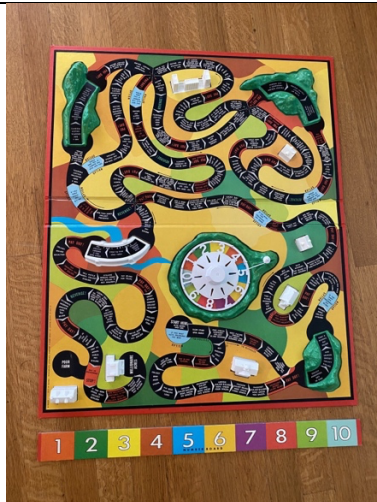


The Game of Life: A Breakdown

Cultural context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Game of Life</i> was a celebration of the original game/the Milton Bradley company's 100th Anniversary. • It was released shortly before Milton Bradley was acquired by Hasbro in the 1980s. • It was endorsed by popular radio talk show host Art Linkletter, whose face appeared on the \$100,000.00 bill • The age recommendation on the 1960s edition and the photo on the 1977 edition's box art shows that this version of the game is intended to be played by children/families (ages 9 and up) <div data-bbox="505 701 1292 1039" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A 2) B 	
First Impressions: Aesthetic, Affect	<p>This game feels like the original versions message about persevering through temptation and having good morals was filtered through one hundred years of capitalism and the success of <i>Monopoly</i>.</p> <p>The bright colours and round, friendly shapes reflect how this version of the game is marketed toward children and families.</p>	
Physical components	<p>Gameboard</p>	<p>This board has a track weaving through features of a natural landscape. 3-D plastic pieces represent forests, buildings, bridges, and a mountain that doubles as the game's spinner.</p> <p>Players start the game on a space</p>



that immediately gives them the option of buying automobile insurance for \$500.00. You enter the world as a fully formed adult who is ready to do Make and Spend Money.

There are forks in the road where players must make choices about which path through life they want to take. For example, will you pursue College, or get straight to Business and go to work?

The effects of different spaces are colour-coded: White and Green spaces take effect when you land on them; Blue spaces means stop and make a decision before spinning again; Red spaces require you to stop, taking effect when you land on or pass through them.

Types of Spaces:

- Movement modifiers
 - E.g., "Slow start, spin again"; "Bridge out ahead! Back up fifteen spaces"; "Jury duty! Lose turn"
 - Note: Spaces that force the player to go back involve no penalties or rewards.
- Lucky Day!
 - Players collect the amount specified from the bank in \$5000 denominations. They can keep the money or reinvest it.
 - To reinvest these winnings, players can



		<p>bet each \$5000 bill on a different number and spin the wheel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Players on this space are safe from being given any Share the Wealth cards • Payday! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The player whose turn it is gets paid their salary • Stocks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “You may play the market if you own stock” • Rewards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., “Find uranium deposit! Collect \$100,000.00”; “Contest winner! Collect \$500.00” ○ All spaces where you are instructed to add family members also come with a reward. • Family building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “STOP: Get married! Add spouse. Collect presents”; “Add baby boy! Collect presents” (see Rewards) • Purchases. (things you decide to buy in this game’s life narrative but are obliged to buy as the player following rules): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>E.g., “Buy raccoon coat! Pay \$500.00”; “Meet future spouse! Pay \$500.00 for diamond ring” (these two purchases frame the first major</u>
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directional choice on the board)

- Penalties (costs that happen to you in the game's life narrative, resembling the player's experience):
 - "Pay \$500.00 gambling loss";
"You've been robbed! Pay \$30,000.00";
"Auto accident! Pay \$4000.00 if not insured"
 - You can also get financial penalties for doing good deeds. E.g., "Help poor relations! Pay \$1000.00."
- Revenge!
 - The player can take \$100,000.00 from another player or send them back 20 spaces (players who cannot pay you are automatically sent back 20 spaces)
 - Players who are in Millionaire Acres are safe from any revenge
- Millionaire Acres
 - Being in Millionaire Acres keeps players safe from others taking revenge on them; there is safety and security in wealth



Finally, the "Day of Reckoning" space is a moment where players must choose between continuing along the path to Millionaire Acres (if they

