



Hold a trivia night to  
raise money or just for fun

# Trivia Nights

## FOR DUMMIES®



**Alan Lovett**

*Trivia night host and founder  
of the Melbourne Trivia Company*

**A Reference for the Rest of Us!®**



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# **Trivia Nights for Dummies**

**by Alan Lovett**



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# About the Author

Alan Lovett started his own trivia event company, Melbourne Trivia Company, after becoming bored with the banal old-fashioned style of his events-company employers and embarrassed by the under-researched questions he often found himself asking as a host at trivia nights.

Since then, Alan has become an acknowledged specialist in writing interesting trivia questions. He has been commissioned to write questions for Carlton Draught and VB bottle caps — you can read nearly 3000 of his questions just by unscrewing beer caps. In the months leading up to the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games, Alan wrote 1000 multiple-choice questions for *The Brains Behind the Games*, an online Australia-wide corporate trivia quiz for Commonwealth Games sponsors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Hudson and Allens Arthur Robinson. He has also written Melbourne-based trivia for the Web site, Only Melbourne ([www.OnlyMelbourne.com.au](http://www.OnlyMelbourne.com.au)).

As a host, Alan is a popular choice, particularly for trivia nights involving the arts, having prepared and hosted successful events for the National Gallery of Victoria, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the St Kilda Film Festival, the Melbourne International Film Festival and the Melba Conservatorium of Music. For five years now, his Fringe Trivia Challenge has pitted representatives of Melbourne's major arts organisations against one another in trivitorial combat.

Alan has also presented trivia for sporting clubs such as Carlton AFL Club.

Money-raising trivia activities are a specialty of Alan's Melbourne Trivia Company, and the beneficiaries he has helped range from small suburban child-care centres to major medical

research, including the fields of ovarian cancer research and cochlear ear transplants.

Alan has spent many years in the world of entertainment. As an entertainer, he has performed in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. As a writer/actor he has toured Canada and parts of the USA five times in the past 15 years. He also performs regularly in Japan (in Japanese).

# Dedication

To Sara, who is the honest, intelligent, talented, funny, loyal, quirky, nicotine-addicted, critical, bossy and stubborn joy of my life. She also really knows how to accessorise.

# Author's Acknowledgments

I'd like to say this book is all my own work but, luckily for me, it has had input and help from a number of other people.

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Carolyn Beaumont, my Project Editor, has (metaphorically) wrestled with me, cajoled, prodded and supported me, put up with my grumpiness and generally made sure the book happened. And happen in a way that means you read what I wanted to say and in a way that you can understand it. Thanks Carolyn.

## **Publisher's Acknowledgments**

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at [www.dummies.com/register/](http://www.dummies.com/register/).

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### **Acquisitions, Development and Editorial**

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# Introduction

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Welcome to the world of trivia nights. Like any other production in the entertainment industry, running a trivia night can be hard work but the results are very rewarding.

Remember the board game *Trivial Pursuit*? I've sat around a table, competing against friends or family, hoping the dice would turn up a category that I knew something about. Many of my friends still play and enjoy the game. The difference with trivia nights is that they get you out of the house. Instead of competing at home, you're sitting around a table as part of a team, competing against a bunch of other teams in an event that's part trivia quiz and part social event.

In the past 20 years or so, trivia nights have become a part of the lives of many people. You may have been to a local school or kindergarten fundraising trivia night. You may have played True or False and begged the next table to be generous with your 'nearly-correct' answers. Or you may be among the many members of the community who turn out every week to play trivia with your team at the local pub.

This book takes you to the next level of participation in a trivia event — to where you're no longer a mere player, but you become the organiser of the event. With the advice and insights offered in this book, you can plan your own trivia night and run an event that gives pleasure to other people and, if needed, raise money for a worthy cause.

## About This Book



In this book, I introduce you to the skills I use to plan a successful trivia event. Over the years, I've prepared and hosted hundreds of trivia nights for all sorts of occasions — hen parties, corporate conferences, clubs' annual general meetings and office and other social clubs. I've prepared and presented fundraising trivia nights for child-care centres, kindergartens, schools, university faculties and sporting clubs, as well as all sorts of charities and other worthy causes. In this book, you can pick my brain as I share some of the secrets involved in planning and presenting a trivia night.

This book contains valuable information to help you

- ✓ Decide whether to have a trivia night
- ✓ Plan the event
- ✓ Get help
- ✓ Organise equipment
- ✓ Find prizes
- ✓ Choose a host
- ✓ Run the night

Although the overall shape of a trivia night is usually more or less the same, some important differences occur between fundraising and purely social non-fundraising events. To make these differences easy to understand, I cover fundraising events and events that are just for fun separately in this book. Along the way, I show you how to organise games and prizes, pick a venue, drum up support and advertise your event and, best of all, ensure your trivia night is not only successful but very entertaining.

# Conventions Used in This Book

To help you pick out information from a page, I use the following conventions throughout the text:

- ✓ Bold highlights the action parts or keywords in bulleted lists.
- ✓ ‘Google’ is now a word in dictionaries, a verb meaning to search for something, using any Internet search engine (whether it’s Google or some other, such as Yahoo or ninemsn). Throughout the book, the word ‘google’ with a lower-case ‘g’ is meant to be generic in that sense. Google with a capital ‘G’ refers to the Google search engine.
- ✓ Sidebars, which look like text enclosed in a shaded grey box, consist of information that’s interesting to know but not necessarily crucial for your understanding of the chapter or section’s topic. If you do stop to read a sidebar, you can expect either to gain information that you appreciate, that interests you or even entertains you.
- ✓ Web addresses appear in a special font (for example, [www.google.com.au](http://www.google.com.au)) so you can easily pick them out.

## How This Book Is Organised

This book is divided into five parts — from discovering what trivia is, all the way to cleaning up after your successful trivia night. Last is the ever-popular Part of Tens to finish off the job. Each of these five parts looks at a different aspect of planning and presenting a trivia night. Each chapter is self-contained so you can read the chapters in any order that suits your needs.

## **Part I: Planning a Trivia Night**

Part I introduces the trivia experience and then shows you how to plan a successful trivia event — for raising money or just for fun. Organising the night includes finding the right help, deciding when and where to hold the event, how to choose a host and then where to advertise your event. This part also deals with games to play and the prizes you need to collect for the winners.

## **Part II: Finding the Best Questions**

At the core of any trivia night is the trivia. Part II takes you straight to the fun of preparing questions and creating a program for the night. I also give you plenty of typical trivia questions to start you off.

## **Part III: Putting on the Night**

Part III takes you to the actual trivia event, counting down to the day, then guiding you and your host through what needs to be done on the night. I also give you some useful tips on dealing with problems that can arise during a trivia event.