

# **Strategic War**

## **Drew Moger**

The goal of this game is for the players to fully eliminate each other's deck of cards. This is achieved through successfully attacking and defending using the cards in each player's deck.

## Game Rules

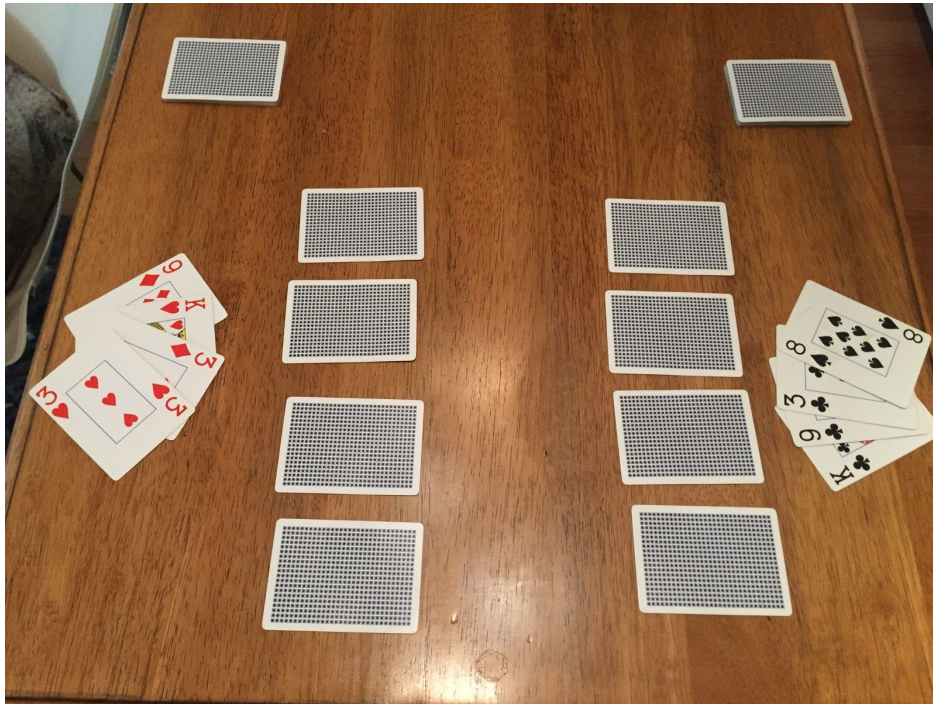
Players: 2

Objective: To remove all of the opposing player's cards from play through successful attacks and defense.

Rules:

1. The deck of cards is split in half with each player receiving a color. Both halves of the deck are shuffled. Each player places their decks face-down. This is their draw pile.
2. The players will take eight cards from the top of their draw piles and look over them. They will decide which four cards will be their defense cards and which four will be their attack cards.
3. When decided, the players will place their defense cards in a row and face-down in front of them. They will keep their attacking cards in their hands.
4. The player with the black cards will attack first. This consists of the attacker placing one of their attacking cards face-up in front of one of the other player's defense cards. The defender will flip over that card and whichever one is the higher value wins. The losing card is removed from play and placed in a discard pile next to the play area.
  - a. If there is a tie, both players keep their cards and play is reset. The attacker will then have the choice to either become the defender or continue their attack but swap the card they had previously attacked with with one of their defending cards.
  - b. Note that 2's will beat Aces and Aces will defeat all other cards.
5. If the attacker's card wins, they keep the card and return it to the bottom of their draw pile. They will then draw a new attacking card from the top of the draw pile. The defender will choose which of their attacking cards will replace the defeated defense card. The defender will then draw a new attack card from the top of their draw pile. The attacker will resume their attack until one of their cards is beaten.
6. If the defender's card wins, they will flip the defense card back over. They may keep their defense card where it is or replace it with an attack card from their hand. The attacker will replace their defeated card with a card drawn from the draw pile. The defender will now become the attacker.
7. When a player's draw pile has been exhausted, they must maintain at least one attack card in their hand while still having as close to four defense cards as possible. When all of their defense cards have been defeated, they will both attack and defend with their final card.
8. When a player's final card is defeated, they lose the game. If the two players have the same final card then the game is a draw. If the players end with multiple of the same card then the player with more cards left is the winner.

## Photos



## Design Process Statement

I started designing this new version of War by reflecting on what aspects of the original game made it difficult, boring, or otherwise unenjoyable. I think the original game is actually much more engaging than some of the other options for this project but it still, like the others, ultimately suffers from the little amount of agency it allows its players. In addressing this, I did not want to completely remove the elements of chance and the unknown that the original War has since that would bring about other issues. I decided to try adding some simple strategy to the gameplay. The actual motions that the players go through are still the same: they each play a card not knowing what the opposing one will be. What my alterations do is divide the game up into attack/defense which gives each player a bit more choice as they plan their respective roles.

The initial concept of attacking and defending was not too difficult to come up with, but the way to do it was a bit more challenging. I decided that breaking it up would be the best method. I also concluded that having four cards for each part was a good number since it is not overwhelming nor does it feel too restrictive. From there, the mechanics were not that different from the regular War and the values for the cards are all the same. I just had to briefly think through the ways in which the players would maintain their hands after winning or losing.

I encountered two main issues when test playing the game. The first one was that the attacker would keep using their best card to attack, quickly tearing through the defender's cards. Due to that, I added the rule that the attacker must return their card to the draw pile. This prevents them from abusing their high-level cards. After my second playthrough of the new game, I reached the end and got stuck as I had not planned for when a player runs out of cards to draw so I had to go back through and add some instructions on how the endgame functions. Overall, I think the improvements, while not perfect, add some interesting strategy and replayability to War while maintaining its element of chance.

Added Strategic Revision: I chose to add a dilemma to this game as my one strategic decision. This change was made to the conditions of when an attacking card ties a defending card. Instead of having the attacker give up their turn, which "hurts" them, I wanted to give them a choice between two moves that both will hurt them but in different ways. The attacker still has the ability to give up their attack and become the defender. The new choice is for them to continue their attack but replace the card that they had attacked with one of their defending cards. This lets the player stay on the offensive but they have to sacrifice a potentially powerful attack card in addition to informing the opposing player of the value of one of their defending cards. This is a dilemma because both choices "hurt" the player but they are given the agency to pick which one works best for them in the current situation.