**Escape Rooms: Where Do I Even Start?!**

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**About Me**
- Library services for 5 years
- Teen Librarian for 3 years
- Love creating new and exciting programs for my teens
- Passions/hobbies include: intellectual freedom, reading, crocheting, quoting Hamilton, and taking photos of my cat.

**In This Presentation**
- Why escape rooms?
- Escape rooms I’ve created
- Creating your own
- Tips and trips
- Lessons I’ve learned

**Why Have Escape Rooms at Your Library?**

1. Something new and different

**Why Have Escape Rooms at Your Library?**

2. Accessibility
**Why have Escape Rooms at Your Library?**

3. Participants learn skills:
   - Teamwork
   - Cooperation
   - Critical thinking

4. Gain new patrons!

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**My Escape Rooms**

- **Harry Potter**
  - January 2018
  - 35 (so far) teens participated
  - 45 minute time slots
  - Repeated the room this summer with 30 more participants.
  - The room traveled!
  - Uploaded pictures, notes, supplies list to Facebook.
  - Estimate that around 50 people have experienced my room!
  - Even in Finland!

**Puzzle:**
- Snape has locked you into his Potions Study and you have 45 minutes to get out before Voldemort comes! (The Dark Lord is very punctual.)

**Goal:**
- The door can only be opened with a specific Latin spell. The spell has been ripped up into three pieces and hidden around the room. Find all three pieces and recite the spell to escape!
- 4 tables (2 on each side of the room)
- Back wall with "WANTED" signs
- Floating candles

Action Shots!
- August 2018
- Teens and families
- 50(ish) people participated
- 1 hour time slots
- Will be repeating room for Halloween

- 4 tables (2 on each side of the room)
- Back wall with “MISSING” signs and sheet
- Christmas lights, of course.

- Plot: You are in the Upside Down and the Demogorgon is coming! Only Eleven can help you escape, but she is in Hopper’s cabin.
- Goal: A map to Hopper’s cabin has been drawn on the inside of an Eggo box. Find all four pieces of the map to get to Eleven!
More Action Shots!

- "Escape the Pirate’s Cove"
- YAB created and planned. I can’t take the credit!
- September 2018
- Kids grades 3-5
- 200+ kids participated
- 45 minute time slots

Plot: Pirate Dan has disappeared! He left instructions for his two daughters to find his treasure.

Goal: Work with your teammates to crack the clues and find the treasure.
Now, onto the fun part...

Creating Your Own!

Step 1: theme

Creating Your Own Step 1: Theme

- What is your theme?
  - Harry Potter, Stranger Things, Murder Mystery, Zombies, Star Wars
- Pick something you know and like.
  - You’ll thank yourself later!

Creating Your Own

Step 2: plot & goal
Creating Your Own Step 2: Plot & Goal

- Why are the participants there? Why should they care? What are the stakes?
- What’s the goal? To find a key to exit the room? To open a box? Three boxes? Find the treasure?

Let’s try it!
Grab a partner or two.

Agree on a theme.
Come up with a plot and goal.
3 minutes and then we’ll share.

Let’s share!

Creating Your Own Step 3: World-Building

- What items would fit well in your room?
- What items could add to the atmosphere?
- You probably will use these items later for clues or red herrings.
- Need help? It’s based on an intellectual property, watch/read it!
You got your theme, plot, goal(s), and some items for world-building... Now what?

Start mapping it out!
“Students, I don’t have a hand to lend, so you should start at the end!”

Creating Your Own

Step 4: clues

Creating Your Own Step 4: Clues

- Different types of clues
- Different types of locks and their pros and cons
- Tips and tricks

Creating Your Own Step 4: Clues

Physical
- Hidden objects
- Manipulated or altered items
  - Something looks different or something is missing
- Patterns are off

Creating Your Own Step 4: Clues

Non-Physical
- Emphasized text
- Blacklight (hidden messages)
- Riddles

Creating Your Own Step 4: Clues

My examples of physical clues:
Creating Your Own Step 4: Clues

My examples of non-physical clues:

- Riddles
- Items hidden "in plain sight"
- Blacklight
- Patterns
- Cutting words out of paper.

Creating Your Own Step 4: Clues

"Easy clues"

Again - Make a map/flowchart/whatever. Just visualize it! Even if you don't know what locks/boxes/combinations you're using

Clue from Snape: "Students, I don't have a hand to lend so you should start at the end!"

Marauder's Map with "Wormtail" excluded.

Fake rats around the room

Riddle that leads to the publication date of "Harry Potter #1"

Fake rats around the room

Riddle that leads to the sorting hat

Code to open up lockbox
Clue from Eleven: “Start with the face that looks out of place.”
The Shining poster with directions to Steve’s House on the back
Nancy’s Diary “Barb tells me to just brush it off…”
Hairbrush safe with missing directions inside
Put both sets of directions together
Code to open up red safe

Clue from Eleven: “Start with the face that looks out of place.”
The Shining poster with directions to Steve’s House on the back
Nancy’s Diary “Barb tells me to just brush it off…”

Latin Spell Piece #1!

Eggo Map Piece #1!

Creating Your Own Step 5: Locks

Creating Your Own Step 5: Locks

Creating Your Own Step 5: Locks

Creating Your Own Step 5: Locks
Creating Your Own
Step 5: Locks
#3. Wordlock

Pros:
- Several varieties
- Cheap
- Possibly reusable
- Make a word (or not!)

Cons:
- Resettable?
- Accessibility?
- Need a box/something to lock.

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**Some tips and tricks!**

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#1. Talk it out!
First to your cat, then to other people.

#2. Assemble a test group.

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#3. Chain and boxes are cheap!

#4. Anything can be a safe. Really.
#5. Tablecloths and blankets add a great vibe.

#6. WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN. You'll never know when you need it!

#7. Want to make a clue trickier? Use a cipher.

#8. Picture frames are great to hide things behind/inside. (Whether for a clue or just for fun.)

**THINGS I’VE LEARNED**

#1. Give yourself more time than you think you need to reset the room.
#2. No two groups will ever be the same.

#3. Buy resettable locks and lockboxes!

#4. Adults can be the worst (people will cheat).

#5. Sometimes your clues won’t go as planned... and that’s okay.

#6. Simple touches go a long way.

#7. Have an extra table and scrap paper available.
#8. Seriously, resetting the room can take way longer than you think. (Also remember to go to the bathroom and eat lunch.)

The End!

Questions?

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