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7 board games

PAGONY

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THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THIS UNUSUAL BOOK

We are a family of four where there are very big differences in ability between our two children. Not only because of the 22-month age gap, but also because my youngest child is developing differently from the other one and has more difficulties in life than their peers. They cannot yet play a game with rules made up by others or one that requires a decision-making strategy. As a result, they are often left out of such games. The result of their forced absence is that the four of us cannot play the more interesting, exciting games together, games that we could easily play with most ten-year-olds.

In my case, we had not had the experience of playing together as a family, which is normally a matter of course with young siblings. For me, this was a very big gap in my life, and a bit of a sore point. Two years ago, when my youngest son turned six, it dawned on me that what we needed were toys that could be played with regardless of the differences in age or ability between the children in the family. We needed games where I could adapt the rules and strategies to suit the varied abilities of my two children. I approached Pagony Publishing with this idea with the result that the *Play Well* book was born. It is a book that has helped the four of us to finally experience the joy of 'playing together', but it's not only intended for us, it's for everyone who is similarly unable to play together because of age or ability differences among the children in the family.

Eszter Harsányi

early childhood integration expert

ABOUT USING THIS BOOK

If you open this book, you will see seven exciting game boards. With this book you can play many, many games together, but it is more than just a collection of games. Prior to the games, you will be shown how to explain the rules of a new game to the players and how to level the playing field for younger and older players, experienced players and beginners, adults and children. We'll show you a few general ways in which to give an advantage to a player. So not only will we get to play, but the stronger player will learn that it's more exciting for them if the weaker player has a chance of winning, and no one ends up being disappointed after playing together.

As parents and teachers, we recognise that it can sometimes be difficult to get a child who loves to play a particular game to sit down in front of a new one, and that after one negative experience they refuse to play it again. It's difficult to play with younger or older siblings because they get annoyed and quarrel. This book will help! If we explain the rules well and tweak them cleverly, everyone in the family will be happy to play together!

The games in this book are simple and quick. We want them to show how we can play together even when we are not at the same level, when one person is more skilful than the others, or when they are young and are frequently distracted. If we are brave enough to adapt the rules and change them a little bit, no one will feel that sitting down and playing was a waste of time because the result was a forgone conclusion. No one is forced to give up or give in. For each of our games, we describe three rule variations in which the stronger player can give a slight, a bigger or the greatest advantage. Trying these out can really give you a taste for giving an advantage, something that doesn't just come naturally.

The seven games and many variations in the book are enough for a whole holiday – but you'll not only have fun playing them, but you will also come to understand how to work together and how to come up with new variations of your own. So just open the book at any of the games, get the pieces out, find some playmates and play a lot! If you find yourself stumped, then turn the page to see how to get started playing that board game and keep on playing!

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

About the rules

A prerequisite for playing together is that someone knows the rules of the game and is able to teach them to others. If you are playing with children, it is a good idea to study the rules in advance because children expect to start playing as soon as the box is opened. While this is generally impossible if no one knows the game – there are very few examples of a one or two-word rulebook – we need to get as close as possible. So, let's get ready!

First, let's read the rules! Even if you know the game, take the time to read the rules from start to finish – you're likely to find new information, or even something you didn't know before. Unpacking the parts of the toy will help you to understand what is written, follow the instructions to unload the base and follow the instructions with the accessories. There may still be obscure parts because it is not easy to make sense of a game system invented by someone else. If you are still not clear, it is worth watching a video showing the gameplay.

Then you can work out what you are going to say to others, in what order and how, and identify the parts that will be more difficult to explain (a good rulebook will help you with this). But don't be daunted by the task: the more we explain, the more knowledgeable and efficient we become.

It is worth trying the game out because it is easier to explain something that you already have experience of. As parents, we can play together before showing the children, as teachers we can organise sessions where we get to know several toys together, but many shops already offer the opportunity to try out a toy before buying it.

What definitely doesn't work: 'Let's just get started and work it out as we go along!' It's a recipe for total chaos. Moreover, if you have a bad experience the first time you play, it will be very difficult to pick it up again.

A FEW BASIC CONCEPTS

1. Ask the others not to interrupt or ask questions if something is not clear until you have finished explaining.
2. Tell the story of the game first. If this is very important for the children, you can also create a story for abstract, unthemed games. But don't think that a story is the most important thing for every child. Listen out for the cues they give and adapt to them.

