

Game Design Document

Trial & Error

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Section 1: Game Overview.....	3
Section 2: Rules and Procedures.....	4
Rules.....	4
Game Procedures.....	4
Section 3: Game Elements.....	6
Premises.....	6
Characters.....	7
Section 4: Comparative Analysis.....	8
Section 5: Interface & Art.....	9
Section 6: Game Rationale.....	12
Player Experience Goal.....	13
Target Audience.....	14
Impact.....	15
Section 7: Team Charter.....	16
Team Members.....	16
Section 8: Design History.....	17
References.....	19

Section 1: Game Overview

Game Digital Copy	Trial & Error Digital Copy
Game Title	Trial & Error
Player Experience Goal (PXG)	1. Players will experience what it feels like to create a compelling narrative on the spot. 2. Players will experience engaging in social interaction to work towards escaping perilous situations.
Platform	Card Game
Genre	Trick-taking, Action-Adventure, RPG, Survival
Theme	Humor, Adventure, Murder Mystery, Zombies, Crime
Target Audience (TA)	15 and up
No# of Players	3-8 players
Game Synopsis	Sabotage, wit, bargaining, luck, all things you'll need to survive and be the last one standing, do you think you have what it takes? Trial and Error is a multiplayer card game where players are put into an ever-revolving world where literally anything can happen and play the cards they're dealt with. The aim? Survive, and take everyone else down beneath you.
Key Features	Key Features or USPs, a minimum of 3? It should appeal to your TA and align with your PXG 1. Character cards 2. Random series of events 3. Anonymous voting 4. Abilities/Powers 5. Luck
Game Modes	Zombie Apocalypse, Murder Mystery, Trapped in the Jurassic
Price Points	\$15

Section 2: Rules and Procedures

Rules

Have fun! Mix it up to your liking with some suggestions below:

Double Trouble: Unleash the Power of Alliance! If the player count exceeds 6, form dynamic duos to strategize and conquer adversaries for a triumphant outcome!

Twin Triumph: Everyone draws 2 yellow cards every round for the whole game, unveiling possibilities and challenging quick thinking

Game Procedures

To initiate the game, each player will be randomly dealt a Blue card. Once every player has received a Blue card, the individual who cried most recently will have the privilege of being the first to select a Red card and place it down. When the chosen setting is announced, the corresponding pink deck associated with that setting will be utilized. The top card from the pink deck will be revealed to unveil the initial problem or event. The game will then proceed in a clockwise direction. Subsequently, for each round, another card will be drawn from the pink deck to advance the storyline.

Following the revelation of each round's problem or event, all players must select a Yellow card. After listening to everyone's proposed solutions, a voting process will ensue with the use of the voting cards. Once all the votes have been cast, the winner and loser will be revealed. The player with the most persuasive solution will acquire a card from the White deck, while the one who lost will be required to draw a card from the Black deck. This process will continue, eliminating more players until only one remains—the last person standing will be crowned the ultimate winner of the game!

Red Deck: This card establishes the setting of the game and is exclusively employed at the outset of each game, rather than for each round. Once a setting card has been selected, the remaining options can be set aside for the duration of the game

Blue Deck: Each player will be assigned a character card, which will dictate their role in the game. These character cards can be openly displayed to opponents. Every character possesses a unique skill and is equipped with two items, which can be utilized during the game based on the yellow card drawn by the player (see Yellow Deck). Characters that are not in use should be set aside for the duration of the game.

Pink Deck(s): From this deck, a card will be drawn to present a fresh problem that the players must overcome in order to advance the story. For each setting, there exists a corresponding pink deck. It's important to note that within all three decks, there are two INSTANT DEATH cards. Any player who loses a round involving an INSTANT DEATH problem will be eliminated from the game. Ensure to keep this deck faced down at all times throughout the duration of the game.

Yellow Deck: Also known as the “action deck”, this particular deck should be kept concealed from other players until it's your turn. It's the most crucial deck in the game. When paired with the character card (see blue deck), a card from this deck will require each player to devise a solution that can overcome the problem or event presented in the pink card (see Pink deck). Ensure to keep this deck faced down throughout the game.