		<p>think they'll outscore other players) OR becoming a Millionaire Tycoon by betting all their money on one number on the spinner; they either win the game immediately or go to the "Poor Farm."</p>
	<p>Toll bridges</p> 	<p>When approaching a toll bridge, the first player to cross collects a \$20,000 toll from those who cross after.</p> <p>If this player ends up in the Poor Farm or needing to cross the bridge again (e.g., because another player took Revenge! and forced them to go back 20 spaces), then the toll goes to the player who followed them over first instead.</p> <p>Toll bridges act as mini-racing competitions between players and a way of reinforcing a highest number always win/first-come-first serve hierarchy.</p>
	<p>Spinner</p> 	<p>As with the 1860s version, there are no dice. Players use a colourful plastic spinner with the numbers 1-10 to determine how far to move small plastic cars along the tracks on the board.</p>
	<p>Currency and Bank/Banker</p>	<p>This game has a Monopoly-like bank that simulates gaining and spending money, insurance (e.g., automobile, life, homeowner's), promissory notes to keep track of debt, and</p>



stock certificates to represent investments. (At the end of the game, stock certificates are worth \$50,000 and insurance policies are worth nothing).

The bank is a designated stockpile of all the resources in the game including currency, insurance, stocks, Share the Wealth cards, cars, and pegs.


The banker is a player who is responsible for tracking distributing these resources, including the babies. In *The Game of Life*, financial institutions are a core part of one's family planning.

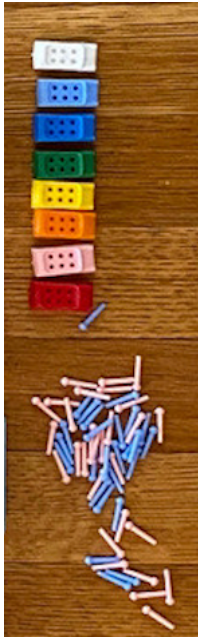
Being the arbiter of resources is an important enough that the instructions recommend that the banker not play the game if there are five or more players.

Players can borrow money from the bank in units of \$20,000 for any expense except for making side bets on the wheel. For every \$20,000 borrowed, the banker gives the player a promissory note indicating that they are in the red. Debt does not accumulate interest unless players have not paid the money back to the bank by the time they reach the Day of Reckoning space.

The game instructions on debt:

"You must make every effort to repay the loan as soon as possible. Give the Promissory Notes WITH THE MONEY back to the bank. Unlike real

		<p><i>life, you pay no interest, unless you still owe money on the Day of Reckoning."</i></p>
	<p>Cards</p> 	<p>When players get Share the Wealth cards, they are placed face down for later use when the player chooses by giving them to an opponent. You can only give one card to an opponent per turn and used cards get sent to the bottom of the pile. Cards cannot be given to players who are on a Lucky Day space.</p> <p>There are three kinds of cards, all of which modify the distribution of payments to the bank among the players:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If an opponent lands on a white space and collects \$10,000 or more, play this card to take half. • Pay card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If you land on a space where you need to pay \$5,000 or more, play this card to force an opponent to pay half your penalty to the bank. • Exemption card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Play this card to be exempt when an opponent gives you a <p>If more than one player wants to give a specific opponent a card, they spin the wheel and the player with the highest number has the privilege</p>

		of sabotaging their opponent.
	<p>Cars and Pegs</p> 	<p>Every player starts the game of life with a car. The player and their growing family are represented by coloured pegs that fit into slots in their car.</p> <p>Each car has room for six gendered (red, yellow, pink, or blue) pegs. Adult pegs are yellow (male) or red (female); baby pegs are blue (male) or pink (female)</p> <p>(Note: I'm not seeing the red and yellow pegs in this board – maybe that was for later editions?)</p>
Rules	<p>General Instructions:</p> <p>Game Intro: <i>"You too can be a Millionaire in this game of Life. That's the object of the game. It all centers around the Wheel of Fate. You start out on life's highway, just out of high school, with a car and \$2,000. As you travel the road, you'll meet with success, failure, and revenge. Your luck -your decisions- may give you more than one chance to make good. You may get revenge on the player who may be a sure winner. Fate plays a large part, but your decisions are also very important. For example, at the first fork in the road, you must decide whether to get into business or take the longer way through college with a chance for a larger salary. Along the way, you'll get married: maybe have a family. You'll know what it is to handle really big money. Your banker will have over \$7,500,000 to start the game. You may become a Millionaire and retire in luxury, or wind up broke at the Poor Farm."</i></p> <p>Each player starts with a one gendered peg in their car and is given four \$500 bills. Turn order is determined by spinning the wheel. Highest spin goes first, then clockwise around the table. The first player places their car in the Start Here space and decides whether to buy auto insurance.</p> <p>Players move their cars around the board, gaining and losing assets. Eventually, they reach the Day of Reckoning space, where they either end up at the Poor Farm, or win the game by becoming a Tycoon or having the most</p>	