A framework story is also important because it helps children to understand and remember the rules because the information is not just left hanging in the air. Consequently, it is a good idea to include a note in the framework story for each new piece of information.

3. This is what gives meaning to all the other rules, and it is also interesting for everyone concerned.
4. Whilst you are explaining the tiles and markers, point to, touch and pass around the objects in question.

You can even give tasks: could you put this there? Could you shuffle those? If the children are involved in the preparation, they are less likely to become bored with the explanation.

5. After the preparation comes the game itself. It is worth running through the structure of the game rules, but sometimes this can be futile, so we have to figure out how to explain the game to the children. First, we should present the game in a logical, linear way, without jumping around, and then explain the context at the end of the explanation. Make sure that the words you use are always the same, for example, 'round' and 'turn' are not synonyms! When explaining, draw attention to where decisions need to be made, but do not give tactical and strategic advice, let the children work it out for themselves. It is also worthwhile doing this during the game: try to avoid evaluating the moves of your fellow players, just let them get on with it!

6. Explanations should always be accompanied by examples: show the way to progress, the combinations of moves, card play, etc. It is worth thinking through these examples in advance.

7. When you have come to the end of the explanation, recap the game arc - the starting point, the aim, and what needs the most attention.

8. At the end, the others can ask questions if there is anything that is still unclear.

There's nothing left to do, so let the game begin! Of course, there will be a lot of uncertainty in the first few games, but don't be afraid, you don't have to play well straight away, it's enough to simply become familiar with the game. Next time we will be able to focus on tactics, which will get steadily better with each game played. Until then, however, it may be necessary to tweak the rules a little to ensure equal chances of winning. That is what the next chapter is all about - giving an advantage and equalising the odds of winning.

[a szöveget tartalmazó beszéd-buborék] ROUND: EVERYONE HAS HAD A TURN - WE MADE IT AROUND. ROUND: A SERIES OF TURNS TOGETHER.

GIVING AN ADVANTAGE

The rules for giving an advantage and balancing the odds

When we play a game, we are always looking for the best move to make, no matter how much it hurts our fellow players. Unless, of course, you're playing with young children learning to play board games – obviously, you don't always beat them. Sometimes we let ourselves go, but you cannot keep on doing it. A better solution is to use rules that even the odds, as a clearly established advantage will allow everyone to play on a level playing field without holding back. As a child becomes more skilful, we can adapt and alter these additional rules.

At the beginning, give a huge advantage! Stronger players are usually better able to cope with a defeat due to a handicap that is too big, while weaker players can get very upset if they are beaten by an advantage. If the weaker player wins, reduce the advantage slightly. With a well-adjusted advantage, everyone enters the game at a similar level. Many children can be persuaded to play together with a well thought through advantage. Everyone can get involved in the game by thinking at the limits of their ability. So, let's take a look at how to compensate for a knowledge gap!

THE NOVICE PLAYER'S ADVANTAGE

In a good many games, the novice player has an advantage because they can set the tone of the competition with the first move. The next player who comes after them has to react to their move, usually they are not able to do something radically different on the board. In most games it is advantageous to do something first or to take an important point on the board. Good games are usually well balanced, the beginner may be anxious, but often has a slight advantage.

LONGER THINKING TIME

Another way of giving an advantage is to give the weaker player more time to make a move. This has long been used in chess. For example, the stronger player gets 3 minutes to make their move, the weaker player 10 minutes. However, this does not always work: the stronger player thinks about their move while the weaker player is making their move. So, they actually have more time to think. An even bigger disadvantage is that rushing is contagious: the fast pace catches up with the weaker player and they start to move quickly, but they usually can't move quickly and well. So, the weaker player loses a lot, learns little from the game, and often loses the game, too. Despite its disadvantages, don't forget this opportunity either!

CHILDREN AGAINST ADULTS

Everyone has heard of simultaneous chess games. You can play on several boards at the same time with several children. The rule is: if only one child wins, the children's team wins! It is like when several knights try to defeat a dragon together. That way, the kids are not only acting for themselves, but also for their peers. Usually, in this situation silence reigns. A good knight won't bother their

fellow warriors by mucking around. Even the last game is watched anxiously, but they can help each other. The general rule of simultaneous play is that a player moves when their opponent sees what they are doing. If you feel like it, you can waive this rule.

