Volcanic Treasure

Ready your rope, hold onto the ground beneath your feet and grab some artifacts.
2 - 4 players
ages: 9 to 99 - playtime: 14 minutes to 30 minutes

Parts List:
- 1 hex base board
- 119 tiles
- 1 Yellow Translucent Rock (treasure)
- 2 White Rocks (Big Rock)
- 24 clear beads (power-up markers)
- Hard-tak (tile pick-up)
- 4 pawns (player pieces)
- 4 cardboard backpacks
- 1 cardboard turn-tracker

Summary

A group of foolhardy explorers have accidentally blown up an ancient and artifact-filled temple whilst looting it. This mythical temple so happens to be placed above an active volcano! Now with both the seismic activity and the random explosions happening all around, the temple is shifting through the lava. You just have to take one more artifact before you leave… Use your wits and the tiles to outsmart and trap your opponents. Ready your rope, hold onto the ground beneath your feet and grab some artifacts.
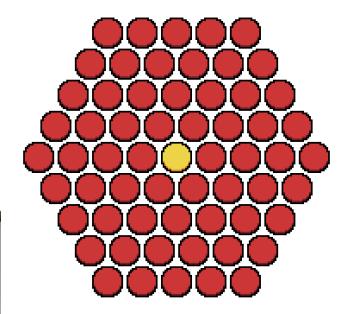
Getting Started:

Objective - Be the first to grab the lost treasure at the center of the map.
Decide on the first player, then turn's follow a clockwise order. (The player to the left of you goes next).

Set-up:

When playing, each valid tile guide should have two tiles placed above the marker tiles on the board. For best practices players should place from inside out to avoid placing in a hole issues. The yellow tile at the center represents where the treasure's tower will be placed. The tower should be above the rest of the tiles by 3 tiles minimum (so a base height of 5 in total at the center). Players can be placed in any unoccupied corner as their starting position. And the Big Rocks can be placed in any of the unoccupied corners. Example below:

Rules:

On your turn, you can utilize **two** of the following actions (or you can do the same action twice):
- **Move** to an adjacent spot (and therefore collect tiles you step off).
- **Place** a tile on a valid unoccupied space on the board
- Use a **powerup** (in any order).

These can be done in any order

Or

A player can instead use their entire turn on one of the following compound actions
- **Jump** across to a tile two tile lengths away
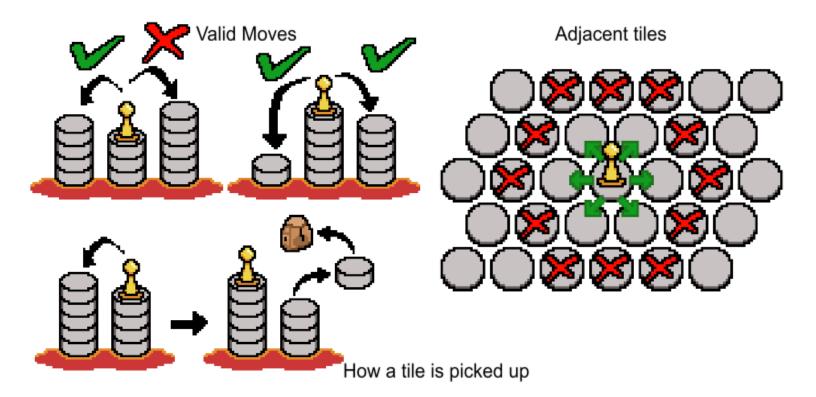- **Move** to and then **Kick** the "Big Rock" to occupy a space almost anywhere on the board

