

# Malarky™

## Malarky rules

Ages 10 to adult - For 3-6 players or teams

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### THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW AND THINGS YOU DON'T

The questions presented in Malarky aren't boring old trivia questions. Oh no. They are the little mysteries of everyday life that we sometimes think about but rarely solve, like why don't we ever see baby pigeons? They are *Imponderables*. David Feldman, the author of the *Imponderables* books, has been compiling, researching, and writing about these mysteries for more than ten years. He is our authority. If you can guess or figure out the answers to his Imponderables, that's good. But if you can convincingly make up your own answers so much the better! **No, you don't need to know the answers to Malarky. You just need to make people believe that you do!**

### IN A NUTSHELL

A question is read aloud to all players. One player, chosen randomly and without anyone knowing who, will be given the correct answer. All the other players think of possible answers. Next, every player presents his or her answer aloud, as convincingly as possible. After all players have tried to pass their answer off as the real McCoy, all players vote for the player they think provided the real answer.

## OBJECT

To score more points than your opponents. You score points in two ways:

1. Present an answer that's so convincing you get other players to vote for you.
2. See through all the Malarky answers and vote for the real answer.

## SET UP

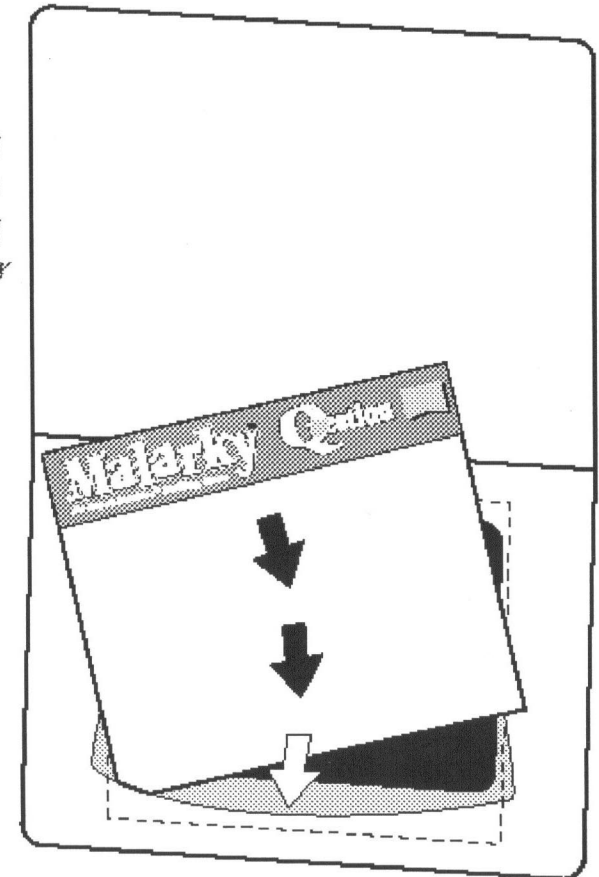
1. Each player takes one black chip and one Concealing Folder.
2. Each player chooses a different color chip (non-black) to represent him- or herself. Each player takes as many of these colored chips as there are players in the game. *For example*, if you chose red, and there are four players in the game, you would take four red chips.
3. All players put one of their colored chips in front of them, so everyone can always see which color represents each player. Then each player hands one of his or her colored chips to every other player. (When done, each player has one black chip, one colored chip from every player, and one of his or her own colored chips in front of them).
4. Put away any remaining chips or Concealing Folders - they will not be used in the game.
5. Write the name of each player on the Scorepad.
6. Take the Bluff Cards out from the end of the card box. They are numbered 315-320. Place one in each Concealing Folder (answer side up), but leave one Concealing Folder empty. This single empty Concealing Folder will hold the *real* answer during play. Any remaining Bluff Cards can also be put away.

## PLAY

1. Players determine who will be the Host for the first round. As every player will host the same number of times, there is no advantage or disadvantage to hosting first. The Host rolls the die and picks a Malarkey card from the Draw end of the card box. Malarkey cards have three Imponderable questions on one side, and their corresponding answers on the other. The Host reads aloud the Imponderable question corresponding to the number rolled (1,2 or 3). The Host must take care not to reveal the answer on the back of the card to any player, even him- or herself! *Part of the fun of Malarkey is that no one knows who will end up holding the correct answer.* The Host reads the *Imponderable* question aloud a second time, so that every player is sure the question is understood. If any player does not understand the question, this is the time to speak up! At this point, all players should begin to think of possible bluff answers to the question.

