Hired Hands Games

13 rules of daily guessing games

Free file

Video 1

The 13 rules of daily guessing games

On 25 August 2026, AI agents read 799 Reddit posts, 9,889 Hacker News items and 7,074 YouTube comments about daily guessing games and wrote down 13 rules.

Roughly was built on them. Under most rules you see what happened when we tried.

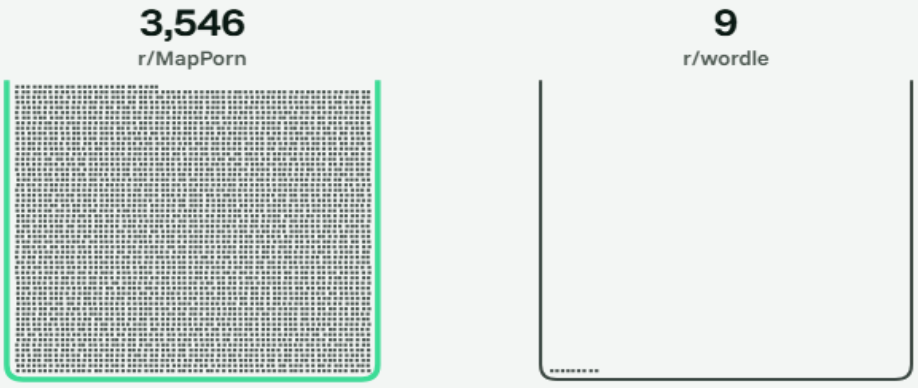
1

Launch where the topic lives

Game communities collect games. Topic communities spread them.

With Roughly

A chart about how players guessed the Hindenburg too small, posted to r/dataisbeautiful, brought 699 visitors in three hours. A normal three hours brings about 135. The Product Hunt launch brought 616 devices and almost no attention.



394× more upvotes for the same map game in r/MapPorn than in r/wordle

The map game travle on Reddit. Heardle, with 69 million visits a month, got 15 upvotes in r/webgames.

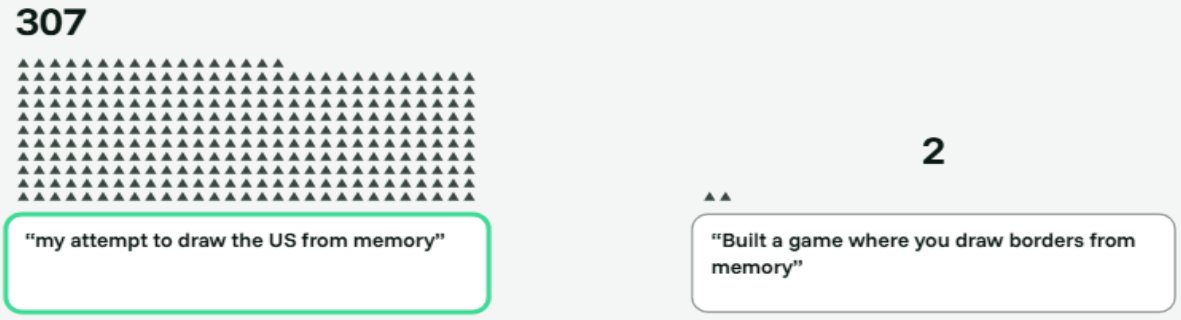
2

People share their own miss

A post about the person does well, a post about the game does not. Give every result a miss worth arguing about.

With Roughly

In mid September, 2.9% to 3.6% of daily players pressed share. On Where?, 285 of 1,056 players pinned the polar bear in Antarctica.



153× more upvotes for the same idea, when the post was about the person

Reddit posts about drawing countries from memory. Of 4,210 upvotes on all of them, the three game announcements got 13.

