

OneNote Escape Rooms

A 10 Step Guide



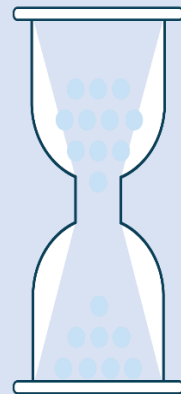
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Why an Escape Room

Quite simply – they are **FUN!**

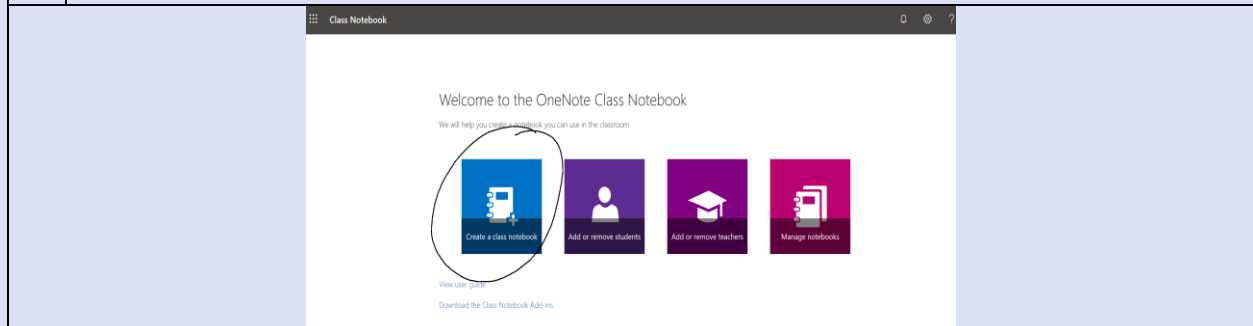
It is a novel approach to teaching students while, simultaneously, testing their understanding and encouraging them to have fun. Post covid-19 might well alter the landscape of HE, and significantly change the way that we design and deliver content. The Escape Room meets that need (for online/remote delivery) while being a key learning and teaching tool.

An Escape Room is a game to students, but a key opportunity for tutors to informally test student understanding of rooms (and, thus, concepts) to determine which they are struggling with the most. This enables them to better support their learners through targeting teaching and support. They also develop a sense of healthy competition, which is in the spirit of gamification.



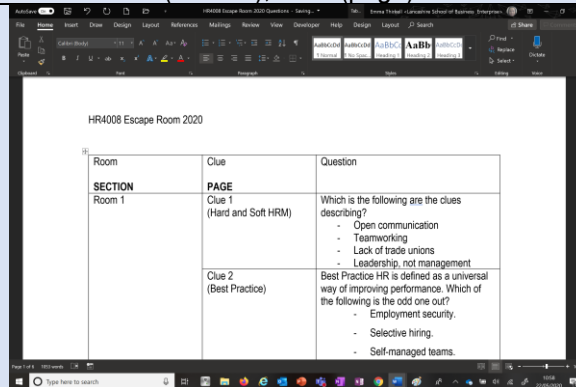
Creating and Designing an Escape Room – 10 Step Guide

- 1 **Create a new Class Notebook** in Office 365. Don't worry about adding students, just a blank Class Notebook is needed.



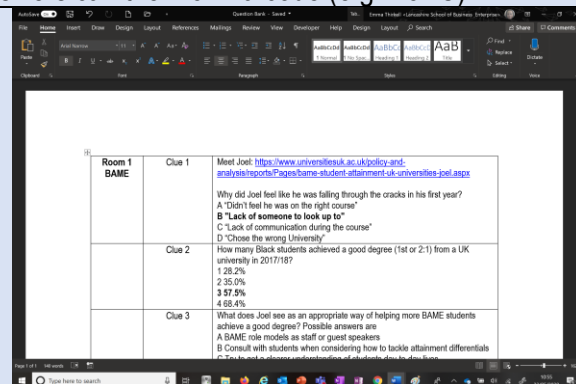
All graphics were created by the wonderfully talented Laura Ridings (@LRidingsUCLan) from the TELT team at University of Central Lancashire.

- 2 Open a new Word document and set a table up. This is where you will **build your questions**. I suggest a 3-column table for Room (section), Clue (page) and Question.



