

## AN INTRODUCTION BY BOB MANKOFF

Welcome to The New Yorker Caption Contest Game. It's my job to give you some advice, and get you in the mood to play the game. If you're already in the mood, you can skip this, and, as they say, let the hilarity ensue. But if, at any point, it fails to ensue, come back here immediately.

My main suggestion for playing and enjoying this game is simple: Don't worry, be funny. In fact, the key to being funny is not to worry about being silly, ridiculous, or idiotic. In real life, such worry might make sense, but in this game it would just be silly, ridiculous, or idiotic. And don't worry about not being funny. In a game like this, the groans produced by unfunny captions are part of the fun. Also, since one of the goals of the game is to guess who wrote what caption, how people fail is just as revealing as how they succeed. Remember, to be funny, you have to risk being unfunny.

Every week in The New Yorker's caption contest which inspired this game we provide a cartoon, like the one by Danny Shanahan below, in need of a caption. And every week, we get, on average, eight thousand submissions, from people whose DNA only a geneticist could distinguish from yours. Many of the captions are, as the British say, spot on. Many more are spot off. But the point is that there are many, many captions – and we have to look through all of them each week to select the thousands of losers.

You can't come up with a funny caption if you don't come up with any caption at all. Therefore,

the first thing to do is to lower the bar. Lower it right down to the ground, so you can step over it and get on with the game. Do this by using the words that immediately pop into your head as jumping off points for your captions when you look at the cartoon. Here are the words and the captions I came up with:

Chicken: "Who you callin' chicken?" Duck: "Hey, I'm not duck soup." Couch: "Quick, duck behind the couch." Lips: "Oops, we don't have lips." Sex: "Let's have monkey sex." Feather: "Am I just a feather in your cap?" Migrate: "Not tonight. I have a migrate headache." Bird flu: "Have you been tested?" Chicks: "I bet you say that to all the chicks." Children: "How will we raise the children?"



Well, I could go on. But, as E. B. White, a pretty good caption writer, once said, "Humor can be dissected, as a frog can, but the thing dies in the process." So, at this point, I think I'll let the frog go. Who knows, maybe he'll get something going with a squirrel. Could be funny.



# THE NEW YORKER

## CARTOON CAPTION GAME

3-6 Players (Best with 4 or 5) • Ages Teen to Adult

### THE SET-UP

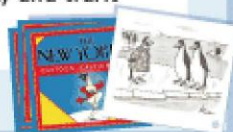
- 1 Select game pieces and place them on START.
- 2 Take an answer sheet and write your name at the top.
- 3 Place the cartoon cards face down on the board.
- 4 Place the timer on the board.
- 5 Roll the dice; high roller goes first; play moves clockwise.

### HOW TO PLAY

- 1 Player rolls the dice and moves the number of spaces shown.



- 2 Roller turns over the next cartoon card, places it face-up in the middle of the board, and starts the timer.



- 3 The remaining players (everyone but the roller) have 45 seconds to write a caption on their answer sheets. Write something and write neatly!

- 4 All answer sheets are collected by the player to the right, shuffled, and read aloud.

- The roller can request to hear the captions again.

- 5 After hearing all of the captions, the roller must pick his/her favorite, and then guess which player wrote which caption.

- Players should be discreet and allow the roller to try matching ALL captions before revealing how many were matched correctly.

- 6 The reader reveals the results. The roller advances one space for every correct match. The player whose caption was the favorite advances two spaces.

There is no opportunity to roll again, and no penalty for incorrectly matching players' answers. Play moves clockwise.

### HOW TO WIN

The first player to land on the WIN space (don't need an exact roll) and match at least two players' captions correctly wins the game.

If the roller matches less than two of the captions, he/she simply remains on the WIN space until his/her next turn.

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For a complete index of the original captions for the cartoons in this game, or if you have any questions, please visit [www.loadedquestions.com](http://www.loadedquestions.com).