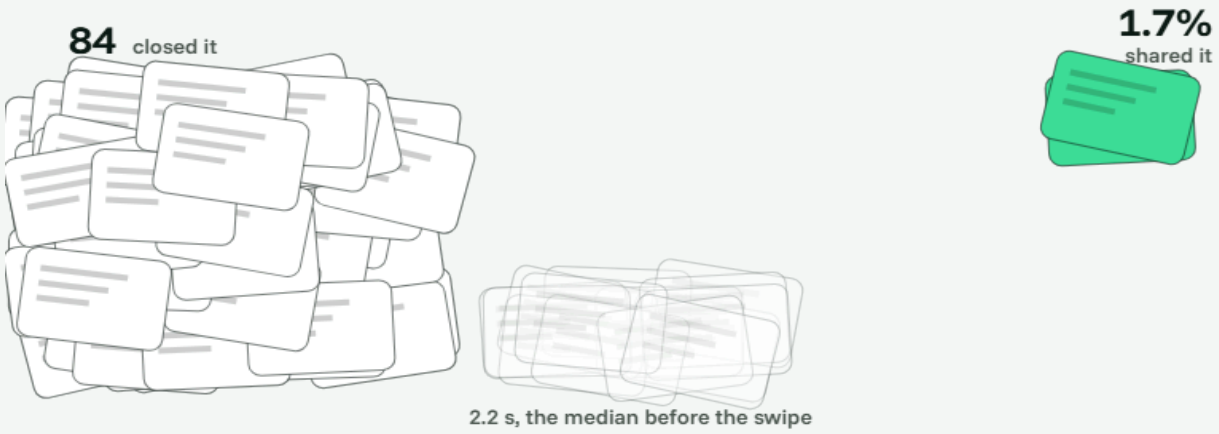
3

Design the share result first

What people send decides whether the game spreads. Design it first, and keep it spoiler free.

With Roughly

Our share card opened by itself after each game. 1.7% shared it. 84% closed it, after a median of 2.2 seconds.



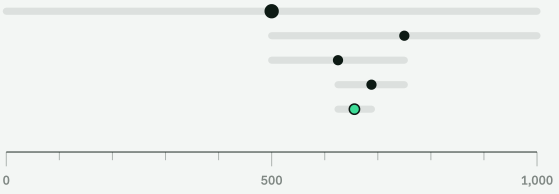
84% of players closed our share card, after a median of 2.2 seconds

The maker of Actorle, 10,000 daily players: “Without that one feature it would’ve died in week 2.” Wordle’s emoji grid came from a player who built it for herself.

4

Typed numbers turn into binary search

With higher or lower as feedback, only the first guess takes thought. Let players drag, draw or tap, or give one shot like GeoGuessr.



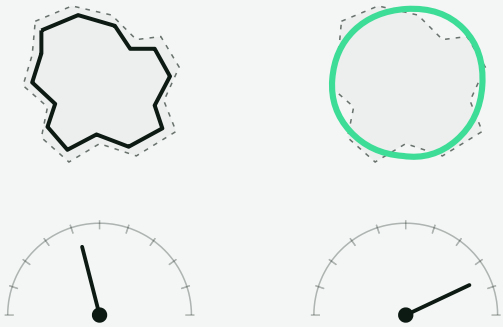
1 guess takes thought, the rest is halving. Try it.

A Costcodle player: “the first guess is the only educated guess, the rest you just play the numbers game.” The developer agreed in public.

5

Test your score with the laziest shape

If a lazy circle beats an honest drawing, players stop drawing. Before launch, feed your scoring a circle, a triangle and a scribble.



a real attempt

a squiggly circle

a squiggly circle beat a real attempt at drawing the country

A player on a draw-the-country game: “I do better just by drawing a squiggly circle than by actually trying to draw the country.” For neal.fun’s Perfect Circle, someone put a tool on GitHub that automates the triangle trick.