Black Deck: Also known as the "bad deck," this particular deck introduces challenges that bestow players with a disadvantage, thereby increasing the difficulty of winning the game. Following each round, the loser will draw a card from this deck. It's worth noting that this deck contains "death is approaching" cards, which can be countered by employing an anecdote card (found in the White deck) within the allocated time frame. Try to avoid obtaining a card from this deck at all costs! Ensure that this deck remains faced down throughout the entire game. Any card that has been selected and utilized should be returned to the bottom of the deck.

White Deck: Introducing the esteemed "good deck," known for bestowing players with cards that can counter the adversities of the black deck or provide a strategic upper hand, ultimately increasing their chances of triumph! Following each round, the victorious player will receive a card from this deck, which can be retained and utilized at their discretion throughout the remainder of the game. Within this deck, you'll find powerful cards such as anecdotes and shields, capable of countering the formidable "death is approaching" cards found in the Black deck (refer to Black deck) or granting the player additional time. In the event of a Freaky Friday card, its effects can be nullified if the selected player possesses the corresponding card. Ensure that this deck remains faced down throughout the entire game. The white card can only be used once by each player, and any card that has been selected and utilized must be returned to the bottom of the deck.

Voting Cards: Use this paper to cast your votes with the pencil provided. Keep it confidential until it is time to reveal your vote at the end of each round. You could use these cards or use other methods like typing it out on the notes app on your phone, whichever floats your boat!

Section 3: Game Elements

Premises

The proposed game consists of 3 distinct red cards which are played once at the start of each game and dictates the settings as well as sets a premise which the players will have to start from.

Zombie Apocalypse: Amidst the lively atmosphere of a bustling Saturday afternoon at the mall, shoppers are suddenly taken aback by the frantic vibrations of their phones. A government alert reveals the unfortunate release of a deadly virus from a nearby research centre, causing an outbreak of zombie-like symptoms. As fear and chaos sweep through the mall, a horde of zombies emerges, attacking the unsuspecting shoppers and turning them into the undead. Everyone's attempts to escape are thwarted by the activation of the emergency lockdown, leaving them trapped inside.

Murder Mystery: It's October 31st and the neighborhood is having its annual Halloween party, run by Edward Ashworthe in his spacious and grand mansion. Festivities were running like usual with everyone having a good time until *BANG* a loud noise erupts alerting the attention of everyone there

Into the Jurassic: You wake up to find yourself in a completely unfamiliar world. The sun is beating down on you, and the air is thick with humidity. As you look around, you realise that you are in a dense jungle, filled with strange and exotic plants. You try to remember how you got here, but your memory is hazy. Looking around, you spot a group of people who are just as confused and scared as you are. Suddenly, you hear a loud roar in the distance, and your heart begins to race. The only hope of escape is to find a way to make contact with the outside world, but the journey ahead is filled with danger at every turn.

Once one of these 3 distinct settings has been selected, the event cards which match the said setting will be used to continue the game. The event cards are distinguishable by the design that's drawn on the back of them i.e "Into the Jurassic" event cards have a drawing of a dinosaur on the back of them.

Characters

Each character is randomly selected by the players and consists of two items and a skill each, players will then have to act as their chosen character and utilise those abilities.

8 Characters in total:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Beatrice - The Grandma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● A Walking Stick● Cooking Utensils● Slow | <p>5. Bob - The Tradie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Helmet● Hammer● Construction Skills |
| <p>2. Joanna - The Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stationary● An Umbrella● Excellent Memory | <p>6. Freddie - The Clown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Unicycle● Red Nose● Trickster |
| <p>3. Kyle - The Gymrat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Resistance Bands● Gym Towel● Strength | <p>7. Karen - The Soccer Mum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Disinfectant Spray● First Aid Kit● Multitasking |
| <p>4. Eve - The Thief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Money● Knife● Stealth | <p>8. Kennedy - The Alien</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Slime Gun● Glass Helmet● Shapeshifting |

Section 4: Comparative Analysis

1. Cards Against Humanity/Bucket of doom

- In the initial make of the game, the primary gameplay mechanic was largely inspired by both CAH and BOD. The idea was to let players have a selection of 5-7 action cards each round, to which they could deduct the best possible option for the predicament they were to be in and convince the other players as to how it was the most effective. In order to change it around a bit, the final make of the game changed so that players are only limited to one action card per round, changing the game so that it is based largely on luck and the players own creativity.

