Design Refinement Worksheet

Team Name: TEAM TEAM
Team Members (Names): Brandon Hutchison, Martin Pocock, Marin Pappin, Evan Daveikis
Game Title: Traitor (still working title?)
Game Mechanism Constraint - Code + Name: STR-07 Traitors
From Building Blocks of Tabletop Game Design : An Encyclopedia of Mechanisms

Design Refinement is a comprehensive process that includes fine-tuning the game's mechanics and rules, ensuring the cards are user-friendly, and creating a rulebook that not only provides clear instructions but also effectively teaches players how to engage with the game.

At the end of Design Refinement, your team should deliver:

- A refined **game** that can be learned and played without guidance from the designers.
  - In other words, a group of players should be able to read the rulebook and learn to play the game on their own.
- A **rulebook** draft in Adobe InDesign:
  - A full draft of the rulebook layout completed using one of the supplied Adobe InDesign templates.
  - Organized using standard tabletop rulebook sections and headings.
  - Organized using logical and visual hierarchy by applying document Styles.
  - Includes diagrams and annotated images that help players learn and understand the rules.
- Refined **cards** featuring:
  - Layouts created in Adobe InDesign using the supplied template, featuring icons, text, and placeholder art.
  - A design that emphasizes usability, ensuring that the design elements (icons, text, art) are straightforward and readable.
  - Artwork is iterative, not final.

Rulebook
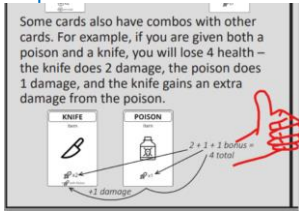Submit as a separate Adobe InDesign package (created using File…Package…)

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Notes on Rulebook
Based on internal team feedback, and external playtesting feedback, provide comment on the state of the rulebook at the end of Design Refinement:
Include annotated images with callouts to help illustrate and support your statements.
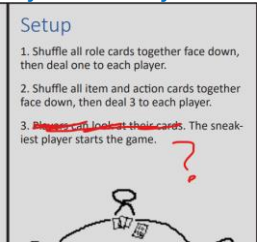
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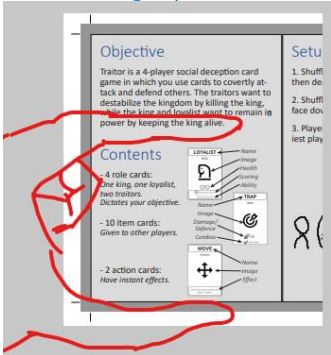What is working:

- Explanation of combos.
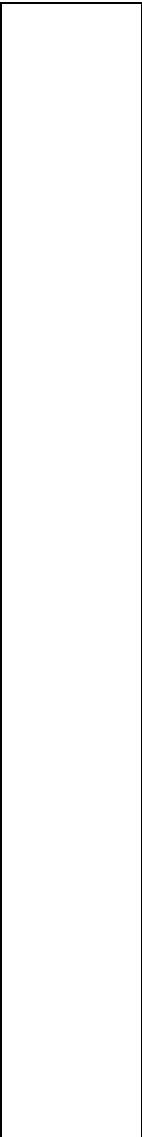
- General flow and order of explanation.
- Clarity of most sections – few/no questions.

What is not working:

- Some areas of clarity are needed – can you look at your own cards? What is your ability?
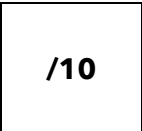
- Some sections could be simplified more.
- The card graphics are a bit small.

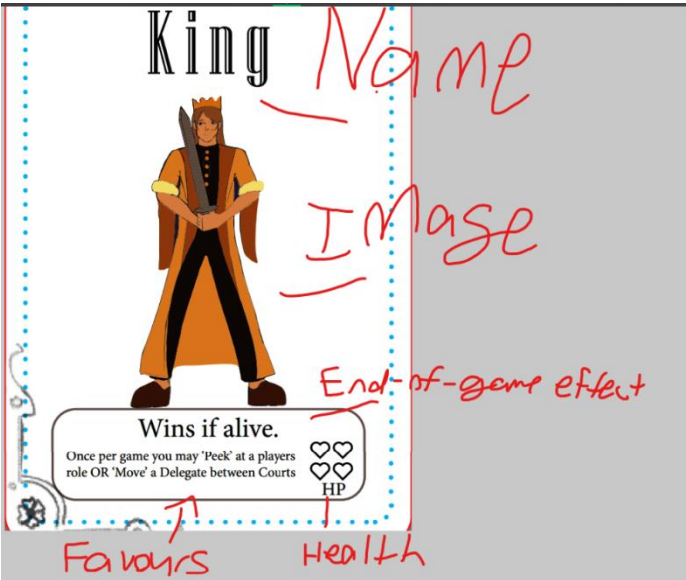- Some areas could be re-ordered for increased clarity.

