

Human Tetris[®] Game Play Guide

By Mike Kazis

There are games I've facilitated where you'd need to separate kids into two large teams and with the thought of playing a Human Tetris game, you'd need to do the same thing. This guide provides information on the best possible way to facilitate a Human Tetris game with the greatest success rate.

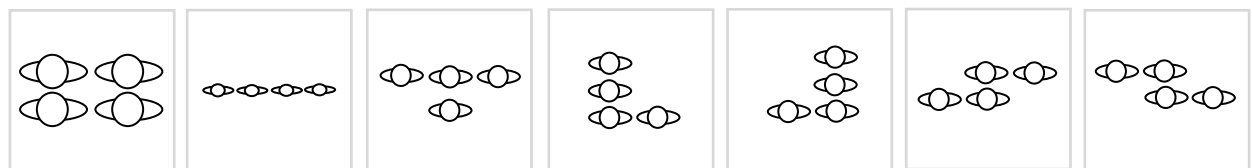
Here's how I envision the game:

Game Setup

- **Two big teams** (If you have 50 kids 25 on each team)
You'll need a lot of people to make up the brick pieces (known as **Tetriminos**) and score points as the teams complete rows (aka **forming a line**).
- **The Board** - **One large square or rectangular area** such as a **dance floor** with boundaries established so that the area width can accommodate 8 to ten 10 columns of people.
- **Each team designates one person as team captain**
The other kids make up the shapes (Tetriminos) – 4 kids grouped together for each shape. There are seven shapes to form. Systematically form each shape one at a time until everyone is part of a Tetrimino. Make sure each team member is using their arms to lock themselves into place with the rest of their group so that they hold their shape.



Source: Official Tetris Web Site - <http://www.tetris.com/how-to-play-tetris/beginner-tips.aspx>



- Line up the Tetrimino's for game play.

Game Play

- The team captain stands at the bottom of the dance floor, preferably elevated on a step ladder, pedestal or stage so he can see the board. He will act as the game player and call out to the moving group how he thinks they should move.

- Groups (Tetriminos) will be in their game positions at the opposite end of the dance floor and given a number in the order in which they have to move down toward the other end of the dance floor.
- When the game play starts, the groups move one at a time toward the captain at the bottom of the board. The captain tells them how to move toward him so that he can form the rows (rotate left, rotate right, slide left, slide right).
- When each team gets to the bottom of the board, that's where they stay until they are part of a complete line until every Tetrimino moves to the bottom of the dance floor.
- While each group is moving, the game facilitator acts as a referee to make sure that the groups move steadily forward and that they are holding their shapes. For game movement, a time limit can be imposed if necessary – 5 to 10 seconds for each group to move forward perhaps. The referee can penalize those groups that are not moving forward or breaking form. A team could be forced to no longer rotate or slide just move to the bottom as they are.

Scoring

This is where it gets tricky:

- Designate the number of columns needed to make up a complete row. The official game has ten columns in each row but you may not have that much space. For the purpose of your game you could reduce it but I would suggest maintaining even numbers and reducing to no more than 8 columns.
- Teams gain points for each line they clear off their board. As each Tetrimino group moves to the bottom of their board, they will try to form the lines you'd see in the actual Tetris game. When a complete line is formed, all the players on that line slide single file off the board and stand to the side. The team is then awarded one point. If a complete line can't be formed, the players stay on the board.
- The team that wins is the team that scores the most points.

Adding Excitement

It's important to maintain excitement for such a complex game. If too many people lose focus the game could "bomb." That's why the facilitator must do what he can to keep everyone's attention on him as the game progresses. Here are a few tips:

- Use something to amplify your voice. If you have a DJ, use their microphone to facilitate the game and to explain the game rules. If there's no DJ system or other type of sound system, a bullhorn would work and would actually be entertaining.
- Play music during the game play. Starting the music communicates to the players and the spectators that the game has officially started. You can use any type of music but I would recommend finding the actual Tetris music. Again if you have no DJ, a "boom box" would suffice.

Comments

Mike Kazis is an experienced party MC and business owner of Dynamite Party Productions, a premiere mobile DJ company. The inspiration for this game was provided by Kathy Griffin, a Celebrations.com member who was looking to play a human version.