GIVING ADVICE

One way of giving an advantage is for the stronger player to speak up when they see something wrong with whatever the other player has done.

You need to discuss in advance how many times you can provide assistance. This method can be a remedy for avoiding obvious mistakes. In shorter games it can be used well, but in long games the warning opportunities usually run out by the end game and a mistake there is final. Nevertheless, it tends to result in a deeper game than one with a time advantage.

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MORE RESOURCES

One of the oldest and best methods is to give a material advantage. In this case, the weaker player can use more resources during the game. They may have more or more valuable pieces or money – or whatever the game contains. In games where players are pitted against each other with a variety of different attributes, 'shopping' is a good method. Both sides have all the game money, but the stronger side has less of it. The pieces are priced and then bought. The players then head into battle with the power they have acquired.

ADVANTAGEOUS STARTING POSITION

You can also give a positional advantage. In these games, one side starts the game from a position of advantage. In this book, the *Mushroom Muddle* and the *Ladybird Scramble* are two that offer such an opportunity.

MORE INFORMATION

In many board games, you can give the weaker party an advantage by giving them more secret information at the beginning of or during the game: something that the others don't know. For example, in the case of a 'blind bid', someone might not bid blindly, but in the knowledge of what the others have decided, or after being allowed to look through the discard pile of cards. Mastering the game and understanding the process is often challenging enough in itself, and it is difficult for a novice player to keep an eye on how their fellow players are playing, which is essential for success. And over time, everyone learns the game enough to level up and work with less information.

SETTING DIFFERENT GOALS

In these variations, the stronger side has to meet an extra condition to win, or for the weaker side the condition for victory is eased. Often the two sides have to develop a completely different strategy, essentially playing a completely different game. An example of this in this book are the advantage giving rules in *Honeypot*.

No method is wrong, but all need to be used carefully, preferably in such a way that the weaker side gets the first few wins. Let's check out the possibilities! The game changes when you win, but the payoff is huge: small and big, beginner and advanced, all argue in the same language. The advantage teaches the weaker player not to waste what they have. In turn, the stronger player has to look at the world from the bottom up, work harder to compensate for the disadvantage, accumulate small advantages to level the playing field and perhaps seize the opportunity.

Three different levels of advantage are always suggested for the games in the book. Once you have practiced them a bit, feel free to apply your own advantage giving ideas!

MOVE DIFFERENTLY

The next level is when the weaker party already recognises the right moves to make. Get two or three *Move Something Else* tokens! Then, if their opponent makes too good a move, they can play one and ask their opponent to move differently. The chips can turn some children into real masters, often it helps them to recognise they need to keep them in reserve for situations where a good move can only have a terminal outcome. Older siblings are also more willing to let younger ones prevail if there are clear limits on what and how many times the other should be allowed to do it.

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ENTER THE GAME FOREST!

Ladybird Scramble

Giant Rock Throwing - Honeypot - Pixie Chess

Mushroom Muddle - Waterlilies

Swamp Shuffle

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LADYBIRD SCRAMBLE

Created by József Jesztl

[illustration] x3

THE AIM OF THE GAME

The player who has all the pieces side by side on the board in a group wins the game.

PREPARING TO PLAY

At the beginning of the game, shuffle the 9 pieces face down and alternately place one red and one yellow piece on the board. Then flip the pieces over and let the game begin!

[illustration]

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

The player taking a turn has to choose between two things: either to move or take. There are no automatic moves in the game, so you always have to make a choice, but you cannot pass.

Each token can move as many times as the ladybird has spots: horizontally, vertically or diagonally, but only in a straight line. You can step over your own ladybird, but not over your opponent's. For the two- and three-spotted tokens, you can choose not to move as many places as you could, perhaps move only one or two places rather than three. However, you can only take if your opponent's ladybird is precisely as many moves away as the number of dots on your token. If you land on your opponent's piece, take it! Remove it from the board and leave yours in its place.

[Image to the right of the text]

The game is won by the player who moves their ladybirds into a group, i.e., all their pieces remaining on the field form a group side by side – in the picture, the yellow ladybirds win. This is true even if someone only has one piece left! So, perhaps taking is not always the best option.