	money out of all the players in Millionaire Acres.
Mechanics	<p><u>Chance</u> - The “checkered” ups and downs of life being out of our control</p> <p>There are many situations where chance (usually the spinner) factors into gameplay:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Movement: Players spin the spinner and the resulting number between 1-10 is associated with movement instructions. In general, players will move forward the same number of spaces displayed on the spinner. 2. Using the spinner for betting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If you are spinning, your competitors can place side bets on the outcome. b. If you bet on the right number(s), the banker pays you 10x that value (E.g., bet correctly on 10 and you win \$100.00). You can only bet on your own spin if you’re on a Lucky Day space; betting is also limited to a cap of \$25,000 over max 5 numbers (per spin). 3. Lucky Day! spaces: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lucky days can apply to real estate inheritance, horse races, the stock market, and the oil industry. Players can reinvest winnings by betting each \$5000 bill they receive on a different number and spinning the wheel. (See the image of the game’s instructions for a breakdown of how each different kind of lucky day can result in big winnings.) 4. Share the Wealth cards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If more than one player wants to give a specific opponent a card, they spin the wheel and the player with the highest number has the privilege of sabotaging their opponent. The act of “sharing the wealth” is coded not as a way to survive and take care, but as a threat. The only way to share wealth in this game is by force. 5. Marriage and family development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Getting married or having children requires other players to give you presents by spinning the wheel to determine how much money they owe you. Having children is financially

	<p>incentivized by requiring winnings not from the bank/state, but from one's competitors.</p> <p>6. Finally, the win/loss condition also includes an element of chance: If players aren't sure about their standing once they go to Millionaire Acres, they can take a chance on becoming a Millionaire Tycoon. They place all their money on one number and spin the wheel. If they win, they win, they're a Tycoon and the game is over. If they lose, they are sent to the Poor Farm.</p>
	<p><u>Judgement</u> - Evaluating options; Decision-making about how best to get more and get ahead</p> <p>Players make decisions about movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players make decisions about direction and/or distance as they move around the board. • Players cannot land on the same space. If a space is already occupied, players must move their car to the next open space on the track. • Moving can involve making a choice at a fork in the road: E.g., College or Business, where the former takes longer and costs money, but can lead to a high salary working as a Doctor, Journalist, Lawyer, Teacher, or Physicist. • This choice involves risk: choosing college can lead to a lower "Bachelor's Degree Salary" of \$6,000.00. If you already have another salary, you can't get bumped down to the bachelor's degree salary when you pass through that space again. As the instructions say "Once a doctor, always a doctor." <p>There are specific rules about moving backwards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You do not activate any rewards or penalties when you go backwards, only when you go forwards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This means you can get the same rewards/penalties when you cross over one stretch of road ○ Marriage is the one exception. As the instructions say "There's a law against bigamy!" • If you're sent back to the Start Here space, you automatically take the business route and keep your original salary (meaning you don't have to go to school again). <p>Players also make choices about purchases/how to use their financial capital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making money is a race to get it while you can and hold onto it by whatever means necessary. The rules encourage players to pay close

	<p>attention to the flow of cash. E.g., if you hit a Pay Day space, you must collect it right away or else risk losing the opportunity once the next player spins. Hitting a payday space also lets players draw a Share the Wealth card, so the more you have, the easier it is to take from others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players also choose when to use Share the Wealth cards and when to place bets.
	<div> <div> <p>Win/Loss Conditions</p> <p><i>“The rich may get richer. The poor may get poorer. But one thing is certain, even the poorest player has the chance to win... The Wheel of Fate spins and may spin you right into being a Millionaire Tycoon Never give up in the Game of Life – you still have a chance.”</i></p> <p>So increasing wealth inequality is framed as something that <i>could</i> happen, but what’s certain is that the poorest player has the <i>chance</i> to catch up and win the rat race. More meritocracy: The only certainty is a fair, even playing field with a fighting chance for anyone who tries hard enough.</p> </div> <div> <p>The Day of Reckoning happens near the end of the game. When a player lands on this space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They receive \$20,000 for each child in the car • They are required to pay any outstanding debts (Promissory Notes returned at a rate of \$25,000 for every \$20,000 borrowed) • They are given the option of going to Millionaire Acres <p>If players aren’t sure about their standing once they go to Millionaire Acres, they can take a chance on becoming a Millionaire Tycoon. They place all their money on one number and spin the wheel. If they win, they win, they’re a Tycoon and the game is over. If they lose, they are sent to the Poor Farm.</p> <p>The player who reaches Millionaire Acres first collects a \$100,000 bonus. They also start collecting a Lucky Number Fee: they spin the wheel and the number it lands on becomes their lucky number (as symbolized by their car being parked on it); every time another player spins this number, the first player collects \$10,000.</p> <p>The game ends when a player becomes a Tycoon or once every</p> </div> </div>

