Rules for OLA ACE Escape Room Challenge

1) Must fit in some kind of suitcase/box/briefcase on a tabletop.
2) Must be able to be solved in 30 minutes or less. It can be difficult, if desired, as many Escape Rooms have low completion percentages.
3) Number of players per team: 6 with option to buy more
4) We will signal time after 10 minutes and then every 5 minutes.
5) Try and have a story that should walk through 3 puzzles. For example: Dead retired pirate lady has hidden a map to her secret island and treasure for her favorite grandkid to find – our teams must help the heir to get a cut of the money.
6) What will your story be? Mystery, Sci-Fi, Horror, Adventure
7) Common locks are to be used:

8) Endowment Committee can provide pen and paper for note taking
9) An example of a puzzle could be: we had a math equation written on the back of a disc. It made no sense at first, but once teams found sheet music, it became useful.

10) Props as Clues
   - What do you have lying around that can fit into your story?
   - Can your co-workers pitch in with stuff?
   - Can they be altered to suit your needs?
   - Inked on? Broken into pieces?
   - What do you need to make?
   - Lots of paper goods, depending on your story...
   - We had the will, fake telegrams, maps, obituaries, news articles...
   - Make extra copies of all your paper props in case they get damaged or written on by the teams.

11) Include Red Herrings – Props that apply to your plot and aid the setting but have no game value.

12) To design the game, start simple with index cards:
   - Make a card for all the lockables, hardware and equipment you are planning to use – locks, boxes, cables, furniture, etc.
   - Make more cards for any game pieces that are props – books, maps, sheet music, clocks, etc.
   - You’ll design the game very peacefully, by arranging your cards on a table.

13) One item on the table should have a description of what the final objective is, or the ‘last thing’ the teams need to find, and what will lead them there.
   - This indicates what you need to solve your last lock. I’d advise using a lock as the last thing if you can.
   - Number of digits needed, and in what order they are used to make the right combination
   - Make the instructional item important by tying it into your scenario/story

14) Steps: Clue Material Types – What can you do? Well, the possibilities are endless...
   - Code Making!
• Books are made for code games: Pages, sentences, letters, words
• Names of things, whatever and wherever you might find them
• We used a name from the map on the wall of our room to set up a series of clues.
• **Sheet Music!** It’s full of numbers and words — great for code making! Puzzles and Games!
• **Word Games, Number Games:** We did Sudoku at first, but it proved to be too hard for the adults! So we switched to a blacklight/hidden number clue.
• **Actual Jigsaw Puzzles:** Inked letters on the back of a puzzle, or a completed puzzle can be a visual clue to something important in the game
• You can find puzzles with images of just about anything to tie into your theme/story
• **Props** — based on your scenario

• Long live the **dead clock** as a lock combination! Everyone does this one. Everywhere.
• **Maps:** Latitude, Longitude, Place Names connected to other stuff...

15) **Clue paths**

• **Pointer Clues** send players in the right direction and make connections between items. They become reference points for teams to pay attention to
  • Place related or twinned clues apart from each other in different parts of the room
  • We had several references to Shakespeare, leopards and Teddy Roosevelt
    • Why these? We used what we had lying around!

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*Poor, decapitated TR!*

Two volumes of the same book, upside down...

Two sets of upside down Shakespeare*
• **Time to take apart the game map, (not in order, but by of clue complexity):**

• **Our paths:**
  - One final lock digit was found solely on the instructional item. *(Piano Bench 3)*
  - One had two clues (Country list, world map + the instructional item. *(Missing Countries)*
  - One had one clue (Leopard puzzle) + instructional item *(Fireplace Invis. Ink)*, with lots of pointer clues.
    - What made this a bit trickier was that it was the path to the blacklight tool
  - One clue had a complex trail of clues (Wall Map and Letter Box to Piano Bench and CD key). *(Musical Math)*

![Diagram of locked combo](image)

16) **Breaking up the Paths:** this is the best part of the game because it demands that players use teamwork and communication.

• One player’s dead end is another’s answer...if they can work together.
• You should build in two different ways to get at the major things they need to find to advance in the game: create some redundancies for a few paths.

17) **Hints?** Up to how difficult the game is. They could be kept in envelopes on the table and people could open as they get frustrated.

18) **Rules?** The teams should have a sheet of rules that are particular to their box. Warn about breakables. Time limit. Teamwork. Make sure teams provide extra copies of all breakables. Also, teams will need to re-set at the end of the 1st round their respective box.

19) **Ways to make money:** Buy extra help, maybe leave one person from the designing box behind that can be purchased, instead of releasing clues at a time frame, let people buy them early/up front. They are in order from most expensive to least expensive.

20) **Prizes:** Most creative box—voted by judges. Team that is fastest to complete 2 boxes (we will reset between rounds and will need volunteers to help with that). There is also a people’s choice award.

21) Further information here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-6oDZkF1iQRRUJ1VzhtYkV1MzQ/view?pref=2&pli=1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-6oDZkF1iQRRUJ1VzhtYkV1MzQ/view?pref=2&pli=1)