Actions
- Move - Move your character to one unoccupied adjacent space AND collect the tile that you just stepped off of to your backpack. Each move is to an adjacent tile by the player. They may move vertically one tile above where the player is before moving, and descend down any amount. Don't touch the lava on the bottom row. See *Valid Moves* below for a visual confirmation.
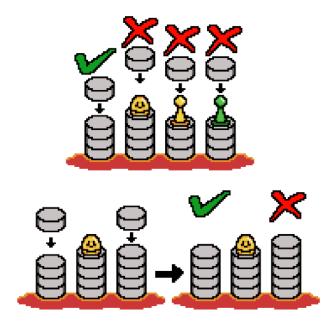
- <u>Place</u> - Place a tile from your backpack on any unoccupied space on the board (not on top of players or treasures). You may not make a tower larger than the treasure tower at the center. See ***Tile Placement*** below.
- <u>Powerup</u> - Remove a tile from **anywhere on the board** (this excludes taking from under the treasure, but you can take from under a player) and add it to your backpack. *Each player gets a new powerup token every few turns.* The number of turns is based off of the player count plus one turns (IE 3 people playing would have a 4 turn wait between getting powerup tokens, or 2 players wait 3 turns). The powerups are depicted by a player holding a clear bead to show how many power ups they have.
- <u>Jump</u> - The player can move across a one tile chasm in the same direction regardless if there is a direct connection between the two (this action choice would obviously use all actions for movement). A "jump" can only happen if the path is uninterrupted by tiles (or objects) higher than it, or if the destination is at most the same height as the jumping tile's height (the destination tile being below the jumping tile's height is perfectly fine). Though this action is a double movement, you are only to take a tile from the position of the jumping tile
- <u>Big Rock</u> - To move the "Big Rock" takes two actions; one to move directly onto the tile the rock occupies, and the other to kick the rock to any unoccupied space on the board. Both actions are needed, a player cannot only move to the tile the Big Rock occupies on one turn and kick it on another turn. The Big Rock is incredibly tall, so it is able to block a jump regardless of how far below the rock is from the jumping tile's height. The Big Rock is able to be sent even into lava, it is just no player is then able to move it afterwards.

<u>Action Illustrations:</u>
Valid Basic Tile Movement -
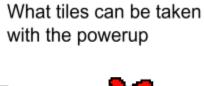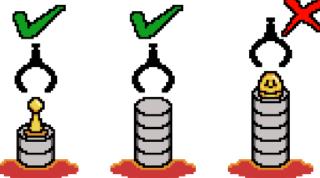

How a tile is picked up

Tile Placement -

What a tile can be placed on
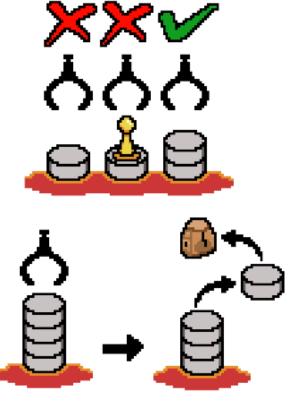
No tile towers can be taller than the treasure tower

Power-up:

What tiles can be taken with the powerup
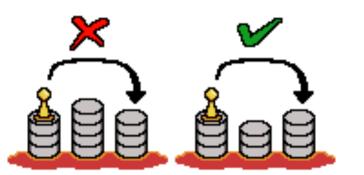
What tiles can be taken
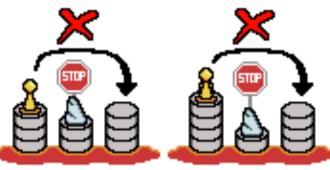
Taking a tile and putting it in the backpack
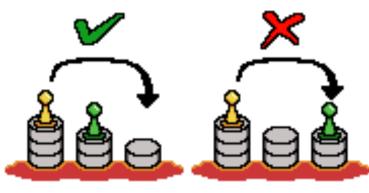
Jump:
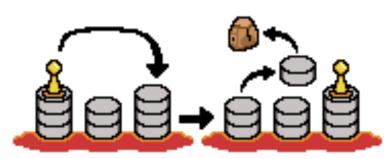
A jump must be over an adjacent tile chasm
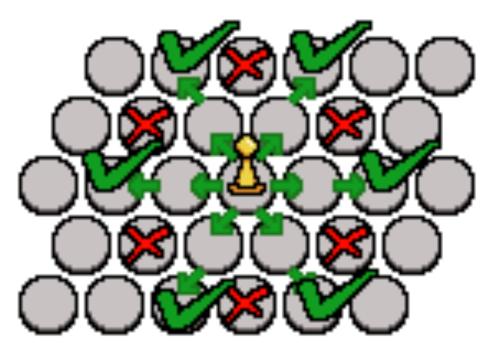
The Big Rock can stop a jump no matter the height different