GIVING AN ADVANTAGE

The biggest advantage – The weaker player's colour is placed to form an almost completely continuous shape, with only three ladybird spaces missing. We leave our own ladybirds scattered around the board according to the starting position. If this game is too easy, four spaces should be left missing from the solid shape!

A big advantage – The weaker side can move two of their ladybirds anywhere on the board before the game starts, and then they start.

Small advantage – After the ladybirds have been placed, the weaker player chooses a colour, and they start.

[speech bubble containing the text]

SIDE BY SIDE: THEY ARE BELOW, ABOVE OR NEXT TO EACH OTHER, NOT JUST WITH THEIR EDGES TOUCHING!

[image with the text]

2 PLAYERS

6+ YEARS OLD

5 MINUTES

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GIANT ROCK THROWING

Created by József Jesztl and Máté Lencse

[image] x28

THE AIM OF THE GAME

To squash or take the opponent's gnomes.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Each player gets two gnomes and two giants, place them as shown in the picture. Place the rocks next to the board, within everyone's reach.

[illustration]

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

The starting player makes one move, from then on everyone makes two moves each turn.

ACTIONS: mining rocks (only dwarves can do this), throwing rocks or gnomes (only giants can do this), gnomes move 1 place at a time, giants move 1-3 places in any direction.

Except for the very first move of the game, during their turn everyone has to move a rock: either to unearth one with their gnome or to throw a rock using their giant. Both our actions can be the same.

- Mining a rock: the gnome can unearth a rock in any empty field adjacent to it. The rock is placed on the board from the common set.
- Throwing a rock: A giant can throw any rock that is not stuck to another rock, i.e., not adjacent to another rock. Separate rocks adjacent to the 4 castles on the board can be moved. A thrown rock or gnome flies until it hits, in the direction of flight it is sent, on the last empty square, i.e., directly in front of the obstacle. Only the nearest rock, castle, giant, or edge of the castle courtyard can stop it; it can fly over a gnome. If a gnome is standing on this field, they are knocked down by the rock or gnome, the knocked down gnome staggers out of the courtyard and sits down in the grass. They play no further part on this occasion.

The game ends immediately when someone has lost both their gnomes. In this case, that player has also lost the game. If one player cannot perform an action that moves a rock, they have also lost the game.

GIVING AN ADVANTAGE

The biggest advantage – In this game, it is easy to give a material advantage: play with fewer dwarves or fewer giants than your opponent!

A Big advantage – The weaker player can break up groups of two (but not more!) rocks, so they can throw these rocks.

A Small advantage – The stronger player's gnomes and giants should not start next to each other

[Image with the text]

2 PLAYERS 7+ YEARS OLD 15 MINUTES

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THE HISTORY OF DRAUGHTS

Draughts or Chequers is the most competitive of all board games. The aim is to completely obliterate the opponent's army. The methods are also very aggressive, as there are usually three rules common to these games.

- Taking is compulsory. Have no mercy for your opponent. When taking, the opponent's piece is knocked off the board by jumping over it. You can also take by moving backwards.
- If you have the choice of several shots, you must choose the one with which you take the most. The result of the above rules is a really beautiful, colourful game with lots of combinations! Moreover, the rules require a great deal of restraint. Our selfish, belligerent little soldiers have to be deployed with care, as they can easily cause a lot of trouble with their ill-advised wanderings. Often, our pieces, that is, our soldiers, can cause us great losses when lured to the other side of the board.

The ancestor of today's game is believed to have been a Middle Eastern game called *Alquerque* played on a 5x5-grid board, the rules of which were transferred to the chess board about 800 years ago. In 15th century Spain, a very exciting new element was added to the game: transformation. As soon as a common soldier has made their way across the board and reached the last row on the other side, they become a queen. The queen can move in any direction, not just one square, and can also capture distant pieces. In chess, it was also at around this time that the queen 'went mad' and the weakest piece became the strongest! Is it a coincidence that this was during the reign of the iron-willed Queen Isabella I of Castile who eventually united Spain?

