

Abstract

The number guessing game is played with one player thinking of a number between 1-100, and another playing trying to guess the number the first player is thinking of. While this game is simple and easy to understand, its basic structure also holds it back. The game lacks replayability because the numbers are not truly randomized (making repeats more likely over many rounds of play) and lack context. My rethinking of the game changes it so the numbers *do* have context, and also allow the players to learn more about each other in the process.

Edited Game Rules

Number of players: 2-3

Setting: can be played in person, chatting online, etc.

Setup: If playing with two players, players will take turns going back and forth. If playing with three players in person, they will sit in a circle and take turns going clockwise. If playing with three players virtually, they will predetermine an order in which the players take turns, ensuring each player gets equal opportunity. After determining who takes the first turn (the method of picking can be determined by the players), the game begins.

1. The person designated to go first comes up with a piece of information about themselves where the answer is a whole number. Then, they ask the other player(s) in question form. Whether or not the players are given ranges to guess within is up to the players. Some examples of number related questions may include:
 - a. "How many pets does my family have?"
 - b. "How old was I when I went on my first date?"
 - c. "How many games are in my GameCube collection?"
 - d. "What year did I graduate high school?"
 - e. "How many different states in the country have I lived in throughout my life?"
 - f. "What is my total number of tattoos and/or piercings?"
2. Another player guesses the answer. In a two-person game, this is simply the other player. In a three-person game played in-person, the guesser is whoever is clockwise from the asker. In a three-person game played virtually, it is whoever was predetermined to go after the asker.
3. The asker informs the guesser whether or not they answered their question correctly. Whether or not the player is given qualifiers as to whether their guess is close or far off is

predetermined by the players (for example, qualifiers may be used for players who are less acquainted with one another and therefore may have less basis for their guesses). If the answer was correct, skip to step 6. If not, the asker reveals whether the answer is higher or lower.

4. In a two-player game, the game guesser has a chance at a second guess. In a three-player game, the third player can guess the answer instead.
5. Regardless of whether or not the second guess was correct, the asker reveals the true answer.
6. This is the chance for the players to openly discuss the subject of the question and its respective answer. Since the primary function of this game's modification is getting to know one another, this can go on for as long as necessary. The asker can elaborate on the answer however they feel fit, and the guesser(s) can ask further questions related to the topic.
7. Regardless of the outcome of the round and who answered the question correctly, it does not affect the order of taking turns. Even if the player sitting clockwise/next on the list answered the previous question incorrectly, it is their turn to come up with a number-related question. The next player also follows the steps as listed. These steps are repeated until the predetermined objective is reached.