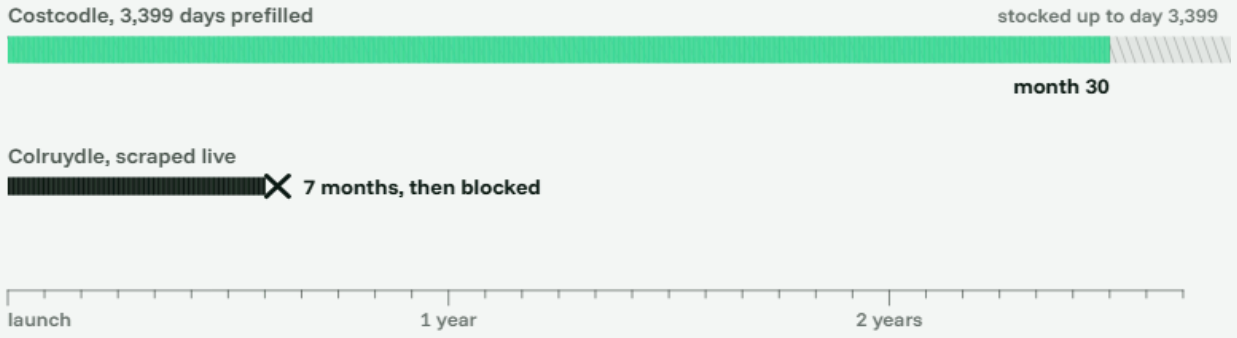
6

Curate once and ship it with the game

A game that scrapes a live source dies the day it gets blocked. Collect the data once, check it, ship it.

With Roughly

The agents traced 668 outline drawings once, up front. After one overnight rework, all 235 animals were checked against the map again, and 84 went back to the old version.



2.5 years without maintenance, against 7 months for a game that scraped live

Costcodle has run without maintenance for two and a half years. Colruydle scraped a supermarket live, got 462 upvotes at launch and was dead seven months later, when the store blocked it.

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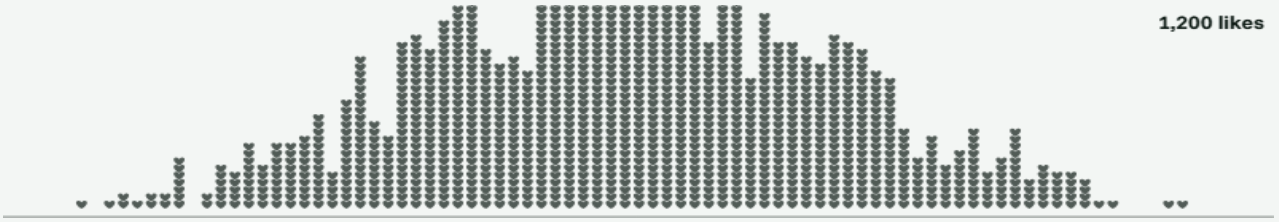
The reveal should teach

End every round with a fact that explains the surprise. It becomes your next post too.

With Roughly

Players guessed the Falcon 9 at a median of 194 m. It is 70 m. That reveal became our next post, with all 1,943 guesses for four rockets.

“This game NEEDS to tell you about the image after you guess!!”



1,200 likes on one comment, the loudest single wish in the data

a comment under a Chronophoto video on YouTube. Players rate Timeguessr above Chronophoto “because it explains what the photo is afterwards.”

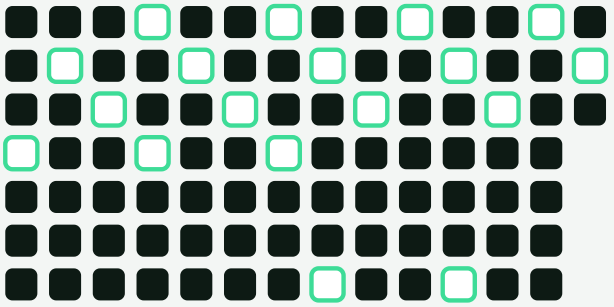
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Content runs out quietly

Most daily games die when the puzzles run out. Count your days of content in years.

With Roughly

Each game got a pool of 121 to 335 items.



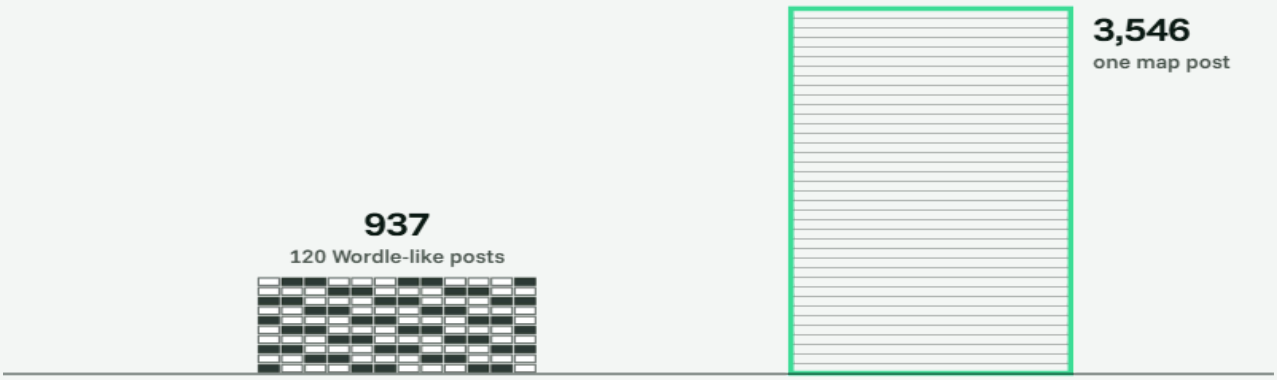
76 of 94 days on which the same target came up twice