Playing draughts on the chessboard became a common game in almost all European countries, and soon individual versions appeared in various nations. In Brazilian draughts, for example, our pieces can only move diagonally forwards, while in Turkish draughts they can only move sideways and forwards one place. In *Alquerque*, you start with a blank board of 5x5 and then alternate 12-12 discs on the grid points. After which, only one square is left free. You can move and take in the directions defined by the lines. The objective is twofold: to take the central field, the throne, with the last piece, or to knock out all the enemy discs. Interestingly, a modern game designer has shrunk these games down to a very small size: great fun is to be had playing on a 2x5-square board with a throne, placing 4 + 4 discs.

Honeypot players also attack and defend according to the rules of international draughts. Much of what is familiar from other draughts games may be familiar in this new version. Before we get to know it, we need to learn the basics of draughts together.

[illustration]

The pieces can only move forward, diagonally. This is also the way to strike - which is compulsory! - but the opponent's piece must be diagonally next to you, with an empty space behind it. Taking backwards is also mandatory.

[illustration]

A clear compulsory serial take. You must first take forwards and then backwards. The light-coloured piece becomes a queen after the move because it has reached the last row



[illustration]

The queen can move anywhere (in a straight diagonal line) after the move, unless she can take pieces and then make more moves, as she is obliged to. In the illustration, the light queen takes all the dark pieces.

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HONEYPOT

Created by: József Jesztl

 x10  x3

THE AIM OF THE GAME

Take all of your opponent's pieces or capture the opponent's fiercely guarded orange honey stash.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Each player must place their 10 pieces as shown in the picture.

Place the three queens next to the field for the time being.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

The players take turns. The pieces can advance one space in any of three possible directions. However, they can also move backwards more than once when they are in a position to take. A taking position is when one of the opponent's pieces is on a square adjacent to the piece and there is an empty square behind it. In this case, the move must be in a straight line. Taking is compulsory, backwards and forwards. If there is a choice between two different taking sequences, then the longer of the two must always be chosen.

THE QUEEN

Any piece that moves onto a red space becomes a queen. A player can have up to three queens on the board at a time. A queen can move in six possible directions, and you can move any number of spaces, so you can take your opponent's piece even from a distance as long as it is in one of the six directions and has an empty square behind it. The queen is also obliged to take pieces, even if in sequence. When there are no more pieces to take, she is not obliged to stop at the nearest empty space, but may continue to move in a straight line with the stroke.

In the diagram you can see the blue queen in a compulsory sequence of moves, with which she incidentally wins the red space, the red piece on the red space captures the opponent's honey stash after knocking out the three blue discs.

ADVANTAGE

The greatest advantage - The weaker party can move 1, 2 or 3 already converted queens to spaces of their choice: the more queens, the greater the advantage.

A big advantage - The stronger side has to capture both orange spaces to win.

A slight advantage - The stronger side gives up one or two of its discs, depending on the advantage they would like to give, and lets their opponent start.

[Image with the text]

2 PLAYERS 6+ YEARS OLD 10 MINUTES

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THE HISTORY OF CHESS

Chess is played almost everywhere in the world and is perhaps one of the most popular board games. It is played by young and old, by masters and amateurs. Its origins are disputed, but many believe that its roots most probably lie in India. There is a main version in widespread use on almost every continent. It is played on giant boards and tiny ones. In the western world, the most common version – which we consider to be the classic or base game – is played on a board of 8x8 light and dark squares. The game is for two-players, but this was not always the case: one of its predecessors had a four-player variant.

Perhaps the most common feature of the game of chess is that the object of the game is to place your opponent in checkmate. Each side has a prominent piece, the king, who when unable to respond to an attack is said to be in 'checkmate'. They are not usually captured, but there are examples of that among the many types of chess game.

Recent research suggests that Chinese chess may be the ancestor of the European game. Of course, the question is not settled. The game is played with chunky pieces marked with their titles. Traditionally, red and black fight each other. The discs are not placed in the centre of the squares, but instead on the grid points, so the playing field expands to 9x9 grid points. There are several pieces on the board, and the king and their guards are not allowed to leave the palace (a 3x3 grid points in the middle, marked by diagonal lines), so mate can only take place there. In this game, stalemate is also viewed as checkmate.

Japanese chess is called *sogi*. Its rules crystallised later, around the 16th century. It does not use colours to distinguish between the pawns, but the orientation of the pentagonal shapes determines the affiliations of the pieces. However, the most important and exciting rule is that you can put your opponent's captured pieces back into play on your own side in place of a move.