Cards

Submit as a separate Adobe InDesign package (created using File…Package…)

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Card Design

Show and annotate at least 2 different cards from your game. Use callouts to explain characteristics and graphic elements. Explain how each detail is designed to support the play experience.

The Role cards feature the most important elements up front and large: your role name itself and its image. The details you only need later are smaller and at the bottom. There are reminders of the favours on the role cards as well – Delegate cards say what they do, so having a way to remember your other action is useful.
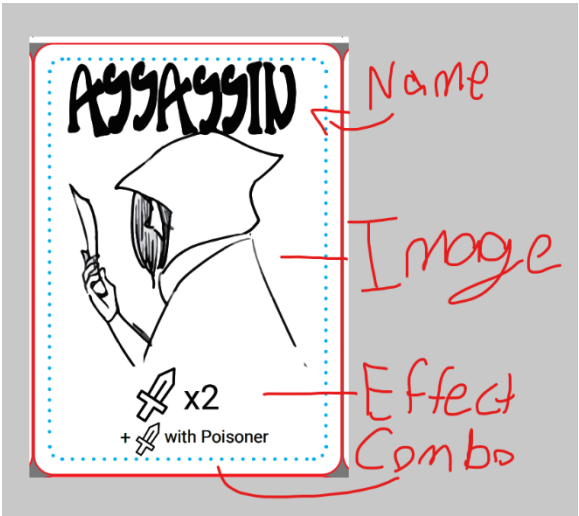
Delegate cards also display the important information first, along with a simple icon to know what the effect is. If the card has a combo, it's listed smaller at the bottom.

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Notes on Cards

Based on internal team feedback, and external playtesting feedback, provide comment on the state of the cards at the end of Design Refinement:
Include annotated images with callouts to help illustrate and support your statements.

What is working:

- Cards present important information first
- Reading cards top to bottom makes sense
- The cards are simple
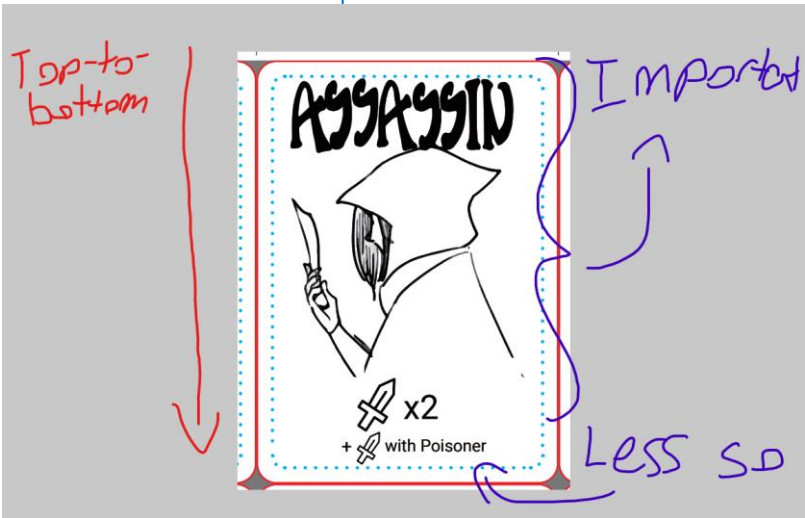
What is not working:

- Combos are still not easy to understand without reading the rules

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The Experience

Describe and illustrate the gameplay arc as experienced by the players of your game.
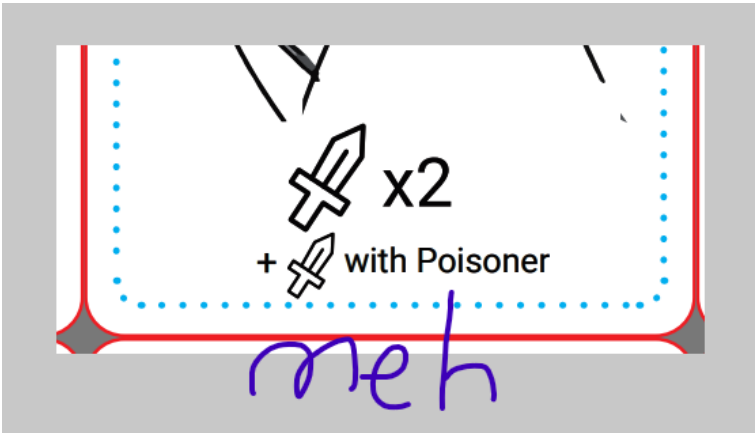
Include annotated images to help explain.

Gameplay Arc Reference: https://ludology.libsyn.com/ludology-epiosde-123-check-up (starting at 42:00)

Opening:
The game begins with all players drawing their initial cards, unaware of each other's roles. The starting player faces the challenging task of making decisions based on limited information. Players must carefully observe their surroundings and use their intuition to determine the identities of others. The focus of this phase is on gathering information and establishing a foundation for strategic play.

Mid-Game:
In the second round, players have interacted with each other, gaining more insights into the game's dynamics. Some players may possess more knowledge than others, creating asymmetrical information among the group. Players must leverage this newfound information to support their teammates and undermine their opponents. In this phase building trust with allies and deceiving your enemies will allow the player to get on top of the situation.

End-Game:
As the game progresses to the final round, players have accumulated the most information they'll have throughout the game. With desperation mounting, players must use their remaining card strategically, focusing on the player they assume to be their enemy. Decisive actions are necessary as players commit to their final moves, aiming for victory for their team. After these final efforts, the game concludes, and points are tallied to determine the outcome.

End-End-Game:
Players get to finally reveal their true roles to each other, leading to lots of laughter. Doing the math while nervously awaiting your fate also provides one last kick of excitement before starting another round.

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Unguided Playtest Results

Document the results of 3 **unguided** playtests.

For all playtests, issues were identified through direct feedback from the players and from observing their failures in the game.
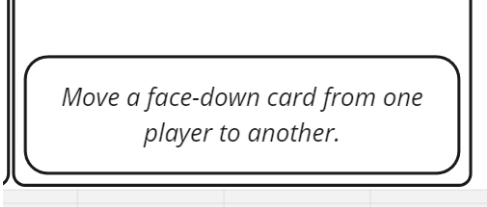
Test #1- Date: February 14, 2024
What issues did you identify in this test? Explain how you were able to identify the issues.
*Include annotated photos or diagrams that help explain the issues identified.

This was the first test of the "modern" rules (reduced action cards, player abilities, new combos). A few variations of drawing cards and the reveal ability were tested, and in the end the following issues were noted from players:
- Players will tend to reveal in the first round when there are no consequences – why wait?
- If there are consequences (revealing your own role), then the king will tend to use the ability and risk revealing themselves.
- Revealing on the last round is irrelevant.
- Combos shouldn't "stack" – it makes it harder to both calculate and balance.
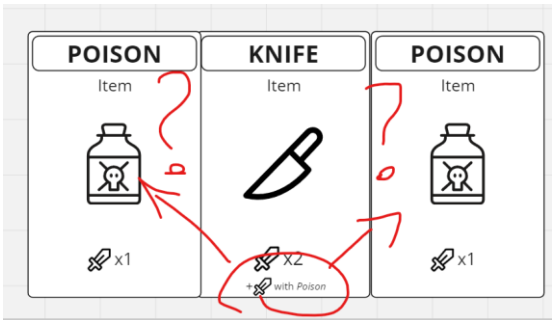
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- The "move" card is only effective at the end of the game.
- Revealing is too "instant" with no drawback, but being forced to reveal your own role is too punishing.
- The move card is too powerful for the king.

Move a face-down card from one player to another.

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Test #2- Date: March 12, 2024
What issues did you identify in this test? Explain how you were able to identify the issues.
*Include annotated photos or diagrams that help explain the issues identified.

