

Playtest Log

Main focuses

Tile balancing

All Playtests cover this topic

Critter card balancing

Playtests 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 14a, 15 cover this topic

Tile Placement Rules

Playtests 1, 4a, 6a, 8, 14a/b cover this topic

All playtests were done on an online mock-up of the game on playingcards.io. The “test rules” section of the log details rules that have not yet been implemented to the rule book. The “changes to rules” part of the log are the changes we implemented going forward, even if it changed again at a later date.

This is an overview of the rules at the start of playtesting. Please read the finished rules first, as the context of the first version here will rely on knowing the final version. Also, please look over each rulebook when they are mentioned between playetest logs.

There were 3 phases. Phase 1 was a drafting phase very similar to the current drafting in setup. During phase 2 players took turns placing the tiles down until the whole board was filled. Phase 3 was a movement phase similar to the play of the current rules, but without tile placement. The board was a 12 by 12 grid with a similar layout. There were no designs for the critter cards or obstacles until playtest 2.

Playtest X

Players:

Objective:

Test rules:

Things that worked:

Problems:

Changes to rules:

Playtest 1,31/05

Players: Ash (recording), Kat, Marianne

Objective: Testing the concept we came up with in brainstorm. Come up with obstacles.

Test rules: Lowered map from 14x14 to 12x12, Preplaced four-way tiles. Can take loot from other players. Obstacle tiles (Guards, cameras, and traps)

Things that worked:

- Phase 2 is fun
- Good balance between hindering and helping in Phase 2
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Problems:

- Not fun without critter cards
- Too many tiles to place, it felt unnecessary to place them all
 - Had 50 left over tiles out of 128
- PVP testing was not fun
 - Got trapped on the loot tile passing the loot back and forth
- First turn has advantage to get to center
- Unsure of what obstacles should do still
- Possibility of completely trapping people in phase 2
- No game end
- Phase 2 is too long

Changes to rules:

- Critters added
- Traps have a deck of cards to draw from
- Combine cameras and guards into security
- Can end game at any start tile
- Different sized loots
- Security will increase suspicion/take VP from you

Rulebook 1

Playtest 2,03/06

Players: Marianne, Sam, Ash, Lucas. (Kat recording)

Objective: General testing of first draft of rules.

Test rules: Drafting cards (take one, pass the rest). Added Critter and Trap cards.

Things that worked:

- Drafting and building phases are fun

Problems:

- Phase 2 was hard online because people lost track of whose turn it was.
- You don't see enough cards in the draft. Need more hand cards to choose from.
- Trap cards need to be redesigned
 - Rotation trap doesn't work on 4 way tiles or straight tiles
- Movement became hard because of how the tiles were placed

Changes to rules: 2-point loot added to preplaced tiles. All cards were reworked for balancing

Playtest 3, 03/06

Players: Ash (recording), 'Soldier_Snipe'

Objective: General testing

Test rules: None

Things that worked:

- None recorded

Problems:

- Movement is too slow in phase 3
 - Can't interact with other players
- Suspicion is unbalanced
 - Too many compared to other tiles
- Drafting is too luck based

Changes to rules: More movement available due to adding actions you can take in a turn

Rulebook 2

Playtest 4a, 10/06

Players: Ash, Kat, Lucas, Marianne. (Sam recording)

Objective: Test first revision of rules

Test rules: Lowered the board size to 10x10

Things that worked:

- Trap cards were more impactful
- Players left through others starting points

Problems:

- Security not working well
- You can “chain” bad luck from traps
 - Slippery onto another trap, slippery onto another trap...
- Hook caused other players to immediately grab your loot

Changes to rules: Removed phase 2 in favour of a “fog of war” inspired placement method of placing as you move. Ending has a 3-round timer after first player ends for other players to exit.

Playtest 4b, 10/06

Players: Sam, Ash, Lucas, Marianne. (Kat recording)

Objective: Test Sam’s personal project version of the game.

Test rules: Sams game rules. Small board, impassible obstacles.

