



CIS 5640: Introduction to Game Design

Lab 3: Crazy Eights, Story Mode, Part 1

Welcome to Lab 3! We will explore how **themes and mechanics** interact in game design. This lab will take place over two weeks, giving you time to brainstorm, prototype, playtest, and refine your own version of **Crazy Eights**, a classic card game that plays similarly to UNO but uses a standard 52-card deck.

Crazy Eights

Objective: Be the first player to get rid of all their cards.

Setup: The game is played with a standard 52-card deck and 4 players. Each player is dealt 7 cards, and the rest of the deck forms a draw pile. One card is placed face-up to start the discard pile.

Gameplay:

- On their turn, a player must play a card that matches the top card of the discard pile in **rank or suit**.
- If they **cannot play**, they must draw a card from the deck.
- **Eights are wild:** A player may play an **8** at any time and choose a new suit for the next player to follow.
- Play continues clockwise.

Winning: The first player to play all their cards wins the round. The game may continue for multiple rounds, with players keeping score based on the value of cards left in opponents' hands.

Task Details

1. **Play the Original Crazy Eight**
 - Play one round of the original game and think about what story fits well into this game.
 - Also pay attention to the core game loop of the game.

2. Pull time!

- Each group will be randomly assigned a theme on discord. Here are some example themes, feel free to propose your own theme:
 1. **Galactic Exploration** – Players are space travelers on a mission.
 2. **Pirate Adventures** – Players are rival pirates hunting for treasure.
 3. **Apocalyptic Survival** – Players cooperate to endure a disaster.
 4. **Kingdom Rivalry** – Nobles vie for the throne.
 5. **Supernatural Mysteries** – Players are ghost hunters or spirits.

Once you've drawn your theme, gather with your teammates and choose one of the following rule constraints:

- **Asymmetry (1 vs 3)**
One player has a different goal from the others
 - **Cooperative Gameplay**
All players must work together toward a shared objective
 - **Character Roles**
Each player has unique abilities (eg. change current suit or rank)
Warning: if these abilities are all very different, the game may become very difficult to tune. We suggest keeping it simple.
 - **Get Physical**
Incorporate physical movement as a part of the game like saying "UNO!" when you only have 1 card left.
 - **Time Limit**
Players must win within a set number of turns
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- The group must now integrate both the theme and the rule constraint into their version of Crazy Eights.
 - You do not need to "finish" the game this week. This is a **difficult task** to accomplish quickly. Because we have two weeks to work on this game, start with the big picture. By the end of the session, you should know the following:
 1. Who are the players in this game?
 2. What is the world of this game and why do players want to achieve their goal?
 3. What does it mean to play a card? What does "winning" or "losing" mean?
 4. What is the core game loop?
 5. What's your new game called? 😊
 - TIPS: This is the first time you will be working with a group of 4 designers, which can be very difficult to coordinate across! Try not to get stuck in analysis paralysis. Not every idea needs to go into the game. Remember that game design is about process, not ideas. Not every idea needs to go into the game, and the most important contributions are not an "idea", but how to make sure that idea is working well within the framework of the game. When in doubt, stop discussing and just playtest! The prototype will help you make decisions.

3. **Prototype and playtest your games!**

- Once your group has finalized the game rules, play at least one full round of your newly designed version.
- Evaluate your own design. Ask yourselves:
 1. Is the game loop still working? Why or why not?
 2. At the high level, is the narrative and theme working with the mechanics? Why or why not?
- Iterate! Modify your rules, adjust your prototype and playtest again!

4. **[BONUS] Time to reflect!**

- If you have extra time, you can begin writing up your reflection (individually) as detailed in your [homework assignment](#).
- Keep in mind that this lab will be running for two weeks so you will not need to write a complete game design doc as we will do so after our next lab.