

What to Do When You're on Your Own

(Other than Watch TV and Play Video Games)



By Matthew Gollub © 2007- 2015

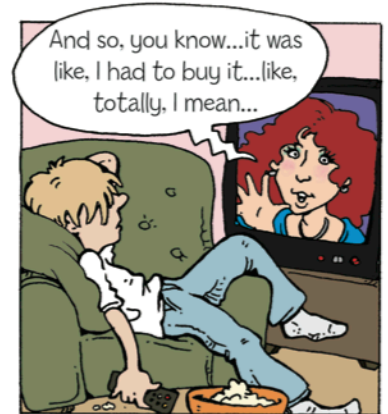
Dozens of years ago, when I was a kid, no one had computers or video games at home. Most television sets received just eight or so stations, and the TVs showed everything in black and white. I kept pet rodents in the garage, but I didn't know anything about "clicking a mouse."

Every kid I knew would have LOVED color TV. And cable TV service. And the chance to play video games online. But for us, the technology did not exist. As a result, we became experts at finding fun things to do that did not involve electronic media. (Since our mother worked full time, my sisters and I were on our own most afternoons.) Some of these activities stretched our imaginations and muscles. But you can try them even today—as alternatives to loads of video games and TV!



- Read something for fun
- Play freeze tag outside

- Lie flat on the grass and stare up at the sky
 - Organize a game of Capture the Flag
 - Listen to music
 - Take turns making up dances
- Build an indoor fort with sheets and furniture
 - Color, draw or paint a picture
 - Practice dribbling a basketball (outside)
 - Talk to a pet



- Write your own comic books, graphic novel, or anime
 - Listen to a story on tape or CD
 - Create a make-believe TV show

- Ask the kid next door if he or she wants to play
 - Make popsicles
 - Nail together blocks of wood
 - Practice a musical instrument

- Write down thoughts in a top-secret journal
 - Build something unusual with Legos
- Challenge yourself to "juggle" a soccer ball 4 times, 6 times, 10 times or more
- Call up your grandma or grandpa on the phone
 - Create puppets and put on a puppet show
 - Plan dinner for your family—and help cook!



Oh! I almost forgot to list homework and daily chores.

I'm sure you can think of even more choices yourself. Good luck and enjoy your free time!