The rules were changed for this playtest – damage and health values were tweaked, combos were made to not stack, and a few other small tweaks. The rulebook also got images. Here were some issues noted:
- Some areas of the rulebook could be clarified.
- Talking isn't encouraged enough in the rules – it is the most important part of the game.

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items, or cards you receive) to other players but you may speak about your cards (truthfully or untruthfully). You are encouraged to talk with other players - have conversations, whisper secrets, deceive, make plots, etc.

After your turn, play moves to the left. If all

This is it

- The combos on the cards are a bit confusing.
- Abilities should have diagrams.

Wins if alive.

Explain?

Reveal your role to everyone to peek at someone's role.

- The rulebook doesn't state how many of each role there are.
- The loyalist is a bit of a waste for the traitors to target – 2hp and heals for 2.

x2 to king, if alive.

Reveal your role to everyone

Test #3- Date: March 18, 2024
What issues did you identify in this test? Explain how you were able to identify the issues.
Include annotated photos or diagrams that help explain the issues identified.

Four different variations of rules were tested with various feedback for each ruleset. Here are the general issues with the rules and cards:

- The action card section of the rulebook was a bit confusing – lots of the details were later in the book; having them earlier could make it easier to understand.

Gameplay
Play goes in order until all players have run out of cards in their hand. Players then reveal their roles and the items they have been given and calculate their final health (see Scoring).

On your turn, you may use an ability (once per game) and must play a card from your hand.

Play an Item Card
Select another player (cannot be yourself) and place an item card from your hand on the table in front of them, face down. The recipient may look at the card you give

Play an Action Card
Place the action card face up on the table and follow the instructions on the card.

Use an Ability
Each player can peek at one player's role once per game. [May add more abilities later - peek, move, swap, etc]

You may not show any cards (your role, items, or cards you receive) to other players, but you may speak about your cards (truth-

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- Confusion between abilities and actions – very similar words with very different gameplay implications.

Play an Action Card
Place the action card face up on the table and follow the instructions on the card.

Use an Ability
Each player can peek at one player's role once per game. [May add more abilities later - peek, move, swap, etc]

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- The Content section should list the individual cards instead of just a number per category.

Contents

- 4 role cards:
One king, one loyalist, two traitors.
Dictates your objective.

- 10 item cards:
Given to other players.

- 2 action cards:
Have instant effects.

LOYALIST
Role
— Name
— Image
— Health
— Scoring
— Ability

TRAP
Item
Name —
Image —
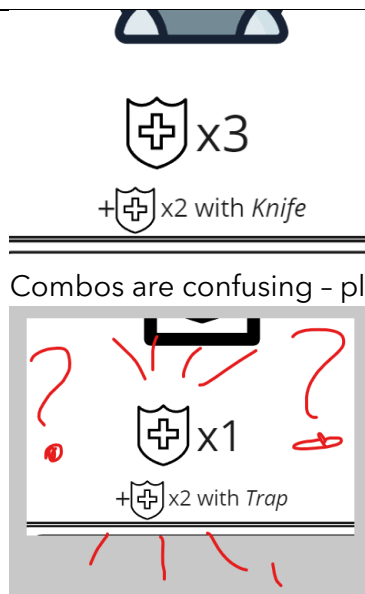Damage/ Defence —
Combos —

MOVE
Action
— Name
— Image
— Effect

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- Cards could have a bit more detail.
- Players were confused with the x on the cards, e.g. X2 with knife and armor. They thought that armor with knife makes armor stronger by X2.

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- Combos are confusing – players did not understand whatsoever.

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The first variation tested was the standard rules:
- There should be some reason to not peek instantly.
- Traitors didn't get enough attacking cards – threw everything at the king and nobody died.

The second variation was a free-for-all where there was no turn order.
- The instant-peeking issue is still present.
- Players didn't communicate very much – they acted on little clues.
- It was very chaotic comparatively and took very little time.
- There were less "impactful" moments as everything happened all at once.

The third variation abolished player hands; rather, the first player drew three cards and played one, then the next player got the remaining two cards and drew one more, etc.
- Players had very little ideas of what each other's roles were.
- Players tended to only really interact with players they knew the roles of.
- Same issues with peeking (too much info early, no drawback etc).

