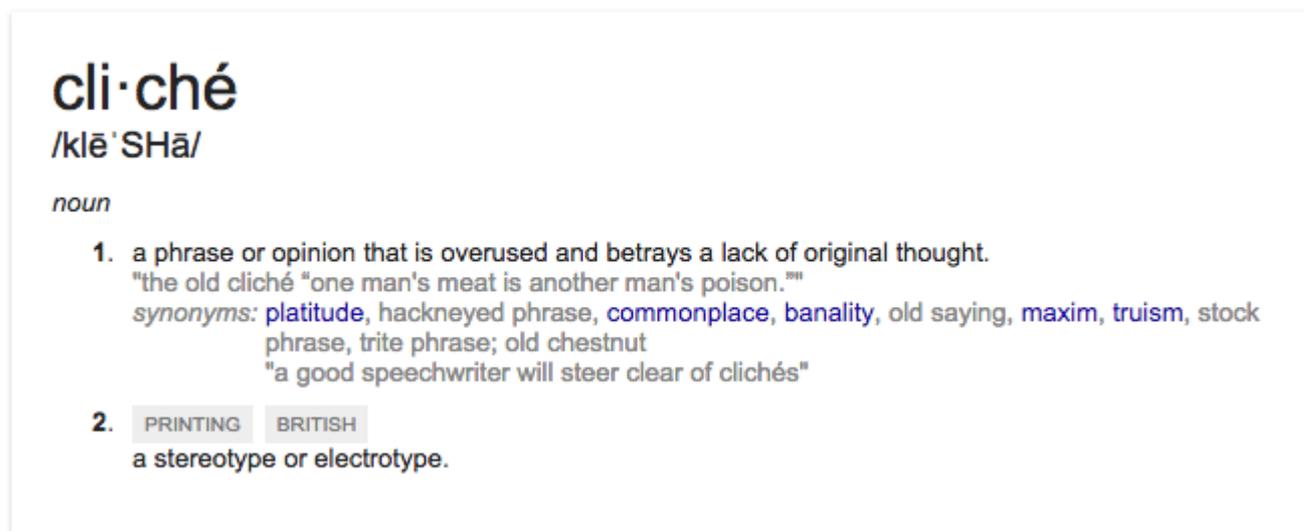


# 6 Escape Room Theme Cliches [Infographic]

*All jokes aside, escape room theme cliches do exist and that's not necessarily a bad thing.*



The infographic defines the word 'cliché' with its phonetic transcription, part of speech, and two definitions. Definition 1 is the primary definition: 'a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought.' It includes a quote: 'the old cliché "one man's meat is another man's poison."' and a list of synonyms: 'platitude, hackneyed phrase, commonplace, banality, old saying, maxim, truism, stock phrase, trite phrase; old chestnut'. A secondary quote is 'a good speechwriter will steer clear of clichés'. Definition 2 is for 'PRINTING' and 'BRITISH' and is 'a stereotype or electrotype.'

**cli·ché**  
/klē'SHā/  
noun

1. a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought.  
"the old cliché "one man's meat is another man's poison."  
*synonyms:* **platitude**, hackneyed phrase, **commonplace**, **banality**, old saying, **maxim**, **truism**, stock phrase, trite phrase; old chestnut  
"a good speechwriter will steer clear of clichés"
2. **PRINTING** **BRITISH**  
a stereotype or electrotype.

Definition No.1 is what we're discussing here, a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought. An escape room theme is an idea that establishes a storyline for the experience. A storyline to base puzzles, tasks and activities around so that players can be entertained. An escape room theme is key and can make or break the entire game.

I have played good games that have these common themes, and I have played bad games that have these themes. I do not believe that using these themes is lazy or unoriginal, but it is easy.



# 6 ESCAPE ROOM THEME CLICHÉS

## Defuse the Bomb

Trapped in a lab space with a counting down timer, oh no! It's almost as if it creates an escape game purely by the storyline itself!



## Escape The Ancient Pyramid

Who doesn't love a good historically inaccurate portrayal of an ancient civilization and their burial rituals?

## Find the Zombie Vaccine

Somehow you are inside of a secret lab, and somehow your group is the only people in the world who can prevent the apocalypse from occurring.



## Break Out Of Jail

Because every jail has the handcuff key hidden somewhere inside the room. Oh and don't forget, you are usually wrongly accused.

## Open the Office Vault

Or find the embezzler, or the murderer or whatever reason has been contrived to trap you inside of an office or study space. Gotta love all those books and desk drawers!



## Survive the Serial Killer

This serial killer doesn't only lock you up in their basement; they leave the key behind as well!

# Escape Room Theme Cliches Are Easy?

Each of these cliched themes presents a:

- Exciting situation
- Time is of the essence
- There is a goal that needs to be accomplished!

These are essential components of an effective escape room game design, and keep players interested! So of course, these escape room themes will be used over and over again. They provide an unrealistic situation for players, or at least a situation they are not likely to find themselves in, and provides them the chance to prove their worth.

These themes are easy because they dictate that time is important, it is inherent in their stories that the clock is ticking and players need to be aware of the time. There is no need to manufacture a reason for the clock to be key to the game.

Every group of players wants to feel like they have won at the end. And that doesn't always mean that they have escaped. An achievable goal, or a situation that has a tangible ending, that can be just as awesome of an ending as finding that last key to open the door.

Because let's be real. Making that bomb stop ticking, right as the last few seconds are counting down? That's pretty freaking amazing. And one hell of an exciting escape room experience.