In chess, large boards usually result in beautiful, high-stakes battles, but there are also smaller local battles that decide the fate of the war. There's a lot of room for combinations, with lots of pieces on the board and a plenty of space. It's also ideal for positioning, as the players are further apart at the start of the game and can prepare for the clash with small preparatory moves.

However, when playing with a child who is always on the move, these advantages can become disadvantages: too much space and too many pieces pull the child's attention in too many directions. Chess is too good a game to put a child off it. Here we show a variation of chess played on a smaller board with fewer pieces. What the small board variations have in common is that the fights develop more quickly, and a game goes down in a few minutes.

To play the game, we need to learn the rules for moving and capturing a few chess pieces, which you can see on the next page. In classic chess, each side has sixteen pieces: eight pawns, and the 'officers': two knights, two castles, two bishops, one queen and one king. Each piece has its own rules for moving. All pieces, except the pawn, can move where they can capture. The pawn can only

move forward, but only diagonally forward. Classical chess starts from a fixed base position and a clear start.

[image]	[image]
THE KING	THE QUEEN
[image]	[image]
THE BISHOP	THE KNIGHT
[image]	[image]
THE CASTLE	THE PAWN

reading copy © Orchard Literary Agency

PIXIE CHESS

Created by József Jesztl

THE AIM OF THE GAME

To put the opponent's king in checkmate.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Form two equal sets of pieces. Take turns placing your officers in the baseline row and your three pawns in the second row in any order. The picture shows one possible starting position.

[image]

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Players take turns, with the light colour starting (see previous page for move rules). When a player takes a turn, they can choose to move a pawn, or bring one of their opponent's captured pawns into play – but under their own colour.

TAKING

If you have taken an opponent's piece with your move, you keep it to bring it into play later.

RETURNING A PIECE

Instead of a move, you can bring into play a piece you have captured on any empty square. You may not return a pawn to your opponent's baseline row, or to a column that already contains a pawn of your own. The piece brought in may even create checkmate immediately. The pawn is the only exception to this rule, but it can also put the king in checkmate.

PROMOTING A PAWN

If the pawn has reached the opponent's baseline row, it can be promoted to the rank you wish – you can use any pawn you like, even a piece from another set. If captured, they lose their rank and become a pawn again.

The game continues until someone's king is in checkmate. You can agree to a draw, but you can also stalemate your opponent's king.

ADVANTAGE

The greatest advantage – The stronger side does not put their queen on the board.

A big advantage – The stronger side plays one fewer of their ranked pieces. A slightly smaller advantage is to play with one fewer pawn instead of a knight.

A slight advantage – The stronger player places the first piece, but the weaker player makes the first move.

WATER LILIES

Created by Máté Lencse

THE AIM OF THE GAME

To get the opponent's frogs.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Place your frogs on the board as shown in the diagram.

[illustration]

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Identify the starting player who has a slight advantage during the game! Players take turns. The player in turn selects a waterlily with more of their frogs than their opponents (where there are the same number of frogs, neither player may move). From the selected waterlily, all frogs must be picked up – including the opponent's – and scattered one by one, with the following restrictions:

- only place one new frog per lily per round.
- the starting lily must remain empty until the end of the round, so you cannot put a frog back on it.
- you can move from one lily to the 8 leaves around it.

KIDNAPPING FROGS

At the end of the round, check to see if there are any lilies with 5 frogs on them. Then the person who has 3, 4 or 5 frogs on that leaf takes all 5 of them, which can be 5 of their own; 4 of their own and 1 of their opponent's; 3 of their own and 2 of their opponent's. It may not be the one whose move it was that is the kidnapper since everything depends on the mix of frogs on the lilies.

The game ends when a) someone has run out of frogs, b) there are fewer than 5 frogs on the field, c) someone has gained an insurmountable advantage. The game is won by the player who has gained more frogs from their opponent.

GIVING AN ADVANTAGE

The greatest advantage – Take out the additional frogs and give the less experienced player 13 and the stronger player 11. This way, the starting position in the middle row will have 3 frogs of one colour.