You may jump over a player, not onto a player
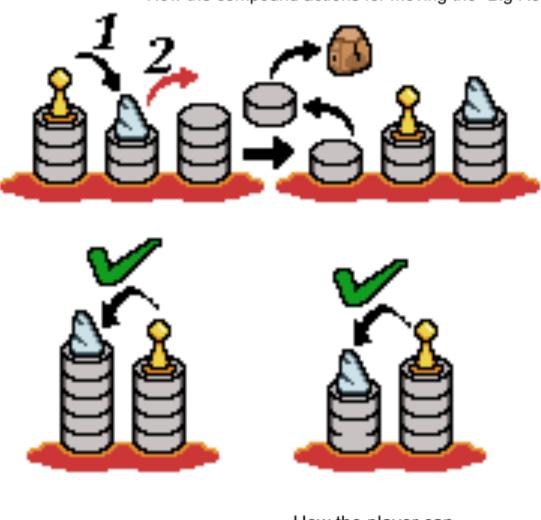
Only the starting tile is taken when jumping

A jump is an unbroken straight line

Big Rock:

How the compound actions for moving the "Big Rock" works

How the player can approach the "Big Rock"

Survey QR Link:

Link to View Rules on Device:

Volcanic Treasure

Playtest Form

(make a copy of this form before editing)

Test Coordinator: Quintan Gerharsdstein
Tester names:
Gino Leone
Rahmel Church
Total time spent:
- *Learning rules*: 7 minutes
- *Setting up game*: 4 minutes
- *Playing game*: 15 minutes

Were there any alternate interpretations of the rules or arguments regarding how the game should be played?
-Not really sure what the game play modes meant / the limits to placing for them
-Wasn't sure on when they would get power-up at first
-rules had no indicator to where the player should start the game
-the actions were clucky to understand
-what is the backpack?
What strategies did testers seem to use?
Make a zig-zagging stairway on one side of the tower and use the power todig under from someone
How many testers used power-ups, and what situations were they used in?
Sometimes to just spite the other player, at the end the power-upwas used to make a power play to get to the treasure. The game had the power up refreshing every three turns so the players could hold multiple and then use multiple in one turn.
When did the winner become evident, and what strategy did they use to win?
There is a board concept in tic-tac-toe called forced loss where there are two options for the player to win and the opponent cannot block both in one turn. Out of the two games, this was how the player won both times, they had the correct distance to make it to the to and had two routes so if one was foiled, they would take the other.
How did the other testers feel about losing?
They lamented about seeing their plan too late to make action.
Did everyone seem engaged in the game?
Yes, it was a rocky start at first but 4 turns in they were both looking intently at the oard.
Overall feedback received:
-Rules were hard to understand

-the pieces are hard to grab and look at to tell evivation at a glance
Other notes:
After this rules were adjusted after this playtest for better description of the powers and how to use them.

