

Introduction and Game Master Guide

The Lost Labyrinth
An Original Escape Game

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Introduction

The Lost Labyrinth is an “escape room”-style challenge, created to give you a taste of this increasingly popular type of team-building activity. It’s designed to be a fun and engaging experience, while also strengthening working relationships. In addition, it can help to develop a range of useful professional skills, such as team leadership, time management, problem solving, communication, and creative thinking.

This escape game can be played either face-to-face or as a “virtual meeting.” It works best with teams of three to six players, and lasts between 40 minutes and an hour.

One player takes on the role of **Game Master**. They print out all the materials and set up the game, then provide the other players with hints and tips if required.

This is a work of fiction, and any similarities with any real people or organizations is accidental. However, the Greek historian Herodotus really did write about a Lost Labyrinth that he claimed to have visited. Several other notable writers backed up his story. And, since the 1840s, archaeologists have carried out work at Hawara in Egypt. In 2008, researchers there claimed to have found clear evidence of a large, labyrinthine structure lying buried under the sand.

Good luck attempting **The Lost Labyrinth**. We’d love to hear what happens when you take on the challenge. And see our article on [Escape Rooms](#) for more information about running puzzle-solving events with your team.

Game Master Guide

The rest of this document is only for the use of the **Game Master** – the person nominated to set up and run the activity. It explains how each puzzle works, and contains hints for the Game Master to give to the players during the game. It also outlines what happens at the end.

The Game Master should read this guide in full before the event takes place.

Before the Game

Print all the game materials PDFs. (Note that two of them, **bowl** and **desk clues**, are double-sided.)

On the **decoders** sheet, cut out both the **small decoder** and **large decoder** as shown.

On the **labyrinth** sheet, cut out the six jigsaw pieces as shown.

At least one player needs to have print-outs of all the materials, including the cut-out decoders and jigsaw pieces. The whole team must be able to see all the materials and it will help if everyone is able to make notes during the game.

Playing the Game

When everyone's ready, tell the players to imagine that the door of the room they're in has just been locked, and that they have up to an hour to escape. Then ask one player to read the **scenario** sheet out loud.

After that, point out that there are various materials in the room to help with the challenge ahead – the various documents in front of them, either as print-outs or on their screen.

Explain that their main aim is to work out the **seven-digit code** that opens the door. If they can display this on the electronic keypad (represented by the grid on the **answer entry** sheet), the door will open, and they'll be able to stop the crime taking place.

They also need to look out for clues to the identity of the thief and their **accomplice**. The pyramid, seen on the **answer entry** sheet – and elsewhere in the materials – will be vital for this.

Emphasize that the **desk clues** are there to help throughout the game. Some of the other materials need to be dealt with in a particular order; however, it's a good idea to take a brief look at all the documents early on.

Let the players know that they can ask for clues from you if necessary.

Direct the players to start by reading the **letter**, before they explore the rest of the documents and clues.

Then start a timer for one hour so that you can give regular time-checks – and the Lost Labyrinth escape game has begun!



Top Tip

Playing the game virtually can add an extra dimension to the challenge.

If the team is struggling to communicate, encourage them to make sure that everyone is looking at the same document at the same time, to try to speak in turn, and to hold documents or notes to the camera if it would help.

Think of the game as an excellent opportunity to practice virtual communication and to hone remote team-working skills.

After providing a hint, give the team a little time to use it before offering more support. Ultimately, if all the available hints aren't enough for the team to solve a particular puzzle, consider giving them the solution to keep the event moving.

Make sure that they start by reading the **letter** from the would-be thief. This directs them to go to the **hieroglyphs** sheet.

Hieroglyphs:

Hint 1: The top message is in quote marks. Can you find quote marks used in any of the other documents? [This should help the players to spot that this top message decodes as “Treasures of Hawara.”]

Hint 2: Use the **deities** sheet to put names to the **cow**, **cloud** and **cobra** images at the bottom of the sheet. [These are BAT, NUT and WADJET.] Look at how these three names are turned into hieroglyphs, to help you to decrypt the rest of the page.

Hint 3: The “sideways scroll” hieroglyph stands for the letter U.

