

Personal Contributions

Prior to this course, I had very little experience with board games in general. The extent only goes as far as playing Catan a handful of times in high school, and various standard card games. Needless to say, I was not very experienced, nor was I particularly sure of what initial steps to take.

To make up for my lack of experience, I immediately put a lot of effort into designing the way our cards would play, starting with **‘Event Cards’**. The design process is explored further in the next chapter.

In an attempt to ease the burden of tracking potentially hundreds of cards, and making it easy to quickly make proposed changes to a card, including its name, description, effects, icon, and the amount of instances of it in the deck, [I created an excel sheet](#) with easily implementable cards, and automatic tracking of existing cards.

Furthermore, I was consistently bringing new design perspectives to the table during discussions, explaining my reasoning for and against various topics and mechanics. I was always very open to hearing and discussing my teammates perspective on perceived flaws in our game, because as designers, we tend to tunnel vision on our own ideas a lot, without realizing or disregarding fundamental flaws in the concept.

Most writing was done either by me entirely, or rewritten for clarity and grammar. That includes the titles, flavour text, descriptors, and more, on all cards, as well as the rule book.

The Story

It was supposed to be a peaceful weekend getaway. Four friends set out on a camping trip deep in the woods, laughing, exploring, and preparing for an adventure. But on the night of Friday the 17th, something ancient stirred beneath the forest floor. One camper wandered off, lured by a whisper only they could hear. When they returned, they weren't quite the same. Now, as strange events unfold and rumors spread, the group must fight to survive while one of them — "The Current" — works in secret to destroy them.

Objectives

- Innocence:** Work together to gather resources and repair all three locations before sunset and dawn.
- Curse:** Secretly sabotage the group's efforts to gather resources and deplete all ration before the third location is repaired.

Game Setup

- Place the **Playing Board Map** at the center of a table.
- Place **Ration Tokens** in the designated Ration spaces. Begin with 30 Rations.
- Shuffle and place the **Action Card Deck** face down.
- Deal three cards to each player before playing.
- Shuffle the **Event Cards** separately.
- Based on desired difficulty, select the amount of **event cards** to use:
 - Easy: 8
 - Normal: 10
 - Hard: 12
- Randomly draw them into the **Action Card Deck**.
- Shuffle and deal 1 **Prep Card** to each player face-up.
- Shuffle the **Role Cards** (1 **Curse**, 2 **Innocence**).
- Place the **turn token** on the start point on the map.

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Playing the Game

Detailed Turn Structure

For a full comprehensive, step-by-step description of the turn structure, please refer to the provided [check sheet](#) about cards.

- Draw Action Cards until you hold a maximum of 5.** If you draw an event card, resolve it, then keep drawing cards until you reach the limit of 5. Draw cards in clockwise fashion.
- Resolve Event Cards as they are drawn.** The player who drew the card is affected by it, if the card states an effect. The party collectively decides on which outcome to take.
- Playing your Action Cards based on the following scenario:**
 - If the Current One has not yet been disclosed:** Place your card face down in any of the four slots, with the desired action facing in the direction of the arrow on the board.
 - The Current One has been disclosed:** The Current may place their action card face up, in any slot they desire. This often proves beneficial for them.

When one player plays their cards, discard either 1 or both cards to hand.

- Shuffle the cards without changing their orientation, then reveal them.** Play attention while shuffling to prevent misplays.

REMARKS:
Keep your actions for yourself! you never know who might be listening.
Refer to the chapter "Reporting & Voting" for more information about what happens at the end of a turn.

Preparation Cards

Powerful, limited cards which can quickly turn the tide of an event, or provide a beneficial boost to resources.

Prep Cards protect you from certain events, giving you an easier option which may include bonus rewards. Use them carefully.

Some cards include **Passive** or **Active** effects that can be played during a turn. **Active** effects are one-time use, while **Passive** effects remain active while the card is in your hand.

Example:
- **Medic:** Wrap yourself up after an injury.
Fishing Rod: With its passive effect, you gain 2x rations from the "Get Fish" action card.
- **Axe:** Can be used as a wolf and bear deterrent, or activate its effect during an event to gain 2x wood.

Action Cards

Action Cards drive the main gameplay. Each card has two distinct sides, left in half. The side that issues effects is relative to the arrows on every player board. Line up your desired half with the arrows.