Things that worked:

- Very strategic

Problems:

- Very little of the original concept and ideas were included that we spent time on
- Lack of chance elements
- Tile placement takes too long in comparison to the short movement round

Changes to rules: None, did not continue further with these rules

Playtest 510/6

Players: Ash (recording), ‘Soldier_Snipe’

Objective: General testing, 2 games played

Test rules: Did not implement changes from log 4b

Things that worked:

- Rules were easy to grasp, especially after seeing someone else take a turn
- Almost tied, meaning the game is somewhat balanced
- Strategy of someone ending early to hope they lose VP was found

Problems:

- Didn't like ai artwork.
- Can get stuck with the ferret card.
- Tile placement is confusing in 2 player.
- Round 2 is too long.

Changes to rules: Squirrel cannot cause negative suspicion.

Playtest 6a, 11/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas

Objective: Adjusting rule changes talked about in log 4b

Test rules: Placement as moving instead of round 2. Dropping off loot. Endgame round timer. More preplaced tiles. Drawing critter cards instead of drafting

Things that worked:

- Quicker game without round 2
- Movement is more fun
- Extra preplaced tiles
 - You feel like you have something to go for and not just place tiles randomly

Problems:

- Not enough suspicion to matter
- We need drafting, someone always gets repeated cards if we don't
- Not enough incentive to exit before game ends
 - Why not just go for more loot to make up for the lost VP

Changes to rules: Punishment instead of reward for end of game timer. End of round timer was also shortened to 2 rounds before game end to increase tension. Removing round 2 in favour of placing tiles while moving.

Playtest 6b, 11/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas, Jamie

Objective: Additional testing with changes made from playtest 6a

Test rules: See 6a changes to rules.

Things that worked:

- Placing tiles as moving was a lot more fun and cut out a lot of time.

Problems:

- Getting given a hand of critters can cause player to have very unequally powered hands
- Cards got used too fast
- Power levels of cards are not balanced
 - Snake and bird are too strong
- Pit trap and hook trap are extremely harsh
- Security feels not impactful enough
 - None of us got to max suspicion or lost VP

Changes to rules: Lowered max suspicion to 10

Playtest 7, 11/06

Players: Ash (recording), 'Soldier_Snipe', 'm'

Objective: General testing

Test rules: None

Things that worked:

- Strategy of everyone escaping through their own start tile emerged

Problems:

- Snake card was too prevalent. It was used by all players
- Pit trap was too punishing
 - Not enough hand cards to make this feel even with other traps
- Bat felt too weak. Spending a card to look at traps feels bad and unnecessary

Changes to rules: Bat was changed to activating a trap that anyone was standing on.

Rulebook 3

Playtest 8, 12/06

Players: Sam (recording), Kat (recording), Ash, Lucas, Marianne

Objective: Test rules implemented in playtest 6

Test rules: none

Things that worked:

- None recorded.

Problems:

- Pit trap feels upsetting and unfair.
- Birds didn't make sense
- Too much get and get out incentive
- Not enough cards in hand
- Not strategic enough with the new tile placement

Changes to rules: Due to birds being too good and not making sense, they were changed to be a maximum of 3 total moves in a turn. Due to mole not being used out of a feeling that it was useless it was changed to let you see a selection of tiles and choose from them.

Playtest 9, 13/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas, Marcus, Gladys

Objective: General testing

Test rules: Birds move you 3 tiles total on your turn (Final version).

Things that worked:

- There was an interesting use of bat where Gladys tried to use it on themselves to try to rotate their tile
 - Strategy of giving yourself a trap card emerged
- Outside playtesters liked tile placement and the amount of luck in it.

Problems:

- Snake is too powerful and prevalent.
- Despite the interesting usage, bat didn't feel useful.
- Unclear on what happens when you draw a suspicion giving trap if you are at maximum suspicion.

- 1 player got only 2 VP, which felt very bad.
- Not enough player interaction
- There's always someone with an unfair amount of traps and security in their starting area
- Outside play testers wanted the game to be longer (30 minute playtest time, with explanation)

Changes to rules: None.

Playtest 10, 14/06

Players: Sam (recording), Marianne, Ash

Objective: General playtesting

Test rules: A hand of tiles instead of drawing off the top of the deck. Bird can double your movement up to 4.

Things that worked:

Problems:

- Bird was too powerful.
- First player had too much of an advantage.

Changes to rules: New tile placement rules

- Players have a hand of 3 tiles that they place from instead of drawing from the deck.
- To balance the first player advantage, for the first turn, the first player only has a hand of 1 tile, the second player has a hand of two tiles, third player has a hand of three tiles and fourth gets four tiles.