Solution: The boxed message decodes to “REBUILD THE LABYRINTH” – directing you to the **labyrinth** sheet next.

Labyrinth:

Hint 1: Put the cut-out jigsaw pieces into the correct spaces on the labyrinth picture. Two of the pieces aren't required.

Hint 2: Where else have you seen those pieces? [They're on the **desk clues** sheets, with a letter printed on each piece.]

Hint 3: Work out which lettered piece fits into each space, then read them down from the top of the page to spell a word.

Solution: When read from top to bottom on the labyrinth, the six lettered pieces required to fill the spaces spell ADVERT – telling you go to the **advertisement** sheet next.

Advertisement:

Hint 1: There's help in the email fragment among the **desk clues**.

Hint 2: On the email, the word "initial" is underlined.

Hint 3: Use the initial letter of every sentence on the sheet to spell a message.

Solution: The initials spell "THE BOWL MUST BE CRACKED" – directing the team to "crack" (solve) the code on the bowl.

Bowl (front):

The players need to start by solving the code on the interior of the bowl. (The other side of the sheet, showing the base of the bowl, comes into play later in the game.)

Hint 1: The code visible inside the bowl is solved by the Eye of Horus – found on the desk clues sheets.

Hint 2: In each marking, the outer shape relates to a section of the grid in the "pupil" of the eye. Then the number of dots indicates which letter in that section to use.

Hint 3: The first marking is A, as the outer shape represents the top left corner of the grid, and one dot signifies the first letter there – A.

Solution: The code spells the name ANHUR. The sheet then tells the players to use this name to align the strips of the small decoder.



Note

It's a good idea to show the players how to use the two decoders.

Explain that there's a small decoder and a large decoder. Each comprises two strips of paper, which need to be aligned so that particular symbols line up.

The right-hand strip of each decoder has one special symbol, different from the rest in some way. Whenever a puzzle directs you to a symbol on the left-hand strip, align that with the special symbol on the right-hand strip – and then the decoder is set up and ready for use.

Using the decoders for the first time:

Hint 1: When the team has discovered the symbol on the left strip, they need to align it with the “special” symbol on the right strip.

Hint 2: On the small decoder, the special symbol has a ring around it [the scarab beetle].

Hint 3: On the large decoder, the special symbol is the letter that’s lower case [the letter w].

Solution: When the symbol for Anhur (the bow) on the small decoder is aligned with the special symbol (the scarab beetle), the sun is next to the whirlpool. Then, on the large decoder, when the whirlpool is aligned with the special symbol (the letter w), each symbol in the code can be decrypted, giving the message “ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY HALVED”.

The answer to this is 775 – directing the players to a place where this appears on one of the materials. And if they need a hint about this, tell them that it’s a measurement on a blueprint [because they need to go to the **museum map** sheet next].

Museum Map:

Hint 1: Starting at number eight (the garden), you’re told to journey around the rooms “in exact order” – but what order?

Hint 2: The “order” is alphabetical order.

Hint 3: In alphabetical order, the sequence of room numbers is Eight, Five, Four, One, Seven, Six, Three, Two.

Solution: Room 2 is the café, and what people do there is EAT. The team needs to write those three letters in the pyramid spaces shown. In addition, the journey through the rooms should have taken the players past the hieroglyphs that spell INFINITY – giving them the symbol to use to set up the small decoder. If they can’t work out the word, direct them to the hieroglyphs document.

Using the decoders for the second time:

Solution: When the infinity sign is aligned with the scarab beetle, the symbol in the shadow of the moon is the raven. And when that is used to align the strips of the large decoder, the team can decrypt the next code, “the heavenly ring” – if they can find it.

Hint: There’s a ring of heavenly names somewhere.

Solution: The ring of symbols is on the desk clues sheets. Using the large decoder as explained above, these symbols reveal the name HERODOTUS – which is the sheet to go to next.

Herodotus:

Hint 1: Why is “cross-word” hyphenated – and circled?

Hint 2: All the words you’re looking for can be found spread **across** other words. For example, STAKE comes from “I was **taken**...”

Hint 3: The “female animal” is a SOW.