The final variation used card-drafting, where the drawing of hands is not random – three cards are laid on the table, the first player chooses one to draw and replenishes the draft pile, the next player draws, etc.
- Players knew each other instantly (easier to tell by seeing which cards they chose)
- Too much healing – no back and forth, just traitors healing each other.
- The higher value cards are always taken first.

Overall, players had the following feedback:

- The drafting mode was the most fun and balanced, but not for everyone - it had the most strategy.
- Players felt that basic card drawing was the simplest.
- Free-for-all felt the most unbalanced. Players thought it would lead to stand-offs and least strategy.
- There should be cards that can do more damage, like a 5-damage card.
- Players didn't really focus on the combos in the game, moreso just playing their attacking cards.
- Too many details readily apparent.
- The games didn't so much have a tug with information and each team competing. Moreso it was one team playing all their cards against players with the information they had against, very two-sidedly until the traitors ended up losing due to lack of killing cards.

- Move card is very strong in comparison to other cards, and with king it makes it super hard to die.

  > *Move a face-down card from one player to another.*

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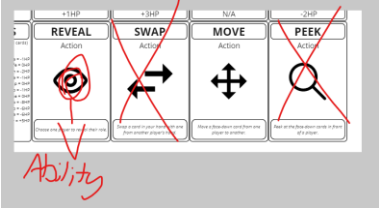- The game definitely required further testing and balancing.
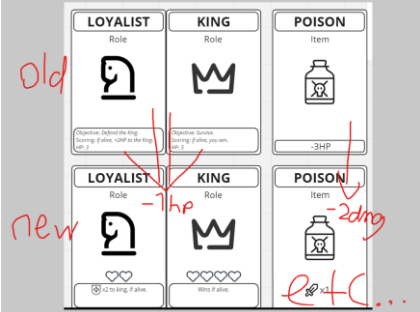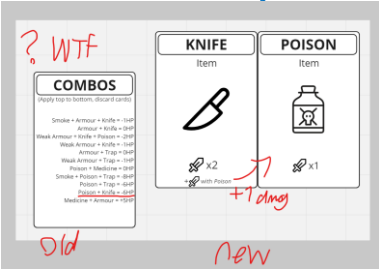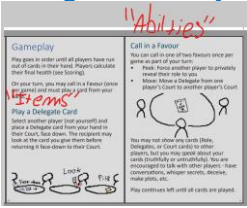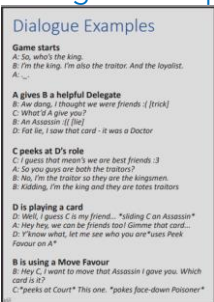
Subtotal

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Changelog of Refinements

Document **at least 5** significant changes to the design from the beginning to the end of Design Refinement. For each change, explain the reasons for the change.

Include annotated images for each change to help explain.

Change	Reasoning
Added player abilities and removed some action cards	Players could draw all action cards and have little ability to impact the game + some abilities were disproportionately better – players are now more equal.
Updated health and damage values	Repeated playtesting showed some cards were under/overpowered and players generally stayed alive when some should die. Changes allowed for desired end behaviour (more death) and more alignment towards desired card behaviour (i.e. teamwork)
Reworked combo system	The system using the combo card was difficult to understand and slow to use. The new system is quick, simple, and doesn't use an extra card.
Changed "items" to "people" (thematic)	Giving "people" to your opponent fits our art team and theming better – instead of 2 kingsmen fighting 2 traitors, it's a much larger-scale fight. It also reduces some confusion with terms.
Removed actions altogether and renamed more terms (people -> delegates, ability -> favour)	Players were still confusing actions and abilities, and the terms were still a bit generic. The single action card was removed and changed into an ability (which were renamed to Favours) in order to make the use of favours more impactful – instead of peeking on the first round, you might want to wait and move a card instead. The new terms also fit the theming better – you send delegates to peoples' courts.
Example Gameplay changed to Dialogue Examples	Players didn't find the example gameplay useful – the rulebook was clear. Providing example of when and what questions to ask encourages talking and clarifies that you can talk at any time.

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TOTAL: **/65**

WEIGHTED GRADE: **/8**