

Board Game Design

What is a game?

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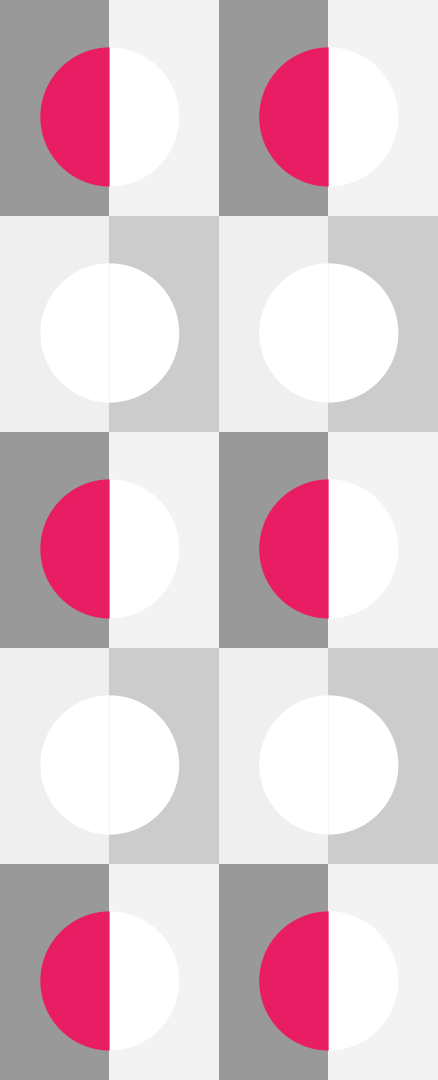
"A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome." - Salen & Zimmerman

"to play a game is to engage in activity directed toward bringing about a specific state of affairs, using only means permitted by specific rules, where the means permitted by the rules are more limited in scope than they would be in the absence of the rules, and where the sole reason for accepting such limitation is to make possible such activity." - Bernard Suits

“The rules of a game provide the player with challenges that the player cannot trivially overcome. It is a basic paradox of games that while the rules themselves are generally definite, unambiguous, and easy to use, the enjoyment of a game depends on these easy-to-use rules presenting challenges that cannot be easily overcome.”

- Jesper Juul

The designers challenge is to
"overcome the difficulties of
complexity."— Christopher
Alexander