2. T.I.M.E Stories

- T.I.M.E Stories is a board game that was found during the initial research for the game and was largely influential in deciding the genre, an RPG. T.I.M.E Stories is unique to other RPG board games as it has a large selection of settings in which inspiration was taken from. Unlike TS however, players cannot change settings during a round and will have to complete or end a game if they desire to play in a different setting as it heavily impacts world-building.

3. Cluedo

- Cluedo inspired one of the later installations of the game which implemented a voting system and cards that the players could write on for each round. Whereas in Cluedo, players deduct from each round the prime suspect, murder weapon and location of the murder, the proposed game uses the voting cards to decide which player performed the best and worst after each round, to which they are to receive a “good” and “bad” card respectively.

Section 5: Interface & Art

Design

The main art style of the game takes inspiration from traditional playing cards which typically consist of fancy lettering, symbols, and an intricate pattern on the back of them. The reason this specific design choice was decided, was because it goes against the simple and minimalistic designs that every other new card game consists of, making it unique, standing out amongst the rest. Going into depth of the design in image 1, which is the background of the card-back without it's main logo, the symbols featured of the rose and axe are symbolic to the games themes, as the axe represents the battle aspect of the game whilst the roses represent the exact opposite and together, the two represent the good and evil of human nature. On the contrary, roses are also famously associated with death, which is arguably one of the main aspects of the game as the last player standing wins.

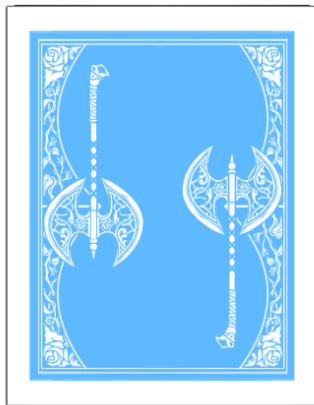


Image 1



Image 2

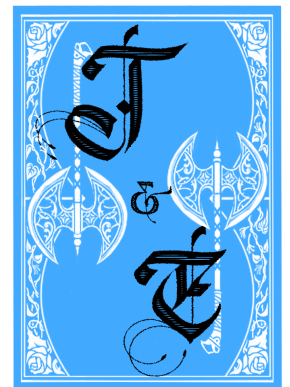


Image 3

Image 2 depicts the very first design of the card backs and helped in deciding the aesthetic and overall look of the game. This design was later scrapped as the art held no symbolic value and there wasn't any room to fit in the logo.

After establishing the base of the card backs, the logo was to be added. It was initially going to be black as shown in image 3, as it contrasted with the white background art, however the differing colours made it too bold and over complicated the overall design.

The logo was then changed to white and the opacity of the background art was lowered, and this was the final design both parties agreed on. This same design was used for the Character, Action, Settings and Event cards as shown in images 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively.



images

5,



6,



7,



8

In the game there are 3 different settings, each having a separate deck of event cards which correspond to it. In order to differentiate each event card, unique symbols were drawn on the back of them; a decapitated hand for 'Zombie Apocalypse', a magnifying glass for 'Murder Mystery' and the silhouette of a dinosaur for 'Into the Jurassic' as shown in images 9, 10 and 11 respectively.



There is also a 'Good' and 'Bad' implementation into the game separated by 2 different decks of cards, where each round a majority vote is taken to select which player demonstrated the best next course of action and which player had the worst. The best performing player is rewarded with a good card whilst the worst performing gets punished with a bad card. As these two cards majorly dictate who wins a game, a separate design was made for each of them.



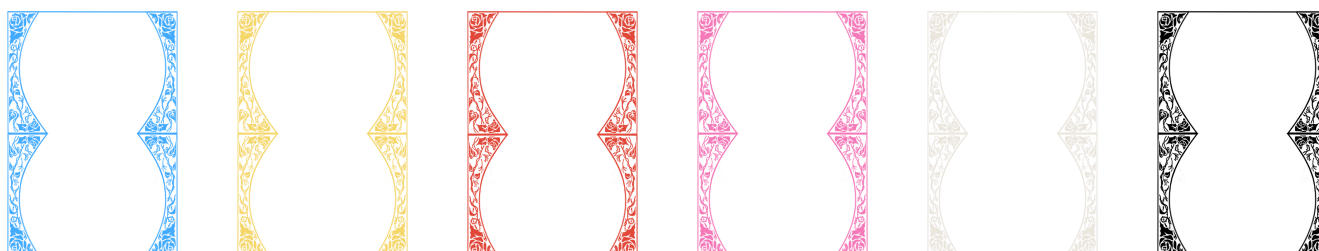
Image 12

The good cards consist of an off-white background with an arrangement of different flowers and the game logo, as shown in image 12. This aesthetic choice was made as flowers are typically synonymous with purity and the good in the world. To contrast this, the bad deck consists of a black background, tangled, thorny branches, and the same logo, as seen in image 13. Thorns are typically presented in media to symbolise negative events and hardships, which is why the aesthetic choice of using them was made.