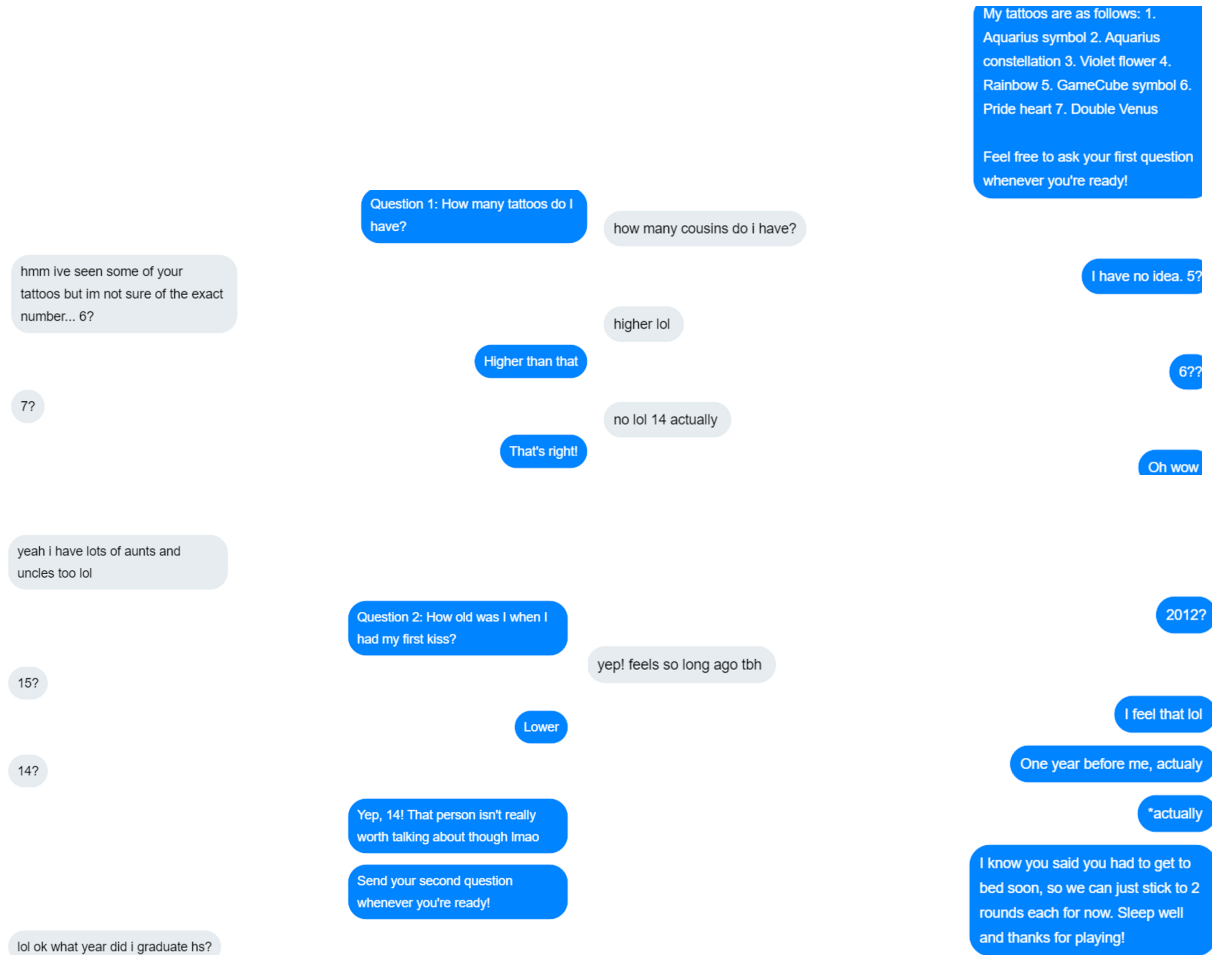
Objective

The game can be played in one of two ways. The objective depends on the focus or goal of the players.

1. The game can be used primarily as a way to break the ice and for players to get to know one another. Players may "win" individual rounds either by correctly guessing another player's questions or by stumping the other player(s) with their own question. Otherwise, the competitive aspect takes a backseat. The amount of questions asked is up to the players, as long as the rounds are split up evenly. In a sense, regardless of who won each round, everyone is a winner in the end as long as they walk away better knowing and/or feeling closer with the other players.
2. A more competitive edge can be added to the game by playing for points instead of a preset amount of questions per person. Individual wins are tallied. Each player asks questions about themselves in order until one player reaches the predetermined amount of points to win.

Example

For this example, I played virtually with 2 players total (including me), using Facebook messenger to play with a Facebook friend. We predetermined that we'd go for 2 rounds, without ranges or qualifiers since we've been Facebook friends for a little while, albeit without much one on one contact.



Design Process Statement

When modifying the number game, my first step was deconstructing the game to see its core issues. In my opinion, its biggest problem was the lack of context or meaning behind the game. While games do not necessarily *need* deeper meaning to work, the lack of purpose gives little reason to continue playing once the novelty of guessing has worn off. From my experience, the number game is often done for external reasons (e.g. determining who goes first in a different game by whoever's guess came closest) rather than simply for the fun of it. I wanted to redesign it into a game that could be more easily played for its own sake.

In the game's traditional format, the process of picking a number incorporates the worst aspects of being both random (lacking context) and not random (not procedurally generated, prone to bias), limiting replayability. If the game is played with each round ending instantaneously if the correct number was not guessed, it allows little space for interpersonal interaction or wiggle room. This is another feature I wanted to fix in my modification of the number game.

My focus on finding a way to give the numbers meaning, which would imbue the game with additional purpose and add room for replayability. When the numbers are attached to personal information, it not only gives said numbers meaning, but gives a better idea about what the answer may be. In the original version, all numbers are theoretically equally as likely; in this version, 50 may be a reasonable guess for one question ("How old is my mom?") but not another ("How many siblings do I have?"), meaning the questions themselves serve as hints. Certain aspects (whether or not answers come with predetermined ranges, whether to play for rounds or points) can be tweaked based on how well the crowd knows each other, how competitive players want the atmosphere to be, etc.

Due to the simplicity of the number game, there was plenty of room for adjustments. Numbers are abstract concepts until we assign meaning to them. Instead of guessing the equivalent of random symbols, this version forces players to more carefully consider the numbers in the context of the question, adding extra steps to figuring out the answer. "Higher" or "lower" also has a deeper meaning beyond the game itself, relating to information about the players. Rather than simply being wrong, an incorrect answer still means players learn more about one another.

Games are often a way of socializing. Even a game not with the explicit end purpose of helping people get to better know one another may have that effect. Because the number game lacked much of an inherent purpose, this made it easy to redesign it in a way where socialization and bonding became its new primary purpose.