Solution: The answers are: STAKE, HERO, TOY, SAND, SOW, and UNDONE. When they’re written into the grid, reading down the boxed letters gives the name KHONSU.

Using the decoders for the third time:

Solution: When the symbol for the god Khonsu (moon) is used to set up the small decoder, the boxer is fighting the cobra. The players need to use the cobra to set up the large decoder, which brings the cat symbol next to the letter X.

Hint: Felix comes from a Latin word for cat. There are some Latin symbols on the desk clues.

Solution: X is the Roman (Latin) numeral for 10 [giving the players a clue about the thief’s birth date].

[The next instruction is to “turn over the bowl,” which means using the reverse side of the bowl sheet next.]

Bowl (back):

Hint 1: Each image is a clue to a word.

Hint 2: The name of one **three-lettered** god can be used to make all four answers.

Hint 3: The four extra letters (in the question-mark boxes) have appeared somewhere else in the game.

Solution: The god’s name is BAT, and the answers are BATH, BEAT, BATS, and BAIT – giving the extra letters H, E, S, and I.

Solving the Door Code

Now – or at any point in the game – the players can tell you the seven-digit door code. They can make any number of attempts to get this right.



Note

Only give the following hints when the players have completed the puzzles on the base of the bowl.

Hint 1: “HE IS 3, 4” is written on the **desk clues** sheet. What could that mean?

Hint 2: Two gods are needed – so who could HE and IS be?

Hint 3: “3, 4” tells you to write the three-letter name followed by the four-letter name.

Hint 4: How can you display those two names as numbers on the keypad? Would it help to complete the electronic number line on the **desk clues** sheet?

Hint 5: The names need to look right “from heaven” – which means “from above” (or “upside-down”).
Solution: The door code is 5151434. [The puzzles lead to the names of two Egyptian gods, HEH and ISIS. To display them on the calculator-style keypad on the door – and to make them “look right from the heavens” – i.e. from above – they need to be typed as 5151434.]

Possible Outcomes of the Game

If the players give the wrong door code, tell them that the door has not opened, and they must try again.

If they are unable to give you the correct answer within the hour time limit, stop the game and go to OUTCOME B, below.

If they give you the correct door code before the time is up, read the following message aloud:

You type your seven-digit solution on the keypad, and see the digits appear on the electronic screen. For a moment, nothing happens. Then you hear a loud beep, and there's a satisfying metal clunk as the lock opens. You're free!

Your information – and your instincts – were correct. The person behind this plan wanted eternal fame, by revealing magical secrets – so no wonder the code they picked was based on the gods Heh and Isis, representing infinity and magic. The extra twist was that these names had to be visible from heaven: upside-down.

You and your team push open the door and run down to the main hall of the museum, where the display cabinet is still securely locked. The thief, however, must have heard you coming, because he or she is gone.

But if you know who they are, you'll be able to alert the police, and make sure that the right person is brought to justice. So, who is the ex-employee who tried to steal the treasure?

If the players now correctly name the thief as LUCAS TREE, go to **OUTCOME A**, below. To help them, you can use the following hints:

Hint 1: Fill in the nine-letter pyramid to reveal the thief's name.

Hint 2: Find something on the **desk clues** sheets to show the letter that goes at the top of the pyramid.

Hint 3: On the **letter**, the three words around the pyramid are all synonyms of the words you need. The desk clues will show you where in the pyramid they need to go.

Hint 4: Why is the word "ulcerates" ringed on the **desk clues** sheet?

If the players still cannot name the thief correctly, end the game by reading aloud the following message:

Since you didn't know the identity of the would-be treasure thief, no one was ever apprehended for the attempted heist. The exhibition went ahead as planned, however. You also have ambitious ideas for future events. But there will always be a feeling of apprehension among your team, since you don't know if the same person will be back in future, in another bid to prove their powers – and wreak their revenge.

Outcome A:

Read aloud the following:

You contact the police immediately and explain Lucas Tree’s foiled attempt to steal the exhibition treasure. The former museum chef is arrested – and, under questioning, admits his entire scheme.

