Connect 4 User Manual

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Introduction

Our program, Connections, is meant to be a simple word game in digital form; our goal is to provide an entertaining but straightforward puzzle that can be played as a part of a morning routine. It is intended for and can be used by anyone. We aimed to emulate the format of the original Connections, released by the New York Times (NYT). The game is emblematic of contemporary tastes in word puzzles, as bite-sized games such as the mini-crossword have taken off in popularity. On that note, Connections is akin to a crossword in the sense that it can be a short puzzle or a challenging brain teaser. The different difficulties and unique modes allow for a variable approach to playing the game.

As the name suggests, Connections makes users find similarities between different words by considering their different meanings and usage in English. At first glance, the words presented can appear completely unrelated and random, but upon further examination related through some real-life or linguistic connection. However, there is nuance to the game, as many words can appear to be loosely related, or imperfectly related. Two words closely related could be in separate categories as intentional misdirection. Categories are very diverse, ranging from: "words with a color in them," and "Legendary Athlete last names." The possibilities are endless, challenging players in their knowledge of different things.

In the growing domain of digital word games, Connections shines as a novel and extremely popular example. In a short time, Connections shot up to the second most popular

NYT game, only behind Wordle, another word game that took the internet by storm. Connections is now notorious for its trickiness and tendency to make the user feel dumb, but also revered for the immense satisfaction felt by players after figuring out challenging categories. The digital age has led to the growth of these potentially frustrating mini-puzzle games, replacing the newspaper variants of the past. Solving the Connections puzzle is now an integral part of many people's morning routine.

The only relevant background information we needed to create the game was knowledge and experience playing the NYT version of the Connections. We are all daily players of the game and decided to take inspiration from it and create our version. Connections can be played by anyone, although a good vocabulary and general knowledge can help immensely. We aimed to write a refreshing variety of games while keeping some principles we liked in mind. Without a doubt, the goal of Connections is to encourage lateral thinking. When going over our most memorable experiences playing the game, the most clever and unexpected categories were always brought up. We wanted to preserve the "ah ha moments" that we all had when figuring out the game. In addition, NYT put an interesting spin on the classic formula on April 1st; they replaced all words with emojis, leading to a unique puzzle. This inspired us to make an image-based game taking Hollywood actors.

Use-Case Diagram:
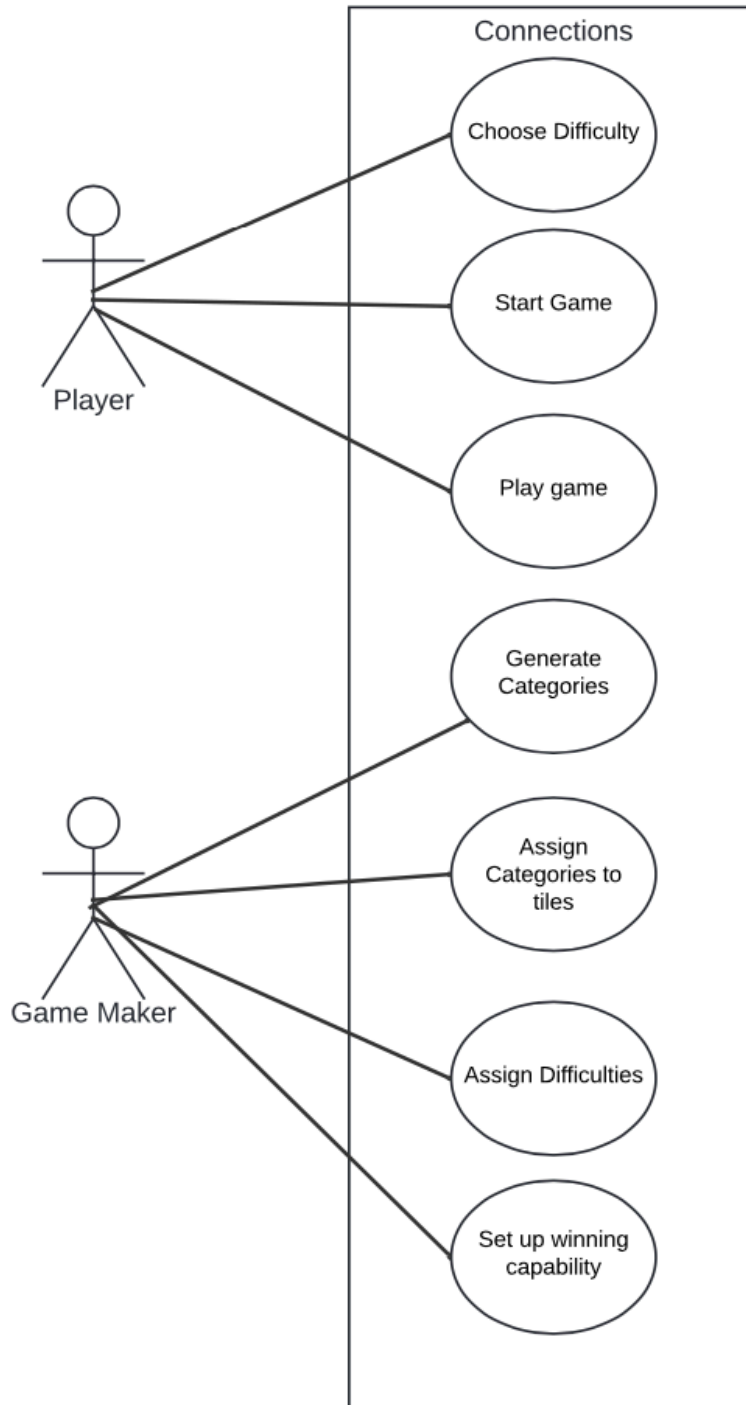
How To Play:

After starting the game, use the mouse to select a level of Connections to play. There are four difficulties, and a special fifth "Hollywood" themed puzzle. After selecting a level, a 4 by 4 grid of words will be presented. The goal of Connections is to find four words that share something in common. By pressing a tile containing a word, it becomes selected. After selecting 4 words, press submit to check whether the four words match the intended category. Find all 4 categories without making 4 mistakes! An example of a category could be Fish, containing: Bass, Salmon, Shark, and Trout. There may be certain words that seem like they belong to multiple categories, or vaguely fit together, watch out for these words! Each category is assigned a color representing its difficulty: From easiest to hardest, the colors are green, yellow, red, and purple. The categories and their respective categories will be revealed as they are guessed. If you run out of guesses, you must return to the main menu and select the same difficulty to find the answers. Good luck!