A big advantage – If there is a waterlily with three frogs on it at the start of the round and you can move to it, you are obliged to choose it. If only one player is required to pick it, then they have a harder time.

A slight advantage – The novice player has an advantage in this game, but it is not insurmountable, so if there is a small gap between players, it is elegant to let the less experienced player start.

[image with the text]

2 PLAYERS 6+ YEARS OLD 10 MINUTES

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MUSHROOM MUDDLE

Created by József Jesztl

1 block card, 50 letter cards

AIM OF THE GAME

At the end of the game, the player's suit of letter cards should be in the majority on the playing field.

PREPARING TO PLAY

The starting player's colour is light. They divide the deck of letter cards into two, consonants and vowels. They count out 16 consonant cards and 10 vowel cards. they make two draw packs of the cards. The remainder is set aside. From the top of each deck, they remove 2-2 cards. they place them dark side up on 4 spaces on the board.

Then they remove 1 card from either deck and place it in front of themselves, light side up. The other player then also draws 2 cards from either deck and places them face up in front of them. The light side draws 2 cards in the same way, and finally the dark side draws 1 more card. In this way, 3-3 cards are placed in front of each player, and the 1 card on top of each of the draw packs is still visible.

If you just deal, you increase the level of luck involved. Go for it!

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

A player's turn consists of four parts:

1. Lays down a letter card.
2. Turns over letter cards.
3. Blocks.
4. Both they and their partner draw enough cards for there to be 3 in front of them

1. *How to place cards* – The player whose turn it is places one card on the board from those in front of them, or indeed from their opponent's cards. The new card must be placed adjacent to the card already on the bottom, or in a corner. Each time a new word must be made using one of the cards already previously there plus the newly placed card, which can form any part of the new word. The letters can be read in any direction (from right to left, left to right, top to bottom, bottom to top or diagonally) and can be changed several times, but each letter card can only be used once in any word. No card can be placed without a word. If a player feels they cannot create a new word using the 8 upturned cards on the table, their opponent will take their turn instead.

2. *Turning cards*

- If a player lays any of their 3 cards they should turn all the letters in the new word to their own colour.
- If you place a letter from the top of any of the draw packs into the formation, that new letter is turned to the opponent's colour, the other letters of the new word to your own.
- - If they place one of their opponent's cards, they leave that card in their opponent's colour, but turn the other letters of the word to their own colour. Your opponent can then turn one letter of the word to their suit.

3. Blocking rules

At the end of the turn, the active player can cover an empty space by placing a block card, which then cannot be used to create words

Placing rules

[illustration containing text] **TREE**

A INSERTED, NEW WORD: **TAR**

[illustration containing text]

TAR MADE LIGHT

[illustration containing text]

S INSERTED, new word: **STAR**

[illustration containing text]

STAR became dark

If the block card is already down, it can be moved to another empty space at the end of the active player's turn. Moving the block is not compulsory!

WORD CREATION RULES

You can post proper names, acronyms, slang. Advanced players can narrow down the range of words that can be filled input down. If a word is found to be unacceptable, the player should take back their cards and place a new word. When the shape is full, the game is over. The game is won by the player with the most cards on the board in their colour.

COMPETITION RULES

A second round can be played with the cards that have been put aside. The other person starts the game. A winner is declared based on the combined result of the two rounds.

VARIATION FOR 4 PLAYERS

In this version the players sitting opposite each other form a pair.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Arrange the decks again as in the previous game. One of the light players starts the draw. Going in a circle, everyone draws 1 card first, then 1 more card for the next turn. So, you play with 8 active cards (2 cards in front of each player), because *unlike* the two-player game, you can't insert cards from the tops of the decks. The discard and blocking rules are the same as in the two-player variation, but the rule for flipping change as follows: if someone places one of their 2 cards, they flip all of the cards in the newly formed word to their colour.

- If they place one of either of their opponent's cards, they leave that card in their opponent's colour, only turning the other letters in that word to their own colour.
- Then the opponent whose card you used may turn any 1 letter of the word to their suit.
- When someone inserts a letter from their partner's cards into the shape, they turn the current letter to their opponent's suit and the other letters of the word to their own.

GIVING AN ADVANTAGE

The greatest advantage - Don't put the starting cards on the highlighted spaces, but around the entire outer circle instead, and in the inexperienced player's colour. That way the more experienced player can only win by laying really long words, making the game challenging for them.