Playtest 11, 14/06

Players: Marianne (recording), Jason

Objective: General testing.

Test rules: Hand of tiles to pick from

Things that worked:

- Jason enjoyed the strategy and plotting his path.

Problems:

- First player to center loot tile has too much of an advantage
- Not enough critter card variation

Changes to rules: None

Rulebook 4

Playtest 12, 17/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas

Objective: Testing of rules implemented after play test 10, specifically hand tiles

Test rules: Rules implemented after playtest 10, didn't draft (lazy)

Things that worked: None recorded.

Problems:

- Feels like less options of what to do because you can't gamble to try to get somewhere. No point in taking a risk because you know what tiles you're going to get.
- Kat had a path to the center with no obstacles except for one trap.
- Some cards are too situational.
- Rotation trap needs to be fixed, there are too many unclear situations.
- Felt too repetitive and too easy to get rid of tiles with traps and security by placing them not on your path.

Changes to rules: Bat can give any player a trap card no matter if they are on a trap tile or not (Final version).

Playtest 13, 17/06

Players: Ash (recording), 'Soldier_Snipe'

Objective: General testing

Test rules: None.

Things that worked:

- More player interaction

Problems:

- Ferret and mole felt much worse with new tile placement
- Snake is a dominant strategy, bat and butterfly are mostly unused

Changes to rules: None.

Playtest 14a, 23/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas

Objective: Heavy testing, focused on tile placement.

Test rules:

- Rules as of playtest 10.
- Snake moves you from security to trap tile.
- Ferret moves you through all walls on your turn.
- Starting player gets +2 suspicion.

Things that worked:

- Snake felt more balanced
- First player change wasn't noticeable but had a better effect on the game than changing the number of tiles in the starting hands.

Problems:

- Traps: Need to be modified
 - Hook doesn't work well. Loot got passed back and forth between players.
 - Pit trap is too punishing. Kat drew 3 and lost all their cards.
 - Rotating a path tile feels too helpful for a trap.
- Having hand tiles led to easy paths to the center while getting a 4 vp loot at extremely minimal risk.
- Changes to ferret didn't make much of a difference due to this method of tile placement.
- Bat feels unfair without restrictions on who you can play it on.

Changes to rules: None

Playtest 14b, 23/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas

Objective: Test old method of tile placement (drawing from the top of the deck) immediately after testing new one

Test rules: Draw tiles randomly when you need to place them. You do not need to fill all adjacent available spaces.

Things that worked:

- We got screwed over by the randomness, but it felt more fun because it was out of our control and was mainly because we took gambles. Could be seen as a problem to some.
- Randomly drawing tiles and then choosing where to place them was more engaging.

Problems: None recorded

Changes to rules: Random drawing of tiles was reimplemented, but you can now choose to not place all the available tile pathways.

Playtest 15, 24/06

Players: Sam, Ash, Marianne, Lucas. (Kat Recording)

Objective: Test rules from playtest 14b.

Test rules: Rules from 14b

Things that worked:

- More player interaction and strategy
- Feels mostly balanced, with just a few kinks to work out in terms of cards.

Problems:

- Snake feels too dominant.
- Too many tiles being revealed when you reach a loot tile

Changes to rules:

- Snake removed. No matter what we changed, the base concept continued to be too powerful.
- Tiles no longer have to be placed connecting to your tile.
- Owl changed to look at another player's hand and swap it with one of their cards.
- Fox changed to being able to play it after seeing the trap card you would trigger
- Butterfly now additionally allows you to give another player on a security tile 1 suspicion.

Rulebook 5 / Finalized rulebook

Playtest 16, 28/06

Players: Kat (recording), Lucas

Objective: Final testing

Test rules: Finalized rules from playtest 15

Things that worked:

- Game was fun
- Close endgame (ended with 14 and 13 points)
- End round balancing

Problems:

- Owl felt kind of useless in 2 players
- Butterfly felt useless for Kat because Lucas got to 10 suspicion very quickly

Changes to rules: Clarified that the player who lost the loot from a hook trap may pick it up for free if it lands on a loot tile. Made endgame end at the start of the first players turn so that every player gets the same number of turns in the game