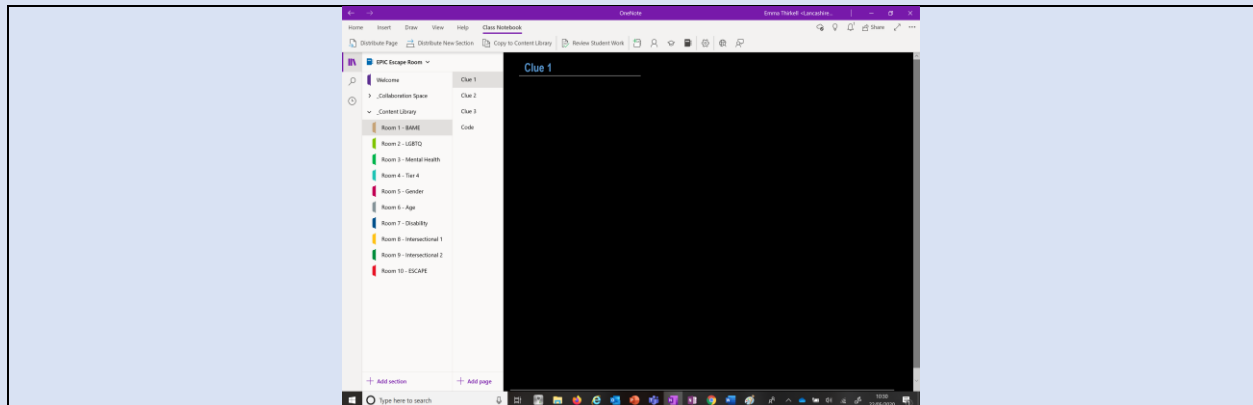
Room	Clue	Question
SECTION Room 1	Clue 1 (Hard and Soft HRM)	Which is the following are the clues describing? - Open communication - Teamworking - Lack of trade unions - Leadership, not management
	Clue 2 (Best Practice)	Best Practice HR is defined as a universal way of improving performance. Which of the following is the odd one out? - Employment security - Selective hiring - Self-managed teams

- 3 **Build your rooms**. Decide how many you want, then how many questions (or clues) you want in each. Start by simply writing the questions and the answer. Once you have those for each room start adding multiple options, like a quiz. Be mindful of the following when creating questions:
- Each question must have a very clear answer (i.e. it should not be vague or debatable);
 - Each question needs a quantitative answer (a, b, c, 1, 2,3 etc) or a short qualitative one-word answer (“yes”, “no”, “management” etc). You can do this by assigning letters or numbers to options (see below screenshot);
 - You can use audio and video, too, but remember to assign numbers/letters;
 - If you want to really challenge your students, ask more than one question (clue) in each room. The answers can then form a code (e.g. A3BC)