Despite years of personal research into the Lost Labyrinth, Tree has been unable to get anyone at the museum to take him seriously. Even when the new exhibition was announced, no one at the museum believed in his theories. His obsession led to mounting stress, a serious ulcer, and a steady drop in his performance at work.

Convinced that the only way to prove his theories was to scrape off the surface of the bowl, Lucas Tree hatched a plan to steal it, and then do whatever it took to bring all its secrets to light. But now his hopes of locating the actual Lost Labyrinth, and becoming the world’s most famous archaeologist, are in tatters. And the centrepiece treasure is still safe.

However, Lucas Tree must have had help. It took someone with more authority than him to get into the security system, steal the display cabinet key, and lock you in. Have you worked out who that was?

If the team correctly names the accomplice as EDEN LAMB, the exhibition’s curator, go to **OUTCOME C**, below. Here are some hints, if required:

Hint 1: The Latin phrase on the desk clues means “Under a lamb’s skin often there often lurks a wolfish mind,” or “Beware a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

Hint 2: The crossword puzzles in the desk clues could help.

Hint 3: The letters in the pyramid give you the accomplice’s initials, plus what they do in the museum.

If the players still cannot name the accomplice, end the game by giving them the following news:

You never did work out who had helped Lucas Tree plan his crime. The exhibition went ahead as planned, though, and it was a great success. And you have ambitious ideas for future events.

But there will always be a feeling or apprehension among your team, since you know that there’s a traitor in your midst – and that, one day, they might decide to try again...

Outcome B:

End the game by reading this message aloud:

The hour is up. With a heavy heart, you try the door one more time, but it remains locked. You and your team turn to the monitor screen, and watch helplessly as a green light comes on in the frame of the display cabinet.

The shadowy figure stands up, turns the key in the lock, opens the door... and, a moment later, they, and the priceless bowl, have disappeared.

All you can do now is wait for morning, when the security team will turn up for work and let you out.

It's going to be a long night.

Outcome C:

End the game by reading the following:

The exhibition's curator, Eden Lamb, was picked up by police later that night. She initially denied any involvement in the crime, but quickly turned on her boyfriend Lucas Tree when she realized that the game was up.

Although terrified by Tree's mounting obsession with the Hawara artefacts, Eden Lamb had been persuaded to help him by promises of riches and fame. Together, she and her partner would finally locate the Lost Labyrinth, and put on the greatest exhibition of ancient treasures the world had ever seen.

Yet their plan has been foiled, and the priceless Hawara bowl is still safe. Maybe one day it will give up the secrets of the Lost Labyrinth of the Pharaohs.

For now, however, you have an Opening Gala to present – launching your most high-profile exhibition to date.

But first, give yourself and your team a moment to catch your breath, and celebrate an extremely hard-won success.

Explanation of Additional Clues

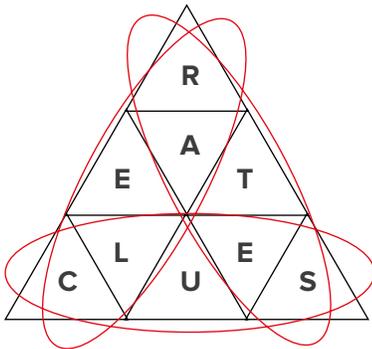
After playing the game, the team may be interested to see if they missed anything! Here are explanations of all the additional clues on the desk clues sheets.

Roman numerals: These were a hint about the X on the large decoder standing for 10 – a number in the thief’s birth data.

Crossword clues: “Misguided need for paradise (4)” = EDEN (an anagram of “need” that means “paradise”) to point to the accomplice. “Reacting badly when supplying (8)” = CATERING (an anagram of “reacting” that means “supplying”) to point to the thief’s former job.

Pyramid with a space for “King of the gods”: The letters here were RA, the god’s name.

The words “Values,” “Obvious” and “Evidence”: These were clues to the words RATES, CLEAR and CLUES, which all had to be put into the pyramid as directed:



The word “ulcerates”: As well as pointing to the thief’s illness from stress, this word contains all the letters in the pyramid, and is an anagram of both LUCAS TREE and “E.L. CURATES”.