The market leader in size guessing used 62 different objects in 94 days. A word game maker: “It takes me about 10 solid hours to make the 30 puzzles for each month.”

9

Skip “-dle” and the tile look

The New York Times has sent takedowns since 2022, aimed at name and look. The format is worn out too.



3.8× the upvotes for one map post, against 120 Wordle-like posts together

When Reactle went down, about 1,900 forks went with it. 120 posts in the Reddit scrape had Wordle in their DNA.

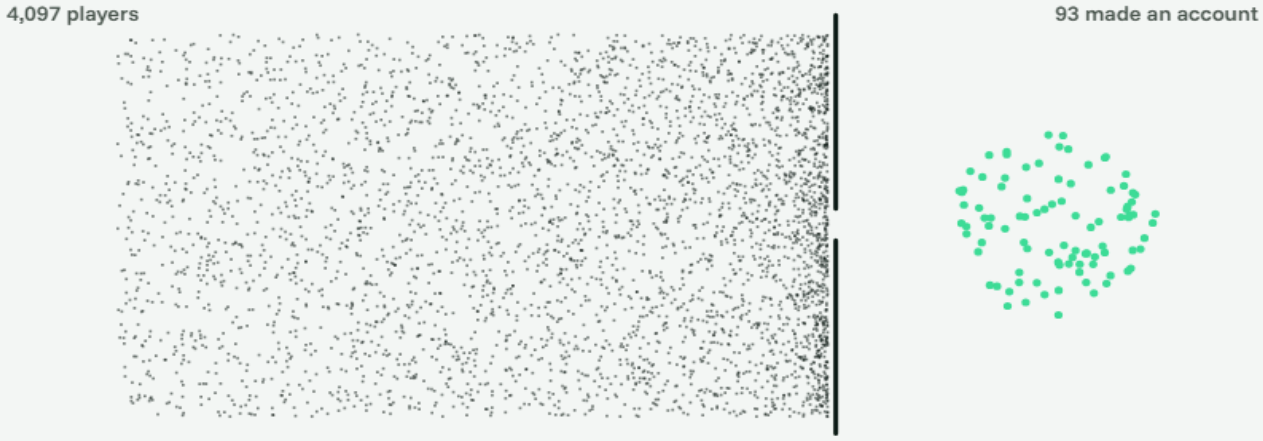
10

No friction at all

Playable five seconds after the click, without an account or an install. Money and data come after the fun.

With Roughly

Roughly is free and needs no account. By 14 October 2026, 137 players had made one anyway.



2.3% made an account on a running daily game (93 of 4,097)

Unzoomed died after it started to require an account. r/InternetIsBeautiful stopped accepting vercel.app links.

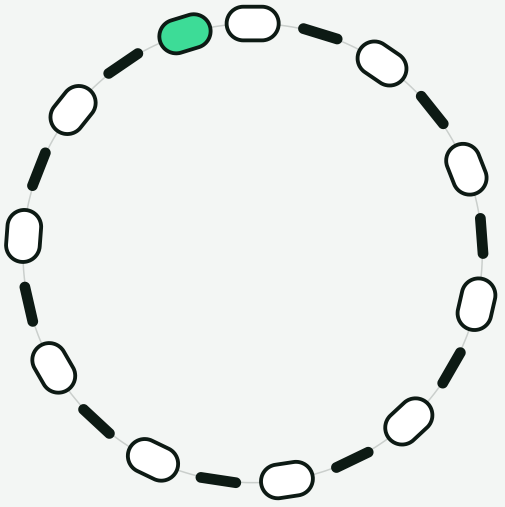
11

One puzzle a day for everyone, plus practice

The shared daily puzzle is what makes sharing work. For players who want more, add practice with no shareable result, like Magnitudle and Costcodle.

