Site of Documentation

Rural Malay community, Titi Teras, Balik Pulau, Penang, Malaysia

Description

*Mulut Itik* is a popular game played by rural Malay children living in the village of Titi Teras in Penang, Malaysia. In it, participants have to construct a *Mulut Itik* - an intricately folded piece of paper that is shaped like a duck's beak and contains a series of numbers and colours written on each folded flap. Players must pick a colour and number, which at the end of the game reveals their 'true' personality type.

Who Plays?

The game requires two players aged between 7 and 10 years of age. Both boys and girls can play.

Accessories/Equipment

This game requires one square piece of paper (ideally recycled) that measures 20 x 20 cm. A pen or pencil is also needed. Colouring pencils or felt tips are optional.
Time and Place

This game can be played at anytime of day both indoors and outdoors. As it only takes a few minutes to construct the *Mulut Itik* and play the game, it is a popular way to pass time between classes at school and during lunch breaks.

Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Players need to have good coordination to construct the *Mulut Itik* from a sheet of paper. During the game players will need to use their numeric skills and sense of rhythm to move the *Mulut Itik* once their opponent has picked their answer. The best players are those that can count in advance and work out which personality trait the player has revealed themselves to have.

Popularity

As this game requires only a paper, pen and a small amount of time, it is often played for fun and to pass the time. Most children learned it this game from friends at school.

History of the game

Although the origins of this game can not be easily traced, it is known to have been played by many members of older generations when they were young. The game has only evolved slightly over time and is played much in the same way as it always was. Back then, it was more popular to include forfeits rather than personality traits on the back of the paper.
Preparation

Making the *Mulut Itik*

1. First, players must take a square sheet of blank paper and fold it in half, diagonally and then open it again. A clear creased line should remain in the middle of the paper. They must then fold the paper diagonally from the opposite side and open it again. The crease lines will intersect and show the centre of the paper.

2. Next, fold each corner of the paper to this central point, to form a smaller square.
3. Turn the paper over and fold the corners into the centre once again, to form an even smaller square.

4. Fold the small square into half and open it again, so there is a horizontal crease line running through the square. Fold the small square into half once again from the other side, so there is a vertical crease line running through the square.
5. Once again there will be a central point where the two lines intersect. As before, fold each corner to this central point, so that an even smaller square is formed.

6. Now the players should be able to slip their fingers into the underside of the square, where the folding has created four small paper compartments.

7. Players should slip their left forefinger and thumb into the two left flaps and their right forefinger and thumb into the two right flaps and bring their fingers together. If constructed it correctly the Mulut Itik should open and close in two directions!
Labelling the *Mulut Itik*

1. Now players need to label the *Mulut Itik*. First they must write the name of a different colour on each of the four flaps.

2. When complete, players must open up the *Mulut Itik* (with flaps facing down). Four triangular faces should be exposed, with two smaller triangles within each large triangle. There are eight small triangles in total which each need to be numbered. The player must write a number on each triangle.
3. Now open up all the four flaps and on the back of each of the smaller triangles, write a personality characteristic. For example, clever, kind, naughty, etc.

4. Fold back the *Mulut Itik* and the game is ready to play.
How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** The player holding the *Mulut Itik* (Player A) asks a series of questions to their opponent (Player B).

1. Player A asks Player B which colour on the *Mulut Itik* they prefer. Player A then spells out the chosen colour. As they spell each letter, Player A opens the *Mulut Itik* horizontally and vertically.

2. Once the colour has been spelled out, the *Mulut Itik* should reveal four numbers.

**Step 2.** Player A then asks Player B to choose one of the four numbers.

Player A counts the chosen number. Once again, as they count, they open *Mulut Itik* vertically and horizontally, one movement for each syllable of the number.
On the final syllable, four new numbers will be displayed inside the *Mulut Itik*. If one of these is that chosen by Player B originally, Player A will open up the flap and reveal Player B’s ‘true’ personality. However, if the number is not displayed the players must repeat Step 2.

**Step 3.** The players can swap roles and play the game as many times as they like.

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**Rules**

1. The flaps can be coloured with crayon or colour pencil instead of writing the names of the colours.

2. Rather than personality traits, players can also write forfeits, jokes or any other instructions they like under the flaps.

3. There are no winners in this game. However if there is a forfeit or instruction written on the inside of the flap, Player B must carry it out.