Image 13

The design used for the front of the cards is a slightly altered version of the design previously shown in image 1, but in the respective colours of the cards, which can be seen in images 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19.



images 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

Image 20:

The design of the box was a combination of all 6 colours and patterns, with the full title reading 'Trial & Error' in dark grey text, and a quick description of the game which reads, "The not-so-classic RPG game, only your wit and luck can save you now." Which is shown in image 20. The same design was used for the back of the rules pamphlet.



Printing

Majority of the printing process was done using Officeworks Print and Collect where the staff would also cut the cards as well with a professional cutter, in order to ensure clean and straight lines. A test print was first performed to see if there would be any errors with the layouting, canvas size and print quality. Luckily this trial was performed as the first deck of cards which is shown in image 21, was printed backwards and the borders of the cards had been trimmed off. To make sure this error doesn't happen again, the printing layouts were adjusted and the cutting request was specified so that the white borders could be kept.



Image 21

After that small mishap, most of the cards as well as the box were printed successfully with the exception of the character cards and some of the good cards which had to be printed using a printer at home and the rules pamphlet which was printed using a school printer, both due to a lack of time. These cards and the box are all shown in images 22 and 23.



Image 22



Image 23

Characters

The proposed game, 'Trial and Error' has a maximum of 8 players, and in order to match this, 8 distinct characters with unique designs and abilities were created. These characters consisted of Beatrice the grandma, Kyle the gym rat, Joanna the student, Eve the thief, Freddie the clown, Karen the soccer mum, Bob the tradie and Kennedy the Alien in images 24 - 31 respectively.

images 24 - 31



Section 6: Game Rationale

The most significant design decision we made for this game is creating specific event cards for each setting instead of just using the same event deck for all of them. This was strategically done to enhance the immersion and narrative flow of the game. By tailoring the event cards to align with the unique characteristics and themes of each setting, the game would provide players with a more engaging and immersive experience. One of the key aspects of any game is to create a cohesive and compelling narrative that captivates players and draws them into the game world. Generic event cards often lack the specificity and connection to the setting, which can lead to a disconnect between the gameplay and the overall theme. In contrast, specific event cards allow players to feel more immersed in the game's world as they encounter challenges, dilemmas, and surprises that are directly related to the chosen setting.

By incorporating specific events into the gameplay, we are able to create a sense of authenticity and coherence. For example, in a zombie apocalypse setting, event cards feature encounters with hordes of undead, scarcity of resources, or crucial decisions regarding survival. On the other hand, the Jurassic-themed setting involves encounters with dinosaurs or the excitement of unexpected discoveries. This design decision also contributes to the narrative flow of the game. Each event card becomes a building block in the unfolding story, ensuring that players experience a progression of events that align with the chosen setting. The specific events not only provide unique challenges and opportunities but also contribute to the overall narrative arc, creating a sense of continuity and progression throughout the game. Furthermore, we also included drawings representing each setting on the back of the cards to create a visual connection between the gameplay and the game's theme, adding depth and variety to the overall experience.

The design decisions concerning the box and the inclusion of additional game components were driven by the goal of enhancing accessibility and providing a comprehensive gaming experience for players. These decisions were justified by the desire to ensure that players had everything they needed to seamlessly set up and enjoy the game, while also promoting convenience and ease of use.

Including a link to the cards template in the game design document was a deliberate choice to make the game more accessible to a wider audience. By providing a downloadable template, the team allowed players to print their own cards, enabling them to easily acquire the necessary game components. This decision eliminated the need for players to rely solely on pre-made card sets or purchasing expensive additional materials, thereby expanding the game's reach.