Volcanic Treasure
Playtest Form
Playtest 3 (10/21/2022)

Test coordinator: Luke
Tester names: James, Zach

Total time spent:
- *Learning rules*: 3 min
- *Setting up game*: 1 min
- *Playing game*: 6 min for first round, 25 min for second round (estimated)

Were there any alternate interpretations of the rules or arguments regarding how the game should be played?
- Players read the descriptions of actions but did not read the part about using 2 per turn and just assumed they could only use 1.
- Players were not sure if they could have multiple power-ups at once. (They played assuming they could accumulate multiple power-ups and use them later.)
- It was unclear whether power-ups would be gained on the 1st, 4th, 7th turns, etc. or on the 3rd, 6th, 9th turns, etc.
- Players asked if they could go on the same spaces as other players, but they naturally decided not to because it would be difficult to fit multiple players on the same space.
- There was some confusion over lava/base layer being different colors.
    - "Is that the lava? It's white."
- Initially, there was a little confusion over whether you can go on lava, but natural intuition cleared that up for the most part.

What strategies did testers seem to use?
- Initially, testers would circle around the outside of the map before going into the middle to try to tower up. From this point forth, turns would be spent in two ways. If another player was getting close to the tower, they would block them. Otherwise, they would collect tiles and try to tower up themselves.
- Players can go two tiles below the treasure (making it look as if they cannot step up to the top) but then can use their powerup to lower the treasure and their move to step up and win on their next turn.

How many testers used power-ups, and what situations were they used in?

- Power-ups were rarely used except once in the first game (which left the player defenseless and let the other player win).

When did the winner become evident, and what strategy did they use to win?
- In the first game, the loser used his power-up earlier, leaving the other player to just climb to the top. Blocking is not always a viable strategy if the player is only one tile away from the tower.
- Winning often came as a result of other players not realizing that the winner was so close to winning. This adds a strategy (of watching other players) to the game, but it also made winning feel somewhat random because it depended on other players not paying attention to the winner.

How did the other testers feel about losing?
- Losers felt somewhat flustered because they did not realize that the other player was so close to winning. Much of the time, losing could have been prevented if they had noticed, so they felt frustrated or unsatisfied. The end of the game often comes as a surprise, which could have also played into these feelings.
- I also think that the feeling of losing partially came from the fact that the winner was already evident when the loser had to play their turn, forcing them to make a move that they knew would be useless.

Did everyone seem engaged in the game?
- Both players seemed engaged overall, although there seems to be some downtime in between turns after players are done planning their next move.

Overall feedback received:
- Good game but unwieldy prototype items.
- Suggestions:
    - Turn counter for gaining power-ups
    - Ability to heighten tower instead of lower it
    - Smaller board in terms of numbers of spaces but each space should be larger (easier to move and pick up)

Other notes:
- There was a funny interaction in the 3 player game, where player 1 set up player 3 to win and just trusted that player 2 would block.
- Used chess pieces for players in the second game

Volcanic Treasure
Playtest Form

Test coordinator: Quintan
Tester names:
Crash test 10/24
Total time spent:
*time pressed, i had to cliff notes it -Q
- *Learning rules*: 2.5 minutes
- *Setting up game*: 3.5 minutes (i helped)
- *Playing game*: ~5 minutes

Were there any alternate interpretations of the rules or arguments regarding how the game should be played?

I gave them my interpretation (ie, the action options, 2 actions, get to the center and moving takes the old tiles under them) I was also doing rules during set-up so time may vary

What strategies did testers seem to use?

(compact mode)
Rush center, use gathered tiles to make tall towers then make a stepping stone tower to make it higher so the power-up cannot take form both large towers. Use you power-up to stop someone else building step by step

How many testers used power-ups, and what situations were they used in?

In the 5 turns, all 4 were used, situations were described in strategies

When did the winner become evident, and what strategy did they use to win?

2 turns from win, they had two routes set up to make it to the top, both could not be disabled in time.

How did the other testers feel about losing?

Wanted to learn more of the game theory of the game to get the game states better

Did everyone seem engaged in the game?

yes

Overall feedback received:

Very quick, very simple. Maybe have more power-up options to use the token on.
Maybe make the treasure totem in the center larger 4 instead of a minimum of 2

Other notes:

They had 17 minutes total to play,so I quickly ran the process, it showed issues itself, but probably not what we are immediately looking for.