2. The Host opens the empty Concealing Folder from the "Question" side of the folder and carefully slides the Malarkey card "Question side up" into the slot provided. (see illustration to the right)

*Card being  
inserted into  
Concealing  
Folder*



3. The Host gathers the Concealing Folders and shuffles them out of the sight of the players. The Concealing Folders are then passed to the player to the left of the Host for reshuffling.
4. Next, each player picks a Concealing Folder from the Host. All players open their Concealing Folder from the *Answer Side*, and carefully check the numbered answer (1, 2, or 3) corresponding to the question asked at the start of the round. One player will be holding the real answer, and all others will be holding Bluff Cards. The Bluff Cards have instructions informing the player holding them to think up a believable bluff answer.
5. The players with the Bluff Cards are getting ready to present bluff answers to the *Imponderable* question that has been read. Meanwhile, the player with the real answer is thinking about how best to put the answer into his or her own words.
6. After an agreed amount of time (we suggest one minute), the Host calls for everyone to close their folders. The Host then offers his or her answer. Play continues in a clockwise direction as all the bluffs and the correct answer are presented.

**IMPORTANT: REPEAT ANSWERS ARE NOT ALLOWED!**

If someone uses the answer you thought of, before your turn comes, you must present another answer. It's a good idea to have a **BACK-UP BLUFF** ready (or maybe two!) A player is allowed to vary his or her answer slightly from one already presented. By altering one clear fact, for example, a player may differentiate his or her answer. If anyone feels that a player has essentially repeated the answer of another player, he or she may challenge the second player, and all the other players vote whether the second answer is too similar. (In the case of an even vote, the Host breaks the tie.) If the second bluffer is judged "guilty" he or she is disqualified from participating in that question.

7. If you are holding the real answer you must familiarize yourself with it and put it into your own words. You will not have the opportunity to simply read it aloud. You will have to present it aloud after the Host calls for all folders to be shut.

### **ALSO IMPORTANT**

Because you are never allowed to repeat an answer, it is possible that when you have been given the Concealing Folder with the real answer, another player may offer the real answer before it is your turn to speak. When it is your turn, you must now present a bluff (since repeat answers are not allowed). Presenting a bluff answer because you were forced to is called a "Forced-Malarky." Although, being forced into a Malarky involves quick thinking, you will be rewarded if you are successful. More about this later.

8. A new Host directs each round, with play passing clockwise.

### **VOTING**

1. After all the answers are presented, players vote secretly for the player they feel presented the real answer. Players vote by taking the colored chip that represents the player they are voting for, and putting it in their closed fist in the center of the table. When all the players' fists are on the table, the Host starts the count of "1-2-3." On the count of 3, all players open their hands to reveal their votes.

2. Players can not vote for themselves. Players must use the black chip to vote if they presented the real answer. Since players must keep their own colored chip out in front of them, voting for yourself is impossible.

3. If you were holding the real answer, but were forced into a Malarky, you vote with the colored chip of the player who presented the correct answer before your turn came. This means that no one will be holding a black chip when the votes are revealed. Everyone will realize that someone bluffed the real answer and that a Forced Malarky has occurred. Only then may you reveal who presented the real answer.

### **SCORING**

(+1) A player earns **one point for every vote his or her answer receives** (whether it is the real answer or a bluff answer).

(+1) A player earns **one point for voting for the real answer.**

(+2) A player who was forced into a Malarky receives **two points for each vote he or she receives.**

Tip: Figure scores one at a time, counting all the points each player earned before scoring the next player. **Example:**

1. See if a Forced Malarky occurred.
2. Count any votes Bob received, then...
3. Check to see if Bob voted for the correct answer and score accordingly.
4. Then determine the score of the next player in the same fashion.

## WINNING

The winner is the player with the highest point total after an agreed-upon number of rounds. We suggest that with three or four players, each player Host three times. With more players, two Hosting rounds by each is better. Toward the end of the game, a player may not receive any votes because he or she is close to winning. This allows others to catch up, assuring a climactic finish almost every game.

## TIE-BREAKER ROUND

If there is a tie, one more Imponderable will be asked, but only these two players will compete. Each player rolls the die. The player with the higher number chooses whether he or she wishes to "give" or "guess" the Imponderable question. The player who gives will draw a card and read the question corresponding to the highest number rolled. The Giver will then look at the correct answer on the back of the card and has one minute to present either the real answer or a bluff. The Guesser must decide whether or not the Giver's answer is correct. The Guesser will either win or lose the game depending on his or her decision.