Furthermore, incorporating a QR code on the box for the rules was a strategic decision that embraced modern technology to improve accessibility. With the prevalence of smartphones and easy access to QR code scanning applications, players could effortlessly access the game's rules and instructions by simply scanning the code. This approach eliminated the need for players to carry physical rulebooks or rely on their memory, offering a convenient and efficient way to access important information during gameplay.

Lastly, the decision to include mini pencils in the box was driven by the game's inclusion of voting cards. By providing the necessary writing instruments, the team ensured that players had everything they needed to actively participate in the game and engage in the voting process. This design choice promoted a seamless and immersive gameplay experience, where players could readily express their choices and preferences without any additional effort or resource gathering.

Player Experience Goal

Players will experience what it feels like to create a compelling narrative on the spot: The game provides opportunities for players to engage in spontaneous storytelling and make decisions that shape the narrative. By presenting them with unexpected events, mysteries, and challenges, players are encouraged to think creatively and react in the moment to create a compelling story. The game mechanics and prompts prompt players to think on their feet and develop their improvisation skills, allowing them to immerse themselves in the role-playing experience.

Players will experience engaging in social interaction to work towards escaping perilous situations: The game emphasizes cooperative gameplay and relies on social interaction between players to overcome challenges and escape dangerous scenarios. By requiring collaboration and communication, players are encouraged to strategize, share information, and pool their resources to find solutions and navigate through the game's perilous situations. The game mechanics and events are designed to foster cooperative play and provide opportunities for players to engage with each other, fostering a sense of shared objectives.

Overall, the game's mechanics, narrative prompts, and emphasis on cooperative play enable players to experience the thrill of creating a compelling narrative on the spot while engaging in social interaction to overcome challenges. By providing an immersive and collaborative experience, the game effectively meets its player experience goals

Target Audience

The proposed game can be played amongst friends and families, preferably on a table or some kind of platform to place the cards on. It is not recommended as a party game or any event that includes heavy uses of alcohol as players should maintain a somewhat level of concentration in order to immerse themselves into the settings and roleplay as the characters. The game is recommended for audiences 15 and up as the death heavy theme it follows and some of its cynical humour may be confusing to young children. Primarily, people who enjoy other role-playing games alike and consume in media such as comics, games, cartoons and anime would also most likely enjoy playing this game.

Impact

The game offers a platform for players to actively engage and improve their communication and negotiation skills. According to "The Psychological and Social Benefits of Playing Cards" (2019), playing games inherently facilitates socialization, enabling players to build interpersonal connections through organic and spontaneous interactions. Whether it's a card game or a board game, the act of playing encourages natural conversation, teamwork, and a healthy sense of friendly competition. As players delve into the game, they are presented with opportunities to discuss solutions, persuade others, and negotiate deals. Through these interactions, they can cultivate and refine effective communication strategies, develop active listening skills, and hone their ability to find common ground with their fellow players. This process allows individuals to practice expressing their thoughts clearly, articulating their ideas persuasively, and respectfully engaging with differing perspectives. By engaging in the game's mechanics and collaborative decision-making, players not only enjoy the immersive experience but also benefit from the development of vital social and communication skills. These acquired skills can have a positive impact beyond the game, empowering individuals to navigate various real-life scenarios with confidence and effectiveness.

Moreover, the game's incorporation of storytelling and problem-solving elements serves to ignite players' creativity and imagination. According to Cox (2023), playing card games offers an avenue to enhance creative thinking. By engaging both the analytical and creative sides of the brain, these games stimulate our mental faculties in diverse ways. The gameplay mechanics of anticipating opponents' moves and strategic planning challenge players to think ahead, fostering a proactive mindset. As players immerse themselves in the game, they are prompted to think beyond conventional boundaries, exploring alternative approaches and inventive solutions. This cultivates a mindset that encourages innovation and fosters open-mindedness, not only within the game but also in other aspects of their lives. The game becomes a canvas for players to unleash their imagination, experiment with different strategies, and embrace different perspectives. It nurtures a mindset that seeks innovative solutions, explores uncharted territories, and encourages individuals to approach challenges with an open and imaginative mindset. By exercising their creative faculties in the game, players develop valuable skills that can be applied to various real-world scenarios, fostering a spirit of innovation and adaptability.

