

Highflyer

Dawn Grasso, October 25, 2020

Overview of Concept

Highflyer is a card game that expands your knowledge of the popular US cities to a whole new level. It incorporates strategy and planning from the first set of city cards that are dealt. The goal of the game is to select optimal city cards to maximize the accumulations of travel points and successfully win the game. The learner, who plays the role of a tourist, will analyze city cards, and evaluate their points associated with four qualities; food, entertainment, sights and weather. A level card is drawn for each round and provides the 2 qualities for that round that are boost qualities. The learner that wins the round will earn an additional 100 boost points in addition to the total points on the played city card. The player with the most points at the end of 10 rounds wins *Highflyer*.

Instructional Objectives

After playing, the learner will be able to strategically appraise city cards and level cards to plan card selections to maximize point accumulation.

1. Rules-Based (relationships between concepts)
2. If the learner is able to successfully play their most optimal city card for each round, then they have the potential to win the round and collect the associated rewards and points.
3. Learner performance is measured by their ability to accurately select city cards with the maximum number of quality points.

Learner/Player/Context Description

The *Highflyer* players are 10-year-old 5- grade students who recently completed the Gifted exam in preparation of transitioning into middle school. The students' that passed the Gifted exam were able to read at a 6- grade and higher level. The students have been learning about the names and locations of the 52 states and their capitals. Games have been incorporated into the 5- grade students' lessons throughout the year. The students have participated in all types of games: digital, card and board games. In this lesson, the students will play *Highflyer*, a 2-4 player card game.

Game Environment

Highflyer is a card game that takes place in cities across the United States. Players will learn about key city qualities as they travel up and down each coast, from the Northwest to the Southeast and everywhere in between, accruing as many travel miles as they can.

What is the Core Dynamic of the game?

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A core dynamic of *Highflyer* is collecting. In my second mentor game, *Wingspan*, players select and collect bird cards to successfully build a nature preserve and win the game. The selection and collection process are very complicated as each turn provides the player an opportunity to evaluate every feature of the bird prior to selecting or discarding a bird card.

Similar to *Wingspan*, *Highflyer* players collect city cards then strategically appraise and select the city card that will maximize their points in each round. By successfully accumulating points in each of the ten rounds the players are able to successfully win the game.

Game Materials, Setup and Logistics

Game Reference: A map of the United States so each tourist can visually see the location of each city that can be played in the game.

City Mileage Key: The key provides players with all 60 cities, each city purchase price in points and the miles between each city that can be played.

Game Cards: 60 City Cards and 20 Level Cards. City cards represent the popular cities across the United States that possess 4 unique qualities that draw tourists to visit them. Each city card contains facts about each city, how much it would cost to purchase that city card and the point values for each of the 4 unique qualities. City cards can only be played twice. Level cards define the two city qualities that will provide bonus or boost points for that round.

Travel Tokens: Travel tokens with numeric value of the travel points from city to city. Blue tokens equal 25 points, red tokens equal 50 points, green tokens equal 75 points and black tokens equal 100 points.

Boost Tokens: White boost tokens equal 100 points

Token Tray: Four bin token tray used to hold the travel, spent tokens and boost tokens

City Tourists: 4 pieces to represent each player as they move around the map

Score Cards: Dry erase whiteboard scorecard to document the points earned for each round

Dry Erase markers with erasers: Markers with eraser to use to document on the score cards

Highflyer is a game designed to increase knowledge of cities across the United States. The game consists of 10 rounds and the player with the highest number of points at the end of the 10-round wins. The game has two sets of cards: city cards and level cards. *Highflyer* starts in the city closest to the current locations of the players. Players will roll a single die to see who goes first. The player with the highest score goes first and then the player to their left goes next and each additional player to the left plays next until all players take their turn. If there is a tie for the highest score, those players will roll the single die again and the player with the highest score will go first.

Description of Character(s)

The players are tourists traveling the United States. In *Highflyer*, tourists travel the United States from city to city in pursuit of accumulating as many travel miles as possible.

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Description of Gameplay/Plot

1. **Game set-up:** Players will lay out the map of the United States, the city mileage key, the 60 city cards, the 20 level