

The *What-If...?* Game



How to Play:

Objective: Create interesting new stories by changing parts of movies, tv shows, or video games.

This game will help you think like a writer.

You may play it with as many or as few players as you want.

Take turns asking “what-if” questions about a movie, tv show, or story. Your question should start with the words “what if ...”, and your question should change the story in some way. (If you are playing by yourself, write your questions down in a journal or sketchbook.)

Example: “What if Cinderella’s Fairy Godmother was really a space alien?”

Does this question make you re-imagine the story?

Now you’re thinking as a writer!

Two Ways to Play!

You don’t have to limit yourself to stories that have already been written.

Write your own stories by asking what-if questions about everyday life!

Kinds of What-If questions:

We can ask many different kinds of what-if questions. Use the following list to inspire you.

Here are some ideas:

- What if (character) was a (job description OR gender OR being) instead of a (his/her/its job/gender/being in the story)?
 - **Example:** *What if Cinderella was a shoemaker instead of a maid?*
 - **Example:** *What if Harry Potter was a girl instead of a boy?*
 - **Example:** *What if Olaf in Frozen was a robot instead of a snowman?*
- What if (character) wanted (desire) instead of (what he/she/it really wants in the story)?
 - **Example:** *What if Cinderella really wanted to take over the whole kingdom instead of wanting to just enjoy life and find love?*
- What if (character) really wasn't (good/evil)?
 - **Example:** *What if the Evil Queen in Snow White wasn't really evil?*
- What if (the story or a part of the story) took place in OR happened OR was set in (new setting) instead of (old setting)?
 - **Example:** *What if Snow White was set under the sea instead of a forest?*
 - **Example:** *What if the last lightsaber battle in Star Wars Episode III took place in a ballroom instead of a lava field?*
- What if (the story) was set in (year or time period) instead of (original time period of the story)?
 - **Example:** *What if Star Wars was set in the Wild West instead of space a long time ago in a galaxy far far away?*
 - **Example:** *What if the Lord of the Rings was set in modern times instead of thousands of years ago?*
- What if (the story's setting) had OR included (new feature)?
 - **Example:** *What if the sea kingdom in The Little Mermaid included sunken submarines?*
 - **Example:** *What if Pride Rock in The Lion King had a crashed UFO on top?*
- What if (new character OR ally) was placed in (story or part of story)?
 - **Example:** *What if Darth Vader was placed in Frozen?*
 - **Example:** *What if Ariel from The Little Mermaid was placed in Cinderella?*
 - **Example:** *What if Ariel had Simba for an ally in The Little Mermaid?*
- What if (main character) did/did not (new action) instead of (old action)?
 - **Example:** *After his father was killed, what if Simba ran home and attacked scar instead of running away into the wilderness?*
 - **Example:** *What if Cinderella poisoned her step sisters instead of serving them?*
 - **Example:** *What if the Little Mermaid tried to turn Prince Eric into a merman instead of turning herself into a human?*
- What if (title) was a poem, commercial, story, movie, play, shopping list, etc.?
 - **Example:** *What if Cinderella were a poem instead of a movie?*

- **Example:** *What if The Lion King were a shopping list instead of a movie?*

Want to keep going?

Take your what-if-ing to the next level by asking what if questions about real life. This is how writers often come up with their ideas.

- Tweak a scientific law: gravity
 - **Example:** What if we walked on the ceiling?
- Change social behaviors: shake hands
 - **Example:** What if people kicked each other's shins instead of shaking hands?
- Change society: government or school
 - **Example:** What if every child was sent to the moon for school?
- Change something about a religion or come up with a new one
 - **Example:** What if someone believed God lived in the center of the earth?
- Mix and match strange things
 - **Example:** What if chocolate ice cream and frogs both grew on trees?
- Change historical facts
 - **Example:** What if the South won the Civil War?