Volcanic Treasure
Playtest Form
(make a copy of this form before editing)

Test coordinator: Quintan
Tester names:
Crashtest 10/24
Total time spent:
- *Learning rules*: 3 minutes
- *Setting up game*: 3 minutes
- *Playing game*: 20 minutes (i think 19 rounds)

Were there any alternate interpretations of the rules or arguments regarding how the game should be played?
I had to reiterate about the vertical progression for movement

What strategies did testers seem to use?
Rush center and build up 1 (tower at 5 high) they built to 3 high. Place equal tower height. Then a placement session by all making a varying board state spiraling to make a staircase (top was at 5 height). Making paths noone else can follow then a player takes away the future path with a power-up. After 6 more turns the bridge has shifted sides. The player has made it to the end, in 2 turns out. He mostly won by holding on to tokens and letting the other players play defensively. The other two didn't have more than one token between them. There was a point where the tokens went form full defense to more strategy of leverage.

How many testers used power-ups, and what situations were they used in?
Quite a lot, one hoarded and the others used to hinder all players

When did the winner become evident, and what strategy did they use to win?
3 turns out, they made a large bridge when the others didn't have enough power-ups to stop them.

How did the other testers feel about losing?
They couldn't do too much to stop them, kinda independent

Did everyone seem engaged in the game?
Yes, it was a slog sometimes at first

Overall feedback received:

Stalemate was not felt. You win based on the mistakes of those before you. The 3 turn power-up turn economy feels too often with more than two players. Exchange tiles for tokens? Make it easier to get in other people's way. Need better ways to block. Need more incentive to collect tiles. Bank extra actions? Game felt slow but not a stalemate for 2 of the 3, one was just kinda stuck at the bottom row. Still very much to force a stalemate if someone decides so. You are only really interacting with the next player with the optimal strategy. Getting your own win is a secondary win condition, the main goal is to grief. You can't make ground in the same spot, if you are losing ground from the other players. Slow strategies to use over spanning turn scapes. Hard to set up a way where you are one turn out from winning and no one can stop you. Victory felt it was due to someone else's blunder, not your strategy. Game needs another mechanic to make it a bit more complex. More than one place on the board to aim for. Allow for varied starting layouts. What if win conditions were more complicated? Points? A way to allow for diverging gameplay? Special tiles for each player. Mechanics are kinda at odds with the goal. Would like to see digging down to be an offensive move. Points would allow for more player freedom. If there is a direct single win condition, vultering becomes a better option. Digging is the central mechanic, building around it more. More strategy is desired though some form of extra mechanic. Hidden information could help, points could help with splitting objectives.

Other notes:

-Powerups need to scale with player # (maybe player # + 1), currently too much for many players
-Hardtack under pawns
-Turn tracker for the cooldown
-Pawn color
-add a skip action if they don't want to do anything (nothing is always a good option)
Keep tower, but they have to dig to the tile at the bottom (single yellow on guide board)???
-very simplistic, add something now to give the gameplay a kick

Volcanic Treasure

Playtest Form

(make a copy of this form before editing)

Test coordinator: autonomous
Tester names: GDD1 other class (merge of both asynchronous sections playtests)

Total time spent:
- *Learning rules*: ~3 minutes
- *Setting up game*: ~9 minutes
- *Playing game*: ~6 minutes

Were there any alternate interpretations of the rules or arguments regarding how the game should be played?
Players were defaulting to playing the game in compact mode and the powers caused the games to end much faster than expected.

What strategies did testers seem to use?
Cannot directly observe, but players were complaining about a victory within 3 turns, so most likely a simple bridge to the center.

How many testers used power-ups, and what situations were they used in?
Unobservable due to the vagueness of the feedback, the only results were that the game's rules allowed for it to end within 3 turns, so it can be assumed one round of power ups at the most.