## GAME STRATEGIES

- Make your answer stand out from the others by not only making it as believable as possible, but by including weird "facts," names and places.
- When holding a Concealing Folder with a bluff card, don't stare off into space thinking of an answer. You should pretend to be reading and putting the answer into your own words.
- If you are holding the real answer, there's no need to memorize the card verbatim. Put it in your own words, but make the answer as accurate as possible. It's also a good idea to have a bluff ready in case you are forced into a Malarky while holding the real answer.

## DIFFERENT PLAY OPTIONS

## **TEAM MALARKY**

This version allows for more than six players to participate. Teammates concur on bluffs and take turns presenting answers. All scoring remains the same.

## **MEGA-MALARKY**

In this version of play, the player holding the card with the real answer may try to Malarky his or her way to additional points by not presenting the real answer but bluffing along with everyone else. This is called a Mega-Malarky. The stakes are high though (three points), so the bluff had better be good. The player trying to pull a Mega-Malarky still votes with the black chip, but simply presents the bluff answer instead of the real answer. For example: Bob votes with his black chip. Did he present the real answer or did he pull a Mega-Malarky? The player to the left of Bob starts by deciding if they believe Bob's answer. If they do believe Bob, they say so and do nothing. If they do not believe Bob, they say "Malarky!" and place their black chip on top of their own colored chip in the center of the table. All other players then decide in the same fashion. Bob's Concealing Folder is examined for verification and...

### **Mega-Malarky Scoring**

- If Bob is caught pulling a Mega-Malarky, all players who challenged him earn three points while Bob has a total of three points deducted from his score.
- If Bob really did present the real answer, then all the players who challenged him lose three points.
- If Bob pulls a Mega-Malarky and no one challenges him (his bluff must have been pretty good!), then Bob earns three points plus one point for every vote he receives. Of course anyone voting for a Mega-Malarky answer gets no points.

## **MINI-MALARKY**

This version is similar to our tie-breaker round. The Host reads a question aloud, and then presents either the real answer on the back of the game card, or presents a bluff. Each player must decide whether they think the Host is bluffing (by voting with the black chip), or presenting the real answer (by voting with the Host's colored chip).

### **Mini-Malarky Scoring**











Players earn one point for voting correctly. The Host earns two points for any votes he or she receives when bluffing, but only one point for votes he or she receives when presenting the real answer. The player with the most points after everyone has Hosted an agreed upon number of times wins!

### A Message from Dave

Welcome to the wonderful and occasionally baffling world of  
Imponderables. Most of the mysteries of everyday life posed in this  
book were asked by readers of my books. As weird as some of these  
questions may be, rest assured that I found the answers by consulting  
experts in each subject. Of course, Malarky cards allow only a  
limited space to answer some of the Imponderables. And some of the  
Imponderables have more than one possible explanation; if so we've  
included the most popular theory. If you'd like more information on a  
particular question, we've placed symbols after each Imponderable to  
let you know from which of my books it came. I hope you have as much  
fun playing Malarky as I had writing the Imponderable books. And do  
what I do: Once you know the real answers, lecture your friends!

*Dave Feldman*

If you "gotta have more information" on a particular question, then check out David Feldman's Imponderables® book series.

	<b>Imponderables</b>
	<b>Why Do Clocks Run Clockwise?</b>
	<b>Who Put the Butter in Butterfly?</b>
	<b>When Do Fish Sleep?</b>
	<b>Why Do Dogs Have Wet Noses?</b>
	<b>Do Penguins Have Knees?</b>
	<b>When Did Wild Poodles Roam the Earth?</b>
	<b>How Does Aspirin Find a Headache?</b>
	<b>What are Hyenas Laughing at, Anyway?</b>
	<b>How Do Astronauts Scratch an Itch?</b>

If you have additional questions or comments, contact us at:

**Malarkey**

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## BOX BACK QUESTIONS

*If you can't wait to find the answers to the questions on the box back, here are the card numbers where you can find them:*

- 1) Why do pirates wear earrings? **Card #314.**
- 2) Where do houseflies go in the winter? **Card #17.**
- 3) Why are tennis balls fuzzy? **Card #107.**
- 4) Why are there two red stripes around the thinnest part of bowling pins? **Card #287.**
- 5) Why do doughnuts have holes? **Card #11.**
- 6) Why don't we see baby pigeons? **Card #227.**
- 7) Why is Rhode Island called an island when it's not? **Card #47.**
- 8) Why is there no channel 1 on TV? **Card #205.**

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