



# grow-a-game!



To create the cards, simply print the graphic on the one side, corresponding category text on the other. For wildcards, print out sheets with the graphic on one side and wildcard on the other instead of the category text. Use cardstock. You can also simply print the graphic for the category on one side and write in your own text on the other to expand the cards' scope. A guillotine-type paper cutter can be used to divide the sheets.

1 or more  
players  
10-30  
minutes

**One Card:** The simplest use of the cards is as a discussion prompt or analysis tool (ex. see Flanagan et al "A Method for Discovering Values in Digital Games" 2007). Any of the card categories can be used individually, but we recommend "Goal" cards as these explicitly present values for discussion.

1. Shuffle the cards
2. Participants each draw a card from the deck and either discuss which existing game or mechanic in a game they believe embodies the goal.

Teams  
of 4-8  
30-60  
minutes

**Two Cards:** With 2 cards, groups move from discussion to begin brainstorming and designing games. If the players use Game cards & Goal cards (for ex), they can imagine modifications to existing games that would include the goal. Using two cards provides an additional design constraint. Groups can decide to collectively add constraints or make the exercise into a game prototype.

1. Decide which 2 card categories will be used and how long brainstorming will last
2. Shuffle cards
3. Each player draws from both card piles and privately brainstorms until time runs out.
4. Players take turns explaining to the group the game they imagined
5. If a player passes, he may use a wildcard the next round
6. After all the players have explained their games, they vote for their favorites by each presenting a vote card to the player with the best idea
7. After three rounds, the player with the most vote cards wins!

Teams of  
4 - 8  
1 hour +

**Three and Four Cards:** Moving beyond 2 cards, the games become significantly more difficult to imagine, but the effort can produce unique and interesting game ideas. The more cards used, the more brainstorming time will be needed. Long, thoughtful silences can be broken by manic torrents of creative game ideas. 3 & 4-card games are similar to the two-card games, but with additional design constraints and longer brainstorming. Wildcards can be used to provide players some flexibility if the chosen constraints prove too challenging. Players could even act out their ideas in "design charades" as a fun variation!

**Conclusion:** **grow-a-game** is particularly useful because of its adaptability. These games are simply suggestions that have worked to varying degrees with different groups in different settings. Even with instructions, however, groups may choose to use the cards in their own ways. The goal is to design unique, fun, "values-conscious" or socially responsible games and there are myriad ways the cards can be used to facilitate that process.