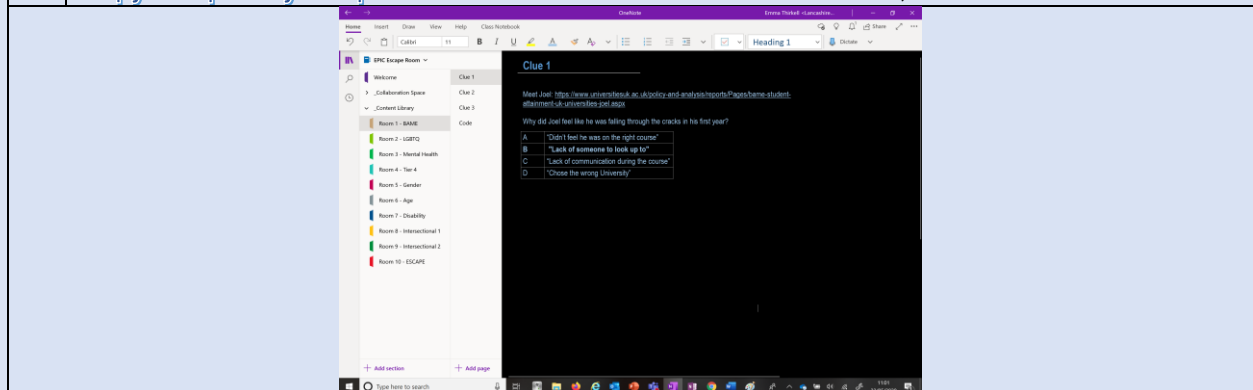


Room 1 BAME	Clue 1	Meet Joel https://www.universities.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/imports/Pages/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-joel.aspx Why did Joel feel like he was falling through the cracks in his first year? A "Didn't feel he was on the right course" B "Lack of someone to look up to" C "Lack of communication during the course" D "Chose the wrong University"
	Clue 2	How many Black students achieved a good degree (1st or 2:1) from a UK university in 2017/18? 1 28.2% 2 35.0% 3 57.5% 4 68.4%
	Clue 3	What does Joel see as an appropriate way of helping more BAME students achieve a good degree? Possible answers are A BAME role models as staff or guest speakers B Consult with students when considering how to tackle attainment differentials C Try to get a degree without taking on any extra duties

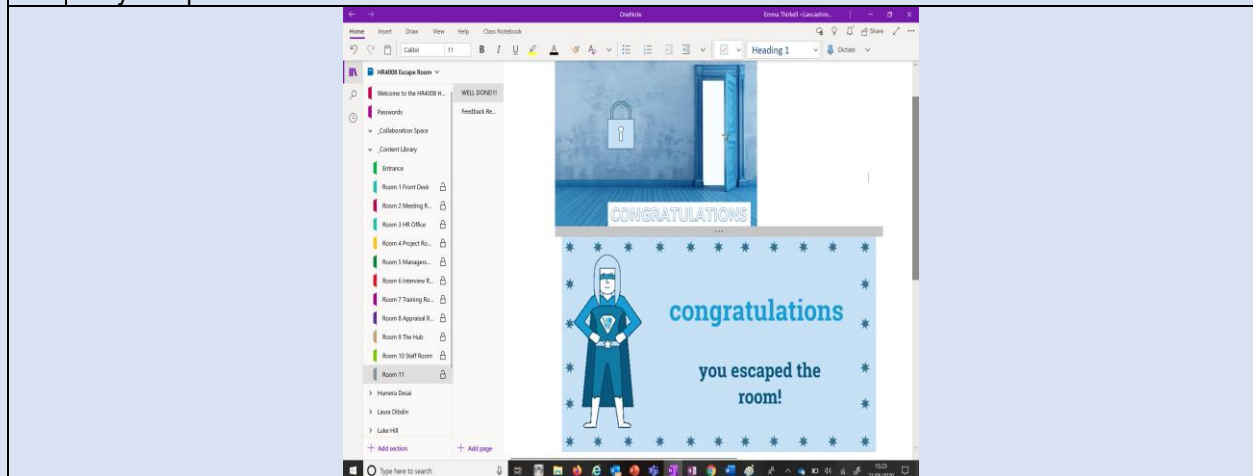
- 4 You can now **set up in Class Notebook**. In the **Content Library** “Add Section” and name each section a room number (e.g. Room 1, Room 2 etc). Avoid using names instead of numbers, as the numbered rooms makes it easier for students to follow. You can always do “Room 1 – Entrance”, “Room 2 – Directors Office” etc if you want to name them. Then “Add Page” within each room and name Clue 1, Clue 2 etc, corresponding to your questions.



5 Copy and paste your questions into each room. You can format now, or later.



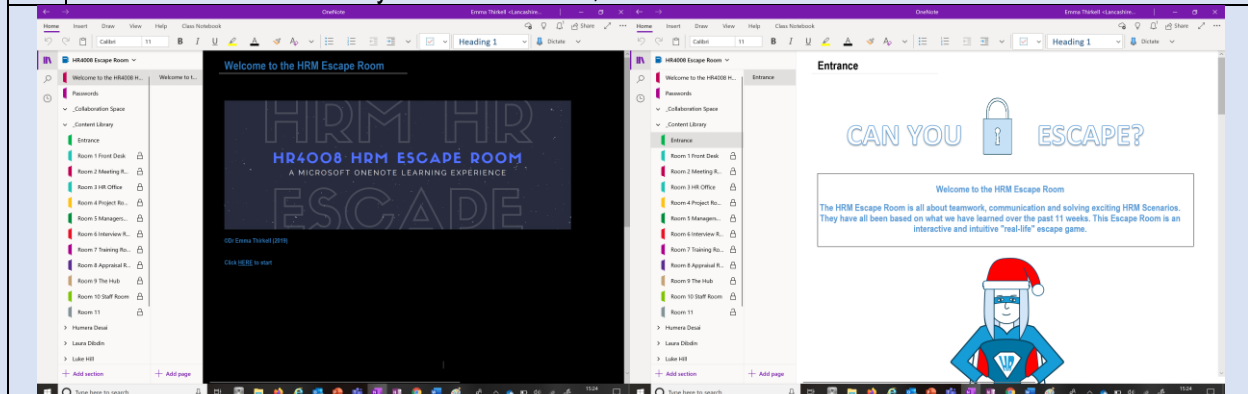
6 Create your breakout room. This is the last room. Try to be creative here and make it fun! You can embed gifs from [giphy](#) graphics from [genially](#), a badge, or a key. If you want to create a leaderboard you could embed an Excel spreadsheet and ask students to add their names to it as they complete.