With Roughly

The longest streak by 4 October 2026 was 21 days in a row.



21 days in a row, the longest Roughly streak by 4 October 2026

“waarom moet ik 12 uur wachten op de volgende” (why do I have to wait 12 hours for the next one) got 42 upvotes, one hour after a launch.

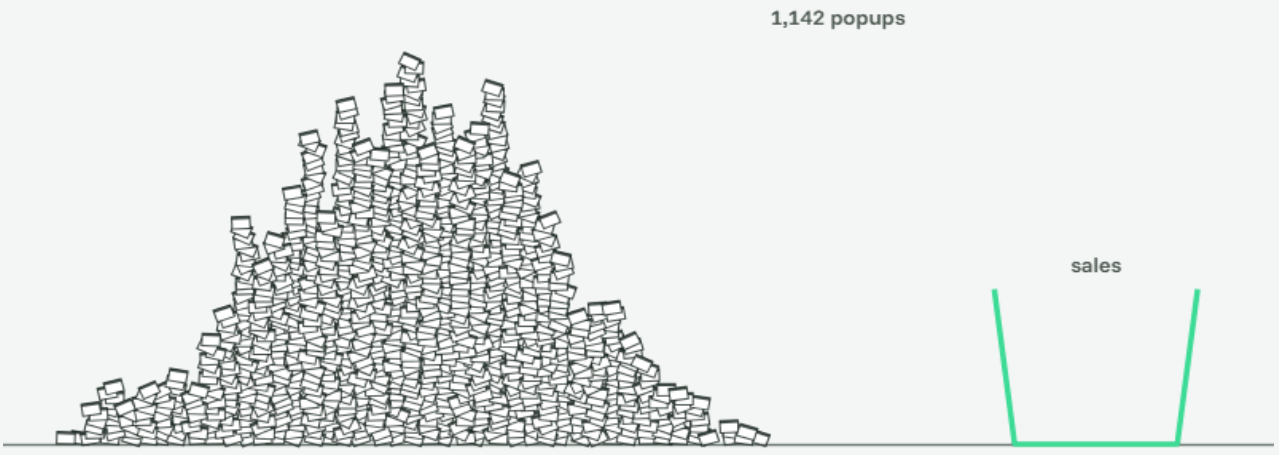
12

Know the money before you start

Daily games make about $0.05 per daily player per month. Add content around the game, or ask for support.

With Roughly

$58.90 from 11 purchases by 17 October 2026, and 4 of the 11 were pay what you want support. In one week the game showed 1,142 purchase popups and sold nothing. Two ad networks said no. A third wants 250,000 monthly users.



0 sales from 1,142 purchase popups in one week on Roughly

Actorle, the best in class, makes about $3,000 a month with 10,000 daily players. dialed.gg had 15 million games played and made $34 in two days.

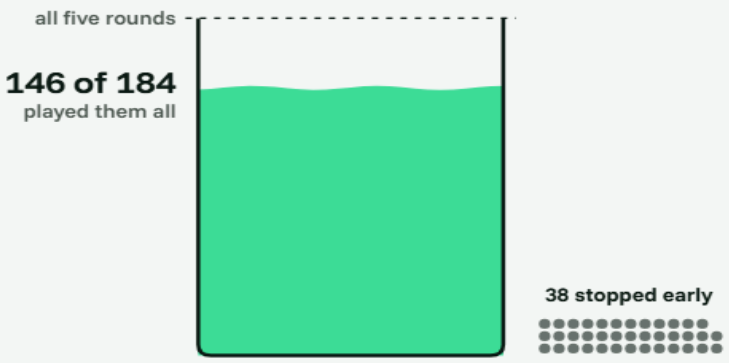
13

Getting started is the hard part

A game wins when someone with no clue can do something sensible in round one. Use skills everyone has, like a feel for size.

With Roughly

In the first four days, 146 of 184 game sessions (79%) played all five rounds.



79%

of Roughly game sessions played all five rounds in the first four days (146 of 184)

The most liked comment in the data, 12,000 likes, under a GeoGuessr tips video with Rainbolt: “Bold of you to assume that I know what country we’re in in the first place.”