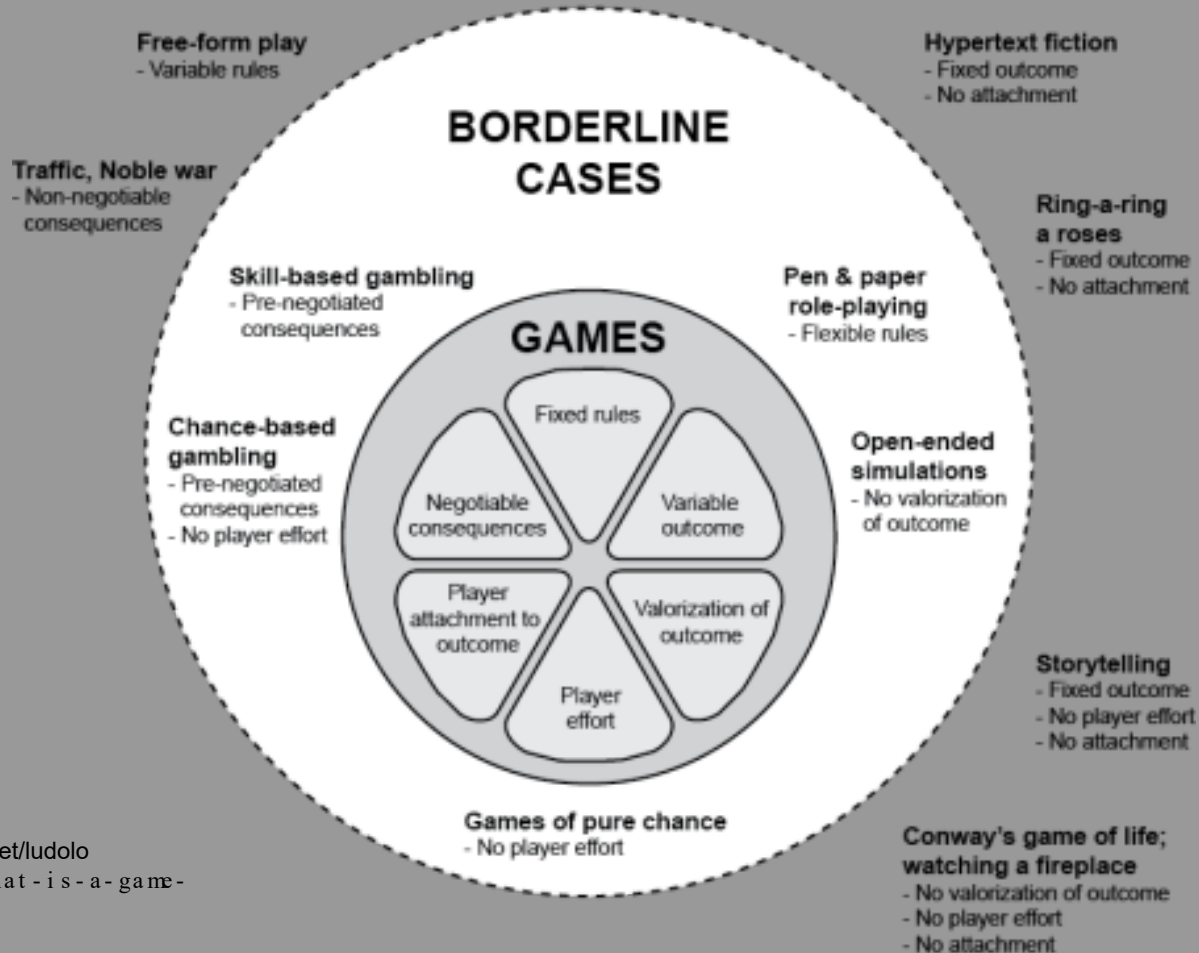


- Up to 6 players have a starting score of 0
- Each take turns to roll a dice
- On each roll the players add the rolled number to their score
- The first person with a score of 100 wins
- There are certain numbers between 0 - 100 that are regarded as special numbers.
- Some special numbers add to the players score while others take away



A game's its RULES

NOT GAMES



"the voluntary attempt to
overcome unnecessary
obstacles". - Bernard Suits



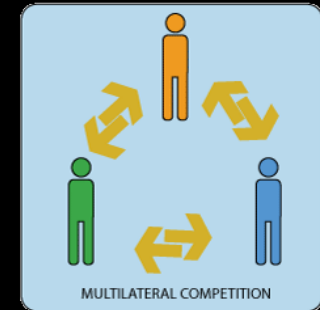
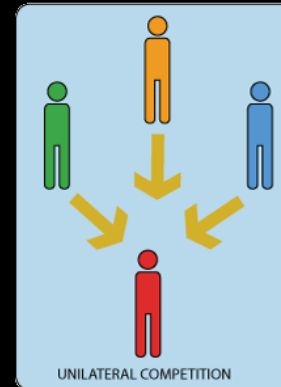
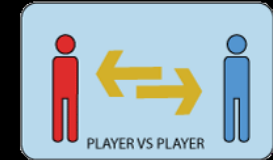
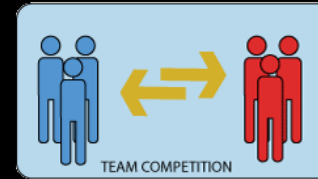
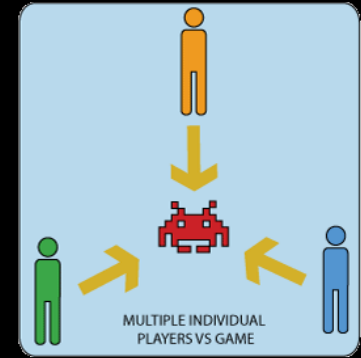
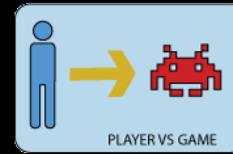
***Play is not just the
system, but the process
of mediation between
objects***

