Magic tricks for 5 year olds (and what a five-year-old's hands can do)

Peabody blog · Games · updated 2026-10-30

All twenty-two magic tricks in the Peabody Magic Shop that fit a five-year-old, each one working the first try, with ages, learning times and the safety notes.

The right magic tricks for a five-year-old are the ones that work by themselves, or with one simple move, and need nothing a kindergartener cannot hold. The Peabody Magic Shop has twenty-two of them, every one at the easiest level, and most are learned in five minutes or less.

I built the Magic Shop so a child could learn a trick from start to finish without a grown-up having to know it first. It is eighty tricks done with things already in the house, and the twenty-two below are the ones written for kindergarten. Here they all are, and then a word about the part of the title that matters most: what we ask of a five-year-old's hands, and what we don't.

All twenty-two

- Trick: The Rubber Pencil · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 1 minute
- Trick: The Hole in Your Hand · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 1 minute
- Trick: The Forehead Coin · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes
- Trick: Pepper Scatter · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Arrow Flip · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Water Vanish · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Linking Paper Clips · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 2 minutes
- Trick: The Bending Spoon · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 3 minutes
- Trick: The Stretching Finger · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 3 minutes
- Trick: Eleven Fingers · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 3 minutes
- Trick: The Crystal Ball Prediction · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 3 minutes
- Trick: The X-Ray Dice · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 3 minutes
- Trick: The Floating Pencil · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Ghost Pencil · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: Thumb Off · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 8 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Salt Shaker Balance · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Spooky Floating Cup · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 5 minutes

- Trick: The Vanishing Pencil · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Crayon Mind Reader · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 9 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Magic Mind Reader · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Balloon Static Wand · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 5 minutes
- Trick: Secret Message Ink · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 10 minutes

The ages come from the grades each trick is written for: the youngest grade plus five, to the oldest grade plus six. The same list, kept up to date as the shop grows, is on the magic tricks for 5-year-olds page.

What a five-year-old's hands are asked to do

I am not going to tell you what five-year-olds can or can't do in general; I don't know your five-year-old. What I can tell you is what the shop asks of them, because it is written into the rules every trick has to pass.

Every one of these is an Apprentice trick. That level means "works by itself, or one simple move", and the code holds it to that: an Apprentice trick is learned in ten minutes or less, or it does not go up. None of the twenty-two is a Conjurer or a Wizard trick, so nothing here needs a secret move practised over days.

Some need no move at all. Pepper Scatter is surface tension doing the work. The Arrow Flip is a glass of water bending light so a drawn arrow turns round. The Hole in Your Hand is your audience's own eyes. The child's job is to set it up and say the magic word.

The rest need one. The Rubber Pencil is a loose wobble. The Stretching Finger is a fist sliding away while a bent finger straightens. Eleven Fingers is not a hand move at all, but a count: three of the twenty-two need nothing but hands.

The steps are short. A trick that starts at 2nd grade or younger may have at most twelve steps, each one a short sentence, read aloud by Flick, the rabbit who runs the shop, and shown in a little moving picture. A child who cannot read yet can still follow along.

The safety notes, and where they come from

Nothing on a trick's safety strip is typed by hand. It comes from the props, so it cannot be forgotten:

- Small parts. Four of the twenty-two use coins, paperclips or dice — the Forehead Coin, the Water Vanish, the Linking Paper Clips and the X-Ray Dice — and each carries a choking note for brothers and sisters under 4. The shop also refuses to put any small-parts trick below kindergarten.
- Grown-up steps. Two have one. In the Spooky Floating Cup a grown-up does the one step with scissors, before the show, and in the Balloon Static Wand a grown-up blows up

and ties the balloon.
• Nothing sharp in a child's hand. The Ghost Pencil hides a short pencil under a watch band or hair tie, and its page says to use an unsharpened one or a craft stick, never a sharpened one.
• Mess. Secret Message Ink uses grape juice, which stains, so its page says to put an old cloth down first.

The one thing to teach

Not the trick: the magic word. A five-year-old's instinct is to rush on to the next thing the moment something happens. Say the word loud, then hold still for one full second so everybody sees it. That second is the difference between a trick and an accident, and it is the same at five as it is at fifty.

If you would rather not choose, Pick me a trick does it: Flick asks four questions, each answered with one of three boxes, and they hand over one trick that fits what is on the table. The age box for the youngest is "5 or 6".

Questions grown-ups ask

Is five too young for magic tricks?

Not for these. Every trick on the list above is written for kindergarten upward and works the first try. The ones that need practice start at first grade or later, and for a five-year-old the shop marks them as a stretch, to try with a grown-up beside them.

Does my five-year-old need to be able to read?

No. Flick reads every step aloud and each one has a little moving picture, so a child can follow by watching and listening. Reading it through together the first time is still the nicest way to start.

What about younger brothers and sisters?

Four of the twenty-two use something small enough to carry a choking note for under-4s, and the page says so on its strip. For a house with a toddler, the Rubber Pencil, Eleven Fingers, Thumb Off and the Stretching Finger use nothing small at all.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, the Magic Shop needs no sign-up. What a child learns stays on their own device; the only thing sent is an anonymous count when a trick is marked as shown to somebody. The library next door has stories for five-year-olds to read along with.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/magic-tricks-for-5-year-olds