A big advantage - Only the weaker player can block and move the block before placing their own card.

A slight advantage - The beginner player is at a slight disadvantage in this game, so if there is only a slight difference in skill between the players, the more successful one should start.

THE PENTOMINO FOREST

THE PENTOMINOES

Pentominoes are shapes made up of five small squares of the same size. There are twelve of them, each different. Very simple games can be played with them. Sometimes the players take turns placing pentominoes on an 8x8 board, and the winner is the one who can place the last one properly. In other words, the pentomino does not hang off the board and does not cover any other element. But you can also play the game by distributing the elements in advance, either for yourself or for your opponent. You can also play on 9x9 and 10x10 boards, but as a complication, the elements can only touch each other at their corners, not their sides. You can solve increasing numbers of puzzles with these familiar little pentominoes. The game is very fast, so it's worth playing it several times in a row to really see who can do better. You can also play with pentominoes alone: there are plenty of exciting puzzles and riddles online. These help you to get to know the set, which can be useful when playing board games. On the next page, you will find *Pentominoes - Forest Animals*. Each animal is made up of pentomino elements. If you don't get it right at the beginning, you will find coloured squares below the figures indicating which animal belongs to which element. You'll find the solution on the other side of the swamp. Once you have solved all the puzzles, you can build ever more animals from the pentomino set, even using all the elements together!

SWAMPLAND SHUFFLE

Created by József Jesztl and Máté Lencse

[Illustration] x2

+ 12 pentomino elements

THE AIM OF THE GAME

The winner is the player who gets most quickly to the other side of the swamp by cleverly placing the elements.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Prepare the 12 pentomino elements next to the board, choose your own pieces and place them on the edge of the field among the reeds! If there are four of you playing, start from all four sides of the field. Decide whether to play on 8x8 or 10x10 – but it is worth trying both for a different experience. For example, the 8x8-board is very narrow, and even placing the elements can be a problem.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

The player whose turn it is always has to choose between two things: either move or place a piece on the board.

HOW TO MOVE

You can only move one piece at a time, to a side-adjacent field.

- You can only move one piece at a time, to a side-adjacent field.
- If you start from a square with dots on it, you can move as many places as there are dots on the square.
- You may not jump over a piece or move onto a square that is occupied already.

RULES FOR PLACING A PIECE

You can place a piece anywhere, but the pieces

- must not overlap
- must not hang out over the edge of the field.

Players start from the outside of the field, among the reeds, and finish on the other side, stepping off the field. If the starting player leaves first, you should still complete the round. If more players get out of the swamp, the game has more winners.

GIVING AN ADVANTAGE

The greatest advantage – An element with dots on it can only be placed by the least experienced player.

A big advantage – The weaker player must cross the 8x8 board, the stronger player must escape from the 10x10 version.

A slight advantage – When the starting player leaves the course, the opponent can no longer move.

[Image with the text]

2 to 4 PLAYERS

6+ YEARS OLD

10 MINUTES

Our inspiration

We were inspired to play and invent new games by the works and creators below. Try these too!

- If the game LOA (*Lines of Action*) by Claude Soucie came to mind during the ladybird rush, it's no coincidence. We ourselves got to know and love it on Nagylaci's (Dr László Nagy') board, and we recommend it to everyone!

- *The Giant Rock Thrower* owes a lot to Walter Zamkauska's *the Game of the Amazons*, Bernd Kienitz's *Isolas* and Tommy De Coninck's *Splut!*

- *Mushroom Muddle* was most inspired by the *Typo* game by Corné van Moorsel and the *WYPS* game by Richard Malaschitz. Even without a board, *Mushroom Muddle* is a good game to play on an imaginary board of 4x4. This is a really good travel game!

- The authors are very keen to play and teach *mancala*, so it is no coincidence that *Water Lilies* is also a mancala type game.

- We were introduced to the *Pentomino* in the set published by Dr László Nagy, with countless exciting puzzles and variations, all of which have inspired us in the present work. The inventor of the *Pentomino* game is the mathematician Solomon W. Golomb.

- The author referred to with the draughts game is Markus Salo's game *Lahti*

THE WILD ANIMALS OF THE PENTOMINO FOREST

Solutions