**all meaning is mediated
through the rules of the
game.**

Systems can be seen as sets of items that can affect one another. The interaction among these set items can form patterns that are distinct from its individual parts (i.e., the whole is greater than the sum of its parts)

The Player

Players are voluntary, active participants in the entertainment activity. They partake in it, they consume it and they are invested in it. Different players can adopt different roles during play. Players can play in teams and define actions for team members. Within role playing games, a player role can facilitate or inhibit a player action, but often players have different play styles, which allows for different matches even when players play the same role.



Objectives

Capture

Chase

Race

Alignment/ Spatialisation

Rescue/Escape

Construct

Outwit

Explore

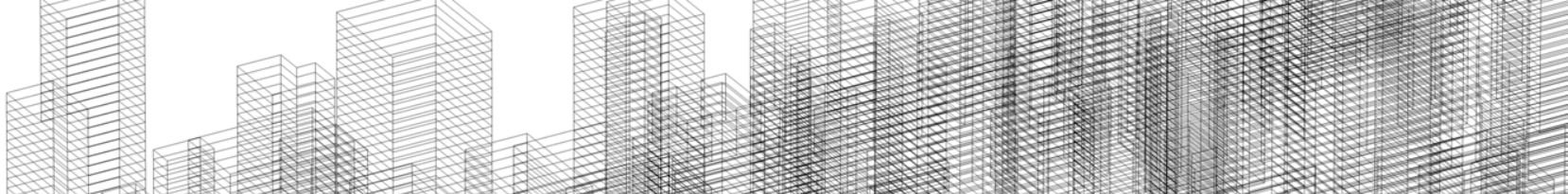
Resources

These are game objects that have a value for players in reaching their individual objectives. The value of these items can be determined by their scarcity and utility. The value for players (i.e., utility) is often scaled by how much an item helps a player achieve a goal.

Common resource examples in games are: Lives, Units, Health, Currency, Actions, Inventory, Time etc.

Rules

These are the exact objects and concepts of your game; they are the building blocks of the game system. As a game designer you want to be able to describe the actions for all possible situations in your rule set. Your rule set specifies everything a player can and cannot do. This means that you often have to limit the actions a player is allowed to do and you have to think about reactions of the game to player actions. Rules are the authority of your game world. They are like a code of honour that players adhere to when entering play.



Conflict

Conflict emerges through procedures and rules in the game that prevent a player from achieving their goal. Conflict is specific to the game and is any challenge to the objective.

Objectives


Conflict

Procedures

Rules

Experiential Systems

A series of relationships



Objects: This refers to elements, variables or parts of a system. These could be physical and/or abstract in nature.

Attributes: These are the properties or qualities that a system and the objects within the system can have.

Internal relationships: The objects in a system are usually in an internal relationship to one another.

Environment: Systems are influenced by the context that surrounds them.



Formal (Closed)

Experiential (Open or Closed)

Culture (Open)

Similarly, when you are designing a game you are not designing just a set of rules, but a set of rules that will always be experienced as play within a cultural context. As a result, you never have the luxury of completely forgetting about context when you are focusing on experience, or on experience and culture when you're focusing on the game's formal structure. It can be useful at times to limit the number of ways you are framing the game, but it is important to remember that a game's formal, experiential, and cultural qualities always exist as integrated phenomena.

Salen and Zimmerman

Activity Time!!

Find a chess or draughts set in your house, its time to change the board to see how this effects the game!!

If you don't have a set use objects in your house to represent the different pieces

Figure out new ways to make the board to change how the game is played

Draw out your new board and play test it with your family. Try removing some pieces and adding others how does it effect your game??