7 Create a Welcome Room, or 'landing page'. Here, set out the aims of the game and the instructions. Be clear in your instructions.

- If all passwords are in upper case, then state that here.
- If you are using more than one clue, to build a code, then state that here.
- You will also need to put the first password here, so that students can enter Room 1 when told.

I put this page before the Collaboration Space, in the current area that has the *Welcome to Class Notebook*. This is so everyone can access it, and 'lands' on it.



- 8 Set up the passwords. Remember, the 'answer' to room 1 will be the password to room 2 - you will be working one behind, and don't lose them! To lock using the Apps:

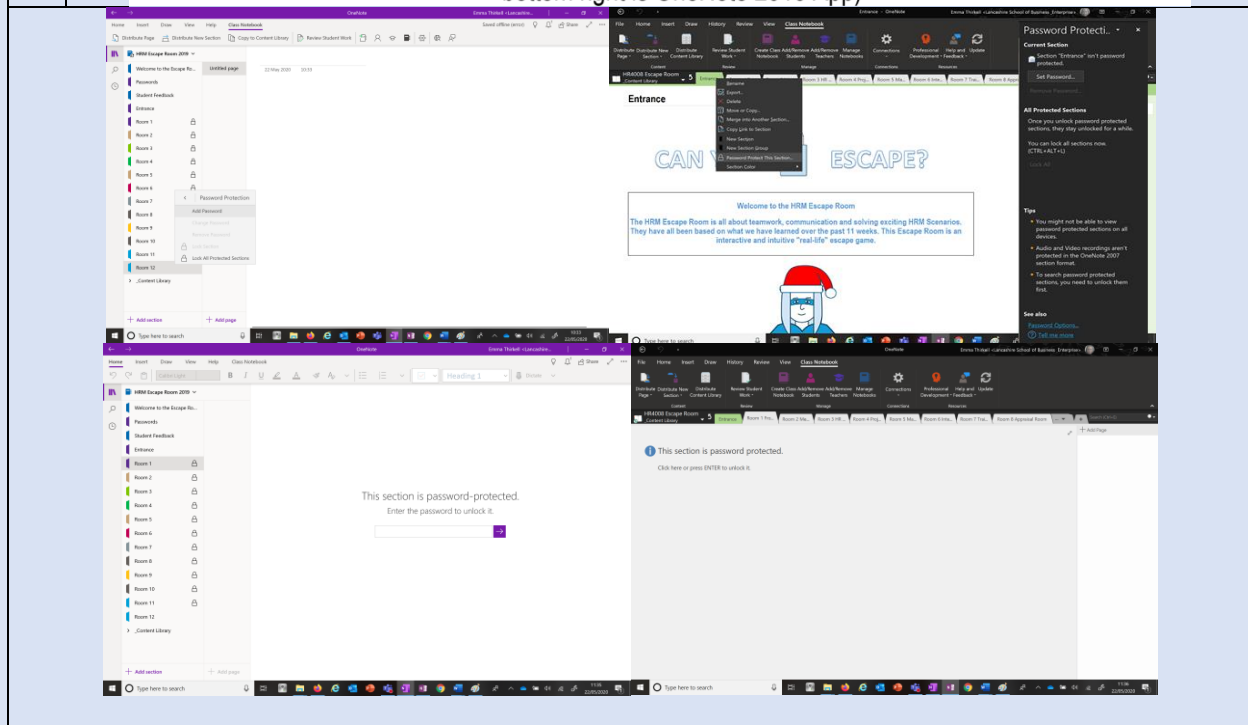
OneNote App (below top left)