When did the winner become evident, and what strategy did they use to win?
Unable to determine due to lack of observations

How did the other testers feel about losing?
Most seemed frustrated in the little feedback received

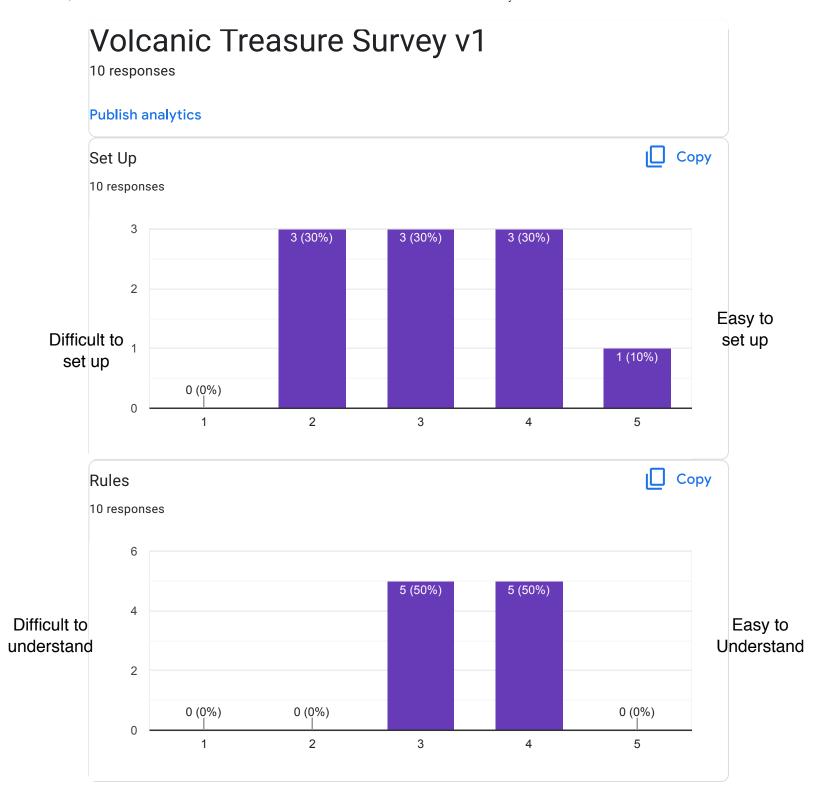### Did everyone seem engaged in the game?
According to the playtest survey results, no
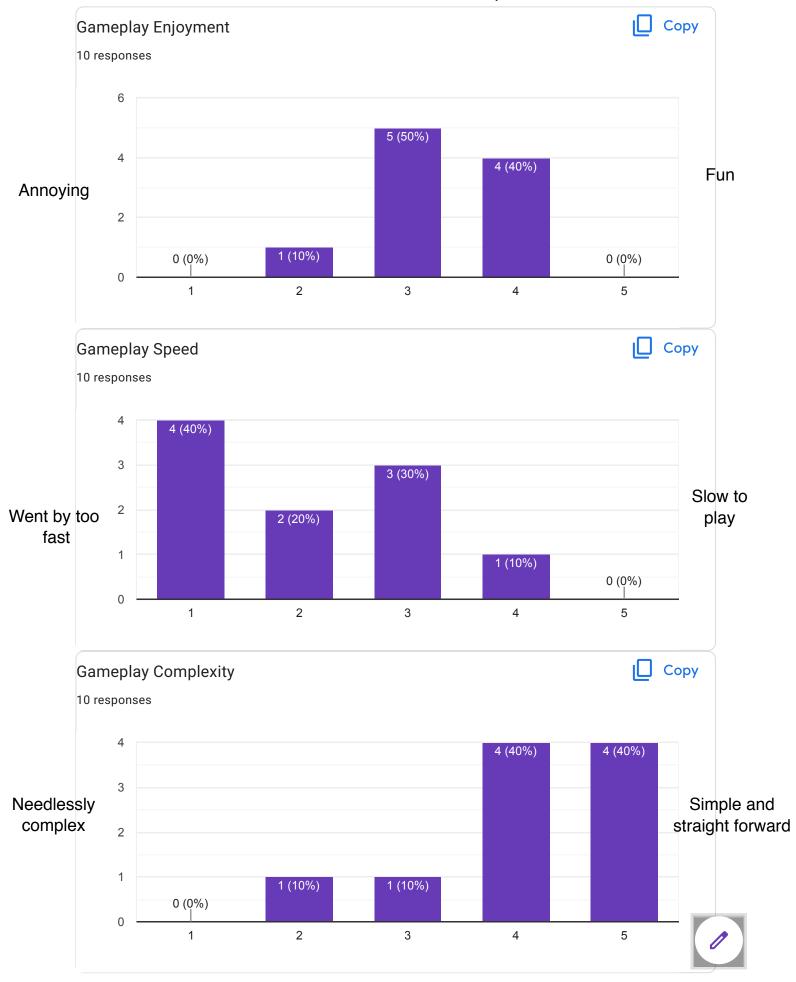
Overall feedback received:

-issues with game's rules being too simple

-game is not very engaging currently

Other notes:

This is less a direct feedback part, and more a note keeping exercise on some of the failures the game has reached when left to its own devices and the wording of the instructions.

Volcanic Treasure Survey v1

10 responses

Publish analytics

Set Up   ⬜ Copy

10 responses

Difficult to
set up

Easy to
set up

0 (0%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)
1	2	3	4	5

Rules   ⬜ Copy

10 responses

Difficult to
understand

Easy to
Understand

0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)
1	2	3	4	5

Gameplay Enjoyment

Copy

10 responses

Annoying

Fun

- 1: 0 (0%)
- 2: 1 (10%)
- 3: 5 (50%)
- 4: 4 (40%)
- 5: 0 (0%)

Gameplay Speed

Copy

10 responses

Went by too fast

Slow to play

- 1: 4 (40%)
- 2: 2 (20%)
- 3: 3 (30%)
- 4: 1 (10%)
- 5: 0 (0%)

Gameplay Complexity

Copy

10 responses

Needlessly complex

Simple and straight forward

- 1: 0 (0%)
- 2: 1 (10%)
- 3: 1 (10%)
- 4: 4 (40%)
- 5: 4 (40%)

Give us your thoughts

9 responses

The rules as written make the game really easy to win, with the treasure tile requiring only 3 turns. I think some changes should be allowing purposeful removal of tiles to send other players to lava, or the ability to place tiles under players.

This seems highly variable with number of players. More discussion was at crash test

We went through it pretty fast with four people. I liked the diagrams in the rule sheet

there should be less turns between getting more powerups. other than that its pretty easy to understand

I'm really sorry but it was so simple that it wasn't all that interesting to play. The concept is interesting though, with the tiles you remove as you go. Someone in my group thought you would have to escape with the treasure as well (idk why I thought the rules were clear). Possibly if you tweak the rules a little to make it more difficult it would be better, as it's pretty easy to win at this point.

I think that allowing players to make the tower taller would make the game much longer and add more strategy aspects

While I understood the rules pretty well, there were still some rules that needed clarifying and changing like if a player can be dropped into lava by a power up. Also, the tiles can at times make it tough to tell if a player is high enough to go to the next level. The game is still pretty fun and very tactical. This is good.

Game was set up for us so hard to comment on that, but so many little chips were hard to work with. We also got stuck with only 2 players so it tended to go really quickly, maybe having alternate 2 player rules would be a good idea. However, the game was fun and I look forward to playing it again!

Good foundation, rules are fairly simple which is good, only real issue is the board itself and the pieces being too small/finicky. The lava layer should be all red and then the rest of the pieces should be not red for example.

Google Forms