Assignment One: Single Mechanic

Design a board or card game that explores **one** single game mechanic in-depth. While you may have more than one mechanic in your game, your goal is to minimize the number and complexity of mechanics, allowing a single mechanic to be largely responsible for all decision-making and emergent behavior in the game. Be prepared to announce the mechanic you have chosen by the first playtest.

Your game must be playable by a stated number of players between two to four people. You do not need to design for multiple groups of differing sizes.

New players need to be able to set up, learn, and complete your game in 20 minutes. Players already familiar with your rules should be able to complete a full session in 10 minutes. Select and design your game bits and rules to emphasize legibility, clarity, and usability. Visual artistry will not be graded. We encourage using tools that speed up iteration.

To complete the assignment, you must select, design, and provide all the necessary game bits to play your game. Please submit them in a box or container appropriately sized for the contents of the game, labelled with the name of the game and the names of all members of the team. Include one copy of printed rules for every player in your game. You may use prototyping materials available in the MIT Game Lab. Submissions will not be returned to students after grading but will be made accessible to future classes.

Your team must create & maintain a written changelog. At the end of every design session, write a short description of your key changes in your game and add it to the changelog. Submit one complete changelog for the entire group. As an example, see the sample changelog at the end of this syllabus.

Prepare to deliver a five-minute presentation at the end of the assignment. Briefly describe the game mechanic and how your game explores all its possibilities. Spend more time describing the challenges and changes you have made to the design during the process, including playtest feedback that you found informative or decisions that altered the direction of the game.

Keep a journal for each team meeting, including team discussions in class. At the end of the assignment, each individual student will personally summarize the notes, reflect on what worked and what needed to be improved in the design process and submit a one-page report describing the team's progress and the individual's role through the entire project.

You must also turn in PDF copies of your game rules, game board, and any custom cards. Scans or photographs of your board and cards are perfectly acceptable; provide color scans if your cards have color. Rules should be properly typed and formatted and must be labelled with the name of the game and the names of all the members of your team. Include a list of all the game bits and props used by your game.

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