10 Escape Room Clichés

1 Black lights
Everyone uses black lights. If you're going to use one, make sure it's strong and use it both sparingly and creatively.

2 Padlocks everywhere
There are a lot of ways to lock things in an escape room. Use variety. And use a variety of locks with different combination lengths. Your players will thank you.

3 Books
Aimlessly flipping through a ton of books isn't fun. If you're using books, then you need a really compelling puzzle, and clues that make it absolutely clear how to use them.

4 Crossword puzzles and sudoku
If your game includes a puzzle that commonly appears in a newspaper or as a homework assignment, then you're doing it wrong.

5 Reading long passages
Don't make your players read long passages.

6 Worn down maps and posters
If a map or poster requires players to place objects on it in specific locations, then you need to laminate the paper. Over time players will wear little spoilers into the paper and ruin the puzzle.

7 Darkness as a challenge
Making a room very dark makes it more frustrating. That doesn't make it more fun. Use darkness intelligently.

8 Bad writing
Write good? Extra important! Prooof-read two,

9 Broken puzzles
Broken puzzles make for sad players. Everything must work every game. Reset your game perfectly, and verify that each component still works correctly. Have backups of each object in the room.

10 Broken clocks
A clock is stopped on a time that is a combination. It must be cliche o'clock.

Room Escape Artist?

Created by an experience designer and a predictive data expert in 2014, RoomEscapeArtist.com publishes well-researched, rational, and reasonably humorous escape room reviews, design and players tips three times a week.

Our mission is to share our love of letting strangers lock us inside giant puzzles, and to push the makers of those giant puzzles to create the best experiences they can.

10 Escape Room Safety Tips

1 Electrical outlets are out of play
If it needs to be plugged in, it should be plugged in before the players enter the room; never ever hide things in an outlet.

2 Eliminate sharp edges and points
Don't use knives, nails or screws. Clip protruding hardware in your furniture.

3 Windows stay locked
Players shouldn't be able to open the windows enough to go outside. Someone will climb out.

4 Be careful with climbing
Everything should be reachable with two feet on the floor. If players must climb, make sure they are climbing on something that is built to safely support the weight of a large adult.

5 Active eyes on players
Cover your game with cameras and mics. Your gamemaster should devote their full attention to the players.

6 Emergency exits are important
Players should have an easy way out in an emergency.

7 Be prepared for emergencies
Staff should be trained in first aid and CPR, and how to operate bolt cutters… also, have a good pair of bolt cutters.

8 Don't fight "The Man"
Research and obey local regulations, including but not limited to zoning, fire code, parking code, and imprisonment laws (some towns will not allow you to lock-in your players).

9 Beware of darkness
If your room is dark, remove tripping hazards.

10 Never lie to your players
Your players need to trust you. Tell them the rules of the room, and make sure that your game never contradicts those rules. If you are caught lying once, then everything you say is suspect.

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