- Click on the room you want to lock
- Right click and select *Password Protection*
- Click *Add Password* and enter the password twice
- Once you have entered all passwords, you can 'bulk' lock by right clicking on one padlock and *Lock all sections*

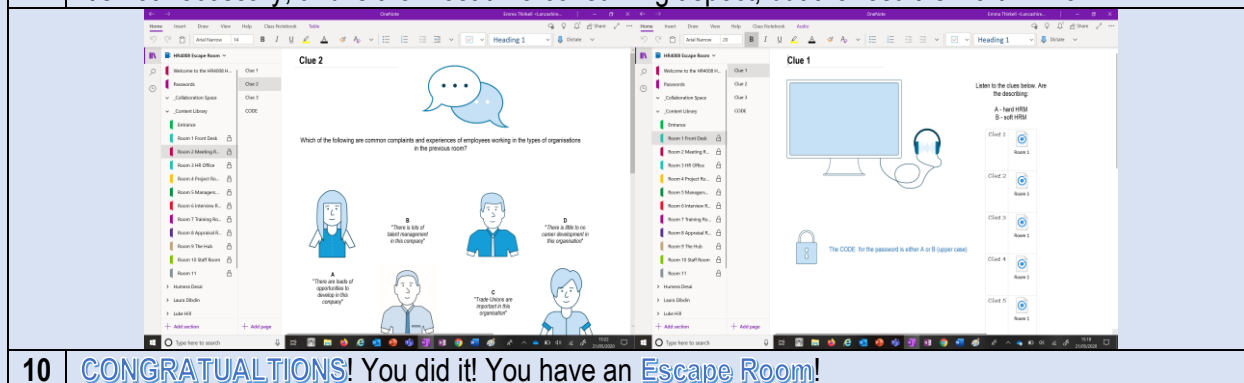
OneNote 2016 App (below top right)

- Right click on the tab at the top for your room (the section)
- Select *Password Protect this Section*
- Click *Set Password* in the box that appears on the right-hand side

In both cases, once locked, the students will see screens as below (bottom left is OneNote App, bottom right is OneNote 2016 App)

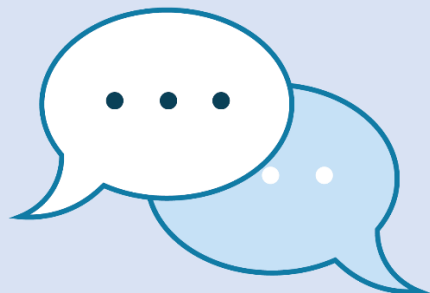


- 9 **Optional – Add Graphics** Go back into each room, and clue, and add graphics. These can be via the image bank (*Insert->Pictures->From Online* on OneNote App or *Insert->Online Pictures* on OneNote 2016 App), your own images or freely available on the internet. You can change the page colour, embed videos (one of my questions asks students to watch a YouTube clip that I embed), record some audio (another question asks students to play some audio clues) or add animations ([genially](#) is great for this). It's not necessary, and is the most time-consuming aspect, but the result is worthwhile.



- 10 **CONGRATUALATIONS!** You did it! You have an **Escape Room!**

To run this with students you will need to either add students individually or have set this up initially in Teams. If you set up in Teams, students are automatically added. If you set this up as a stand-alone Class Notebook you will need individual student email addresses to add. Students will receive a link, going the latter route, and will have access when they click it.



FAQs

I've put together a few Frequently Asked Questions that I have received over the years.

How long will this take me to create? Looks a lot of work!

For a 'basic' 12 room, 12 question, game it takes me around 2 hours from thinking about it to completion. This does include the integrated graphics throughout. Without the graphics it should take an hour. The more clues you have, the longer it will take.

Can it be reused?

Absolutely! You only need to create this once.

If it is embedded within a Team, then you can copy across to a new Class Notebook or set up a new Team Class Notebook using the original as the template.

If it is standalone, then remember to delete the previous students and add the new ones.

Can it be ran remotely?