		<p>player has reached either the Poor Farm or Millionaire Acres. Everyone counts their money and the player with the most wins.</p>
	<p>General Observations about Values and Rhetoric</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rather than accumulating points that show off one's moral fibre, this game is about aspiring to be the best most successful capitalist subject by accumulating the most financial capital. Players compete to maximize their own chances of financial gain and to shift responsibility for financial burdens onto others. 2. Life involves a determined set of events on an almost linear track. You can occasionally decide which forks in the road to take, and you can decide what to do with your material resources, but the path itself and the possible stops on it are already determined. 3. Players are regularly encouraged to keep taking risks for a bigger reward (e.g., Lucky Day! Spaces; trying to become a Millionaire Tycoon at the end of the game). This reminds me of the 1860s version of the game's message about perseverance leading to success as the payoff. There is a difference between persevering despite trials and tribulation vs persevering through continuous calculated risks... 4. The only way to share wealth in this game is by force. Players are shielded from having to share by a combination of luck and wealth; Players are protected from Share the Wealth cards via the Lucky Day! space; There is safety and security from the effects of the Revenge! if you are in Millionaire Acres. Redistributing wealth or otherwise doing nice things for yourself and others gets in the way of progressing through life and being a winner! You can get financial penalties for doing good deeds. E.g., "Help poor relations! Pay \$1000.00." As far as I can tell, there is no incentive for the player to do this. Also "Stop to fish: Lose turn" <p>The temporal limits on the Pay Day! Space (you can't collect retroactively once someone gets in the way by spinning), the Share the Wealth cards (where the only option to share is extraction and forced redistribution), and the obligation to give people monetary gift when they grow their family all communicate that other people (our competitors) are a significant threat to our wealth and our potential future as a millionaire! Someone taking away what you have is just as much of a threat as getting into an auto accident, if not more</p>	

	<p>5. In the 1980s version (an updated version of the '60s basic format), if you end up at the poor farm, you were said to be retiring in the country and becoming a philosopher. I think we can draw an interesting connection between this description of dropping out of the rat race to become a philosopher and the 1860s version's approach to the "Truth" square: You could be a philosopher and ponder the truths of life, but it would get you nowhere, and certainly no closer to "Happy old Age."</p> <p>6. Players are financially incentivized to have children and, by extension, to pay for a ring and get married (because the benefits outweigh the costs). Gaining a spouse is effectively an investment in future children that pays off upon the Day of Reckoning, making spouses and children a retirement investment. Having children forces other players to give you presents by spinning the wheel to determine how much money they owe you. Children are an investment that pays off both when you extract money from competitors and when there is a payoff from the bank/state later in life. In the 1860s version, Marriage was proximate to Happy Old Age but didn't do anything on its own to help you win.</p> <p>7. Hetero-monogamy is baked into the game in a few ways. Gendered pegs are placed coupled in cars alongside a back seat to be filled with pink and blue babies. Crossing the same stretch of road more than once means players have additional opportunities to claim rewards, except in the case of marriage because "There's a law against bigamy!" On its face, the game's overarching capitalist logic might suggest that multiple marriages = more kids = more money! However, social norms dictate that only one marriage per play is what's fair.</p> <p>8. The framing of the choice between Business and College feels like there's some disdain for higher education (or at least for the risk it presents). The beginning of the Business path has a space about buying a ring for a soups, while the College path has a space about buying a raccoon coat... is this game saying something about "smart" vs "risky/bad" purchases? When you take the business route, the first big purchase is a diamond ring for a spouse – much more practical, serious, adult, grown up, etc...</p>
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*Please note that images of this game were sourced from Idahohoarder on eBay:
<https://www.ebay.ca/itm/234451372186>*