Event Cards

If any player draws an Event Card from the deck, they must resolve it immediately before continuing the turn. Events can be:
- **Good Events:** Provide unexpected help.
Example: Supply Cache Gains +1 Prep Card.
- **Bad Events:** Drain resources or status.
Example: Mysterious Noise Lose 1 Flashlight and +2 Rations.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
		Name					
1		Name	Description	Option 1 (Prep)	Option 2 (Resource)	Option 3 (Ration)	Image
2	1	Bear Attack	A bear has been spotted! You must act quickly before things take a turn for the worse!	You lose your only bucket at the bear killing 3 rations (-1 Gun, +3 Rations)	You lost some rations at the bear in an attempt to feed it, but now... (-7 Rations)	The bear stole some rations! (-5 Rations)	1
3	2	Reinforce	Heavy Rain™ has enmeshed the camp and is wetting everything. Find a way to protect your most valuable resources before they become unusable!	Use your Tarp to cover all resources from the rain. (-1 Tarp)	Work together to collect all resources and bring them conveniently. All players must select a figure in order to satisfy this condition. If anyone disagrees, the full condition is triggered instead.	Everyone becomes sick from the storm, all players can only select 1 action card each turn until next event.	1
4	3	Mysterious Noise	The party is awoken during the night by a suspicious noise. As you tread carefully through the dark forest, you see a faint silhouette of what appears to be a person.	Use your Flashlight to illuminate the strange figure. The figure turns out to be a bear for two turns, you also discover some left over particles. (-1 Flashlight, +2 Rations)	Build your own shelter (-3 skins, -3 logs, -3 ropes).	Everyone retreats back to the camp, cold and afraid.	1
5	4	Hypothermia	A sudden headache hits the camp grounds. Consume enough fluids before you all suffer from hypothermia!	Use your Hydration Pack to cool everyone down. (-1 Hydration Pack)	Consume half your supply of rations in order to survive the hypothermia. (-4 Rations/2)	For two turns, you may eat back at any of your action cards. Stop! Further actions may threaten.	1

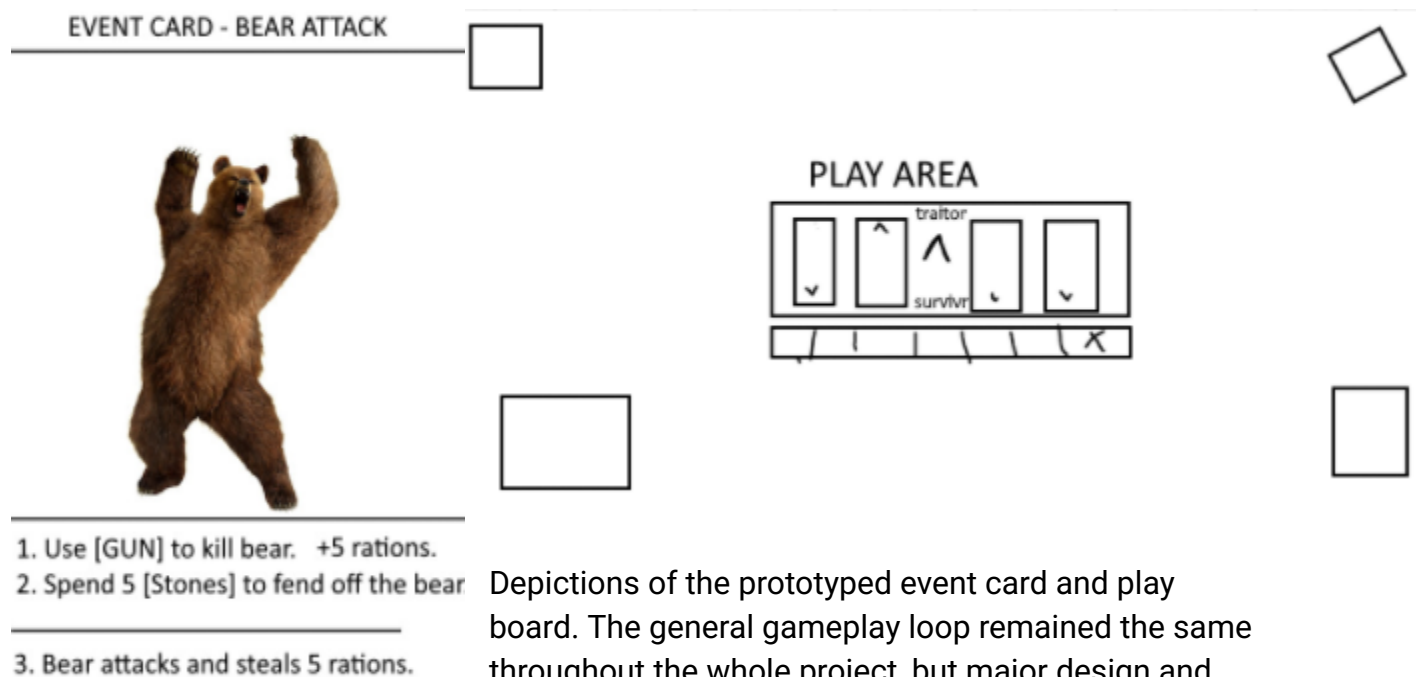
Design Reflection

Our initial game concept was broadly based on a handful of board games and video games that we had either played together on the inauguration day of the course, or throughout our lifespan. Some reference games include Among Us, [Deep Sea Adventure](#), Dead by Daylight, and [Three Cheers for Master](#).

From these reference games, I looked at what made them stand out, and what their main gameplay loop was about, and *why* they are so addicting.

The aspect I identified was most engaging with Deep Sea Adventure, was how collaborative, yet destructive the game was. You are on your own, but you share a health resource with your opposing players.

I felt like this mechanic was really gripping and proposed a similar idea to the team. Collectively we agreed, and work began on what eventually became “Friday the 17th”.