Section 7: Team Charter

Team Members

1. Kira
 - Artist person and overview writer
 - Can be contacted through his phone number, instagram or discord

2. Dayana
 - Note taker, rules and procedures writer, and layout designer
 - Can be contacted through her phone number, instagram or discord

Section 8: Design History

Version (00.00)	Document Changes	Who	Date
1.1	Version 1 includes typing out the game overview. 1. We typed out the PXG, genre, theme, platform, TA, No of players, synopsis (Kira) and key features (Dayana)	Dayana and Kira	30/03/23
1.2	Version 1.2 includes listing down the rules and comparative analysis. 1. I listed down in point form the rules that our game has (to tweak and make into a proper paragraph at a later date) 2. I added one card game that is similar to ours for comparative analysis (Bucket of Doom)	Dayana	12/04/23
1.3	Version 1.3 includes adding the game procedures and revised the price of the game. 1. I listed down the general game procedures, to be revised on a later date 2. We thought that the price was too high so we reduced it from \$25 to \$15	Kira and Dayana	13/04/23
1.4	Version 1.4 includes adding a mockup of the voting cards. 1. For reference during designing stage, I added a screenshot of how the voting cards should look like (to be removed at a later date)	Kira	14/04/23
1.5	Version 1.5 includes adding to the game elements section, highlighting things we should remove before submission, adding one more card game for our comparative analysis and started the interface and art section. 1. I added to the game elements section, listing down the premise of the game and characters that we would have 2. I also highlighted the stuff we should remove before submission like the guiding note under every section 3. Additionally, I also added one more card game for our comparative analysis, which is Cards Against Humanity 4. I started the interface and art section as I will be the one to design the deck	Kira	27/04/23
1.6	Version 1.6 includes tweaking the PXG, typing out how the game would be able to meet the PXG in the game rationale section (page 9), adding to the team charter in section 7 and tuning the design history. 1. I added two more PXG on top of the current one that we already have 2. I added a few points on why the game would be able to meet the PXG 3. I added our names, roles, how we can be contacted 4. I added to the design history table the history of the document and changes we have made	Dayana	30/04/23
1.7	Version 1.7 includes rewriting the game procedures and added a description for each deck that we would have, which also will be included in our rules pamphlet in the box and writing the game rationale and the pro-social impact of the game. 1. I started rewriting the game procedures getting inspiration from what Kira has written earlier. 2. I also included a description of each deck so that players would know what each deck is for and the functions of each deck. 3. I started listing down the game rationale and PXG in point forms 4. I started listing down the pro-social impact of the game	Dayana	14/05/23
1.8	Version 1.8 includes removing previous rules (as they were more like game procedures instead) and brainstorming rules, updated the table of contents, added on to the game	Dayana	18/05/23

	procedure, adding 2 more competitors for our comparative analysis and included a line to put our game link at the overview section. 1. We brainstormed for rules drawing inspiration from cards like Cards Against Humanity and Bucket of Doom 2. We also updated the table of contents as we have made some changes 3. We made slight changes to the game procedures and added a paragraph describing the voting cards as that was forgotten previously 4. We added 2 more card games to the comparative analysis (Time Stories and Cluedo) 5. We included a line as a place holder at the top of the overview section, to be replaced with an actual link to the game template after we are done with the game.	and Kira	
1.9	Version 1.9 includes crafting out and finalising the game rationale and pro-social impact section, adding links to the references I used and making minor tweaks to the team charter section.. 1. I expanded on what I wrote earlier on the game rationale section, crafting a few paragraphs on justifying our design decisions and the PXG. 2. I also expanded on what I wrote earlier for the impact section, making a cohesive response. 3. I added my references to the references portion below 4. Finally, I made some minor tweaks to the team charter section, adding on to what we were assigned to do.	Dayana	23/05/23
1.10	Version 1.10 includes adding the games digital copy link, adding on to the interface and art, game elements and comparative analysis. 1. Dayana added the link to the games digital copy in the game overview portion 2. Kira added on and refined the interface and art section, adding in her ideation process 3. Kira also refined the game elements and expanded on the comparative analysis for each card game	Kira and Dayana	24/05/23
1.11	Version 1.11 includes continuing the interface and art section, cited references and completing the target audience section. 1. I continued writing the interface and art section, adding in the finalised card designs and rationale behind it 2. I cited the references I used 3. I completed the target audience section	Kira	25/05/23

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