Yes. I would perhaps suggest a group meeting before starting to set the parameters and introduce the students. I would also advise being available during the game to answer any questions.

If you use Teams, consider setting the students up in groups – you can set them up in their own group areas/breakout rooms within Teams for them to communicate with each other.

Is it an individual or group game?

Either. To build skills I run it as a group Escape Room. This way they work together and rely on each other, although this is easier in a face-to-face setting.

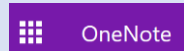
If you are running remotely, you may want to consider an individual approach.

It's not working for my students, what do I do?

Ensure, before you run the Escape Room, that students are familiar with OneNote. There are different versions of the app, and they work and format slightly differently.



The one on the left is the OneNote App. The one on the right is the OneNote 2016 App



This is the OneNote Online version, accessed through the browser

Ensure that students have at least seen OneNote before the game, to reduce technical problems. Also try testing it on all platforms. I prefer the OneNote App. My least favourite (and my students' least favourite) is OneNote Online – it tends to be clunky and slow.

The Rooms are not showing up in order, what do I do?

This sometimes happens, especially when accessing through OneNote Online. Therefore, I suggest rooms being numbered (quant) as opposed to named (qual). Ensure students work from Room 1 up to 10 in order and put this in the Instructions/Welcome.

The passwords are not working for my students, what can I do?

This is (usually) one of two reasons.

1. You may have entered the password/code wrong when setting it up. If this is the case, you will need to delete the room and start again. You cannot retrieve the password retrospectively.
2. The students have entered it wrong either because their answer or code is incorrect or is in the wrong case. When using a code, I usually indicate how long the code is (e.g. "the code is 4 characters long). When using shorter passwords, I indicate the case (e.g. "all upper case").

The graphics take so much time, do I need them?

No, not at all - it can be a simple 'test'. The graphics do help to create the feeling of an Escape Room, though. Students generally are more engaged when it looks more 'real'. [Genially](#) is a quick and easy way to get professional looking graphics in. Don't forget – the template can be used for many years, so you only have to put the time in once.

How many times should I run an Escape Room?

This really depends on its aim. Students may become fatigued if it is run too often. There are also workload implications for creating many of these. I would suggest using in the following instances:

- To consolidate learning on larger topics, *at specific points*, throughout a module;
- To consolidate learning on the whole module, at the *end of the module*;
- As *revision* before an exam, to show students what they already know (or don't!).

How long does it take to run?

That depends on how 'big' the game is. A simple game of 12 rooms, 1 question per room takes my students 15mins - 20mins. A more complex of 10 rooms, 3 questions per room requiring a multi character code, takes just over an hour.

This time doesn't include the setting up or the debriefing (see below for estimate timings).

How do you suggest I run it?

I give very little input, other than instructions and debrief. You will need to set aside 10-15 mins to get students on OneNote and ensure everyone has access, as well as go through the instructions. Start the game and avoid giving help - the learning technique here is guided discovery, so it does require students to get on with it themselves. The key is to get students looking through their notes, researching online, using the VLE and/or working together. If the aim is problem solving, teamworking etc then your input is minimal to zero during the game.

At the end, when each student/group have completed, I spend 15-20 mins debriefing. I suggest making a note of the rooms that students struggled with, going back to those at the end and looking at it as a group. What was challenging? Do you need to go back through the theory? Do they need to go away and do more work? Was there something they misunderstood when it was taught? etc etc

Are there any other uses for the Escape Room?

Yes – you can use it as an induction activity to get students working together to become familiar with the University/course/module. You can use it to determine students' understanding of a topic/module at the start – this helps you know which direction to head in during the module. You can also use it to improve students' understanding of using the Library/researching skills – set questions which require students to go to certain books/journals. Perhaps the reference for the book/journal is the code.



I really hope that this helps anyone who is thinking about creating an Escape Room.

If you have any questions, then please email me or send me a Tweet (@EmmaThirkell). I'd love to hear from you, if you have created one.

A year ago, I created some videos of me setting up a very basic (no fancy graphics) Escape Room. These can be found [HERE](#)

Remember, it might not be perfect first time, but you can alter it. Even if it doesn't work seamlessly, students appreciate the innovation and effort.

Finally – have [fun](#) and [happy escaping](#)!

