



Explanation, Instructions, & Templates

The grow-a-game cards are a game design tool developed by Tiltfactor Lab as part of the Values at Play research project. They can be used a number of ways, depending on the size of the group using them and the group's design experience. While the cards can be used within the structure of a formal game, they can also be used to stimulate discussion or to provide constraints for brainstorming sessions. The cards can facilitate analysis of the values present in video games, or they can be used for imagining modifications to existing games or for designing entirely new games.

Description of Cards

There are six card categories in the grow-a-game cards: ACTIONS, CHALLENGES, GAMES, GOALS, WILDCARDS, & VOTES. With the exception of Wildcards, each category has a different color & symbol; the cards have an icon on one side and text on the other. Challenge, Game, & Goal cards all have brief explanations underneath their titles in case the player is unfamiliar with the topic. The cards focus on social values, but they are applicable in a variety of design tasks. Start discussion with the Goals cards, then brainstorm new games with the additional constraints.



Actions (Hammer): These are game mechanics, or the actions that a player performs within the game. Mechanics are geared towards socially conscious actions, including: trading, creating and subverting.



Challenges (Column): Social issues and conflicts are represented on the Challenge Cards. These include: sexism, pollution and addiction.



Games (Chess Board): Example games, from classic board games to modern first-person shooters, are presented in this card category. These cards trigger dialogue about values by inspiring players to analyze and modify popular existing games. Sample games include: Scrabble, Pac-Man and Quake.



Goals (Tree): Goals cards have ideals that might set the context for a more just and sustainable society. Goals include: generosity, peace and autonomy.



Votes (Thumbs Up): After each design round, players can give vote cards to the players with the best ideas. The player with the most cards at the game's end wins!

Wildcards: In every category of card there are Wildcards to provide some flexibility to the more structured exercises. Rather than relying on the ideas presented on the grow-a-game cards, players can decide to use their own actions, challenges, games and goals. These may or may not be used in exercises, depending on the group experience and dynamics.