Depictions of the prototyped event card and play board. The general gameplay loop remained the same throughout the whole project, but major design and balancing choices were made to make the game more engaging and enjoyable.

Early on in development we were notified that the traitor role felt lackluster, and unimpactful. As a remedy, I took initiative and proposed using a lesson learned from one of the lectures: *Exploring the extremes*. We granted the traitor unimaginable power

compared to previous iterations, buffing all their cards capabilities, while also granting them entirely new abilities such as destroying fully repaired structures from the survivors, a power so overwhelming it was quickly removed, although it was very fun for the traitor in the moment.

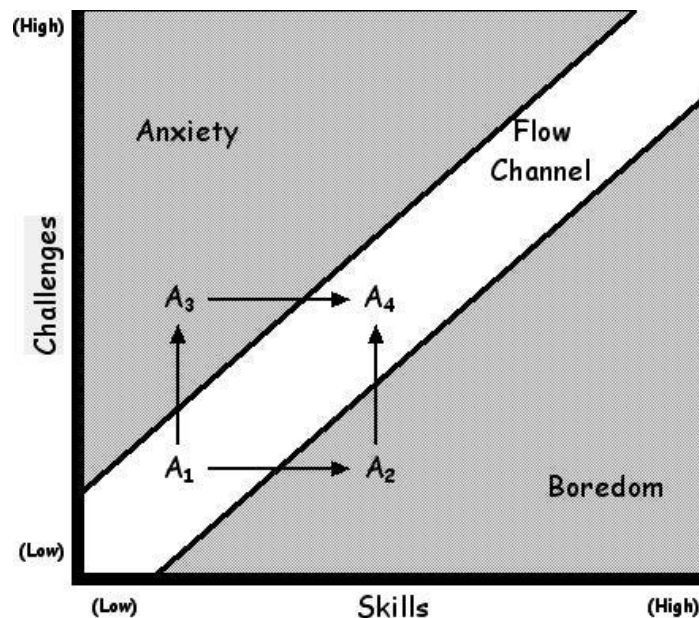
Furthermore, I made sure to always *follow the fun* — a game design principle I often refer to, and for good reason. Whenever I saw playtesters having fun, I took note of what was happening in the game at that moment. For instance, some of our earliest playtesters were all at their most engaged point during each event. Knowing this, I proposed the following decisions to the group:

1. Randomize when an event card is drawn, by inserting them randomly into the action card deck. This led to increased tensions inbetween player turns, because you never knew if you would be the one to pull a potentially game-changing or destructive event.
2. Increase the dramatic tension between turns, slowly building up with each event. To ease tensions, we added positive events, while easing the crushing impact that some events previously had.

Iteration & Playtesting

I know from previous game design experience that playtesting is a superpower that is unmatched, and provides measurable feedback on what in the game feels good vs. what doesn't.

We conducted a total of seven playtests, three of which were internal, and with each subsequent playtest we gathered feedback, analyzed the core criticism, and iterated on the issue until we reached a desirable outcome. A recurring topic that we often discussed was economy balance, so with that in mind I set out to find a solution.



From Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience
by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (page 74)

With our new and improved deck of action cards based on playtesting, I randomly drew four cards, noted the resulting actions, and repeated the processes a total of 10 times. The experiment resulted in a few discoveries:

1. We had multiple duplicate cards that were skewing the odds. Those were subsequently removed and replaced with newer, balanced cards.
2. The new odds with the updated cards were not at a desirable split, so I made a handful of changes to resource and ration gains to reach an average 70/30 split (Resources/Rations). This yielded the most fair feeling gameplay result.
3. As a result of the previous discoveries, all resource yields and the amount of cards yielding resources were modified to provide higher average yields. For example, all +1 cards were changed to +2, and the amount of resource cards was adjusted to be evenly distributed, with +5 cards being 50% more rare.

By the end of this study, resource card odds had been adjusted to the following:

Resource	% of total resource value
Rations	52 / 175 \approx 29.7 %
Stone	41 / 175 \approx 23.4 %
Wood	41 / 175 \approx 23.4 %
Rope	41 / 175 \approx 23.4 %

Feedback
- Event Cards might benefit from a white back face. Prevents you from seeing 'through' the deck, and distinguishing when an event card is about to come up. Importance: 2 (1-5)
- Rule Book images, depiction of cards in the book. Gives better clarity and conveys information better than a wall of text. Importance: 5
- Order of chapters in rule book should adhere to their importance. More important stuff at the start. Importance: 4
- Mirrored board layout so players on both sides of a table can play the game comfortably. Importance: 5
- Too much text in rule book, centralize/streamline categories. Importance: 5

41 being the total yield contributed by each non-Rations resource (Stone/Wood/Rope).
175 = the total yield from all 59 cards.

This lesson was also something I picked up from the lectures, where the probability of things can be tweaked to reach a more desirable gameplay experience.

To summarize, I have personally contributed by detailing my thought process in discussions about new mechanics or changes to existing ones; applied game design principles and practices to drive the engagement further, resulting in a more fun experience; measured and tweaked the game balance through mathematical probabilities; and frequently pushed for other people to provide their own perspective on our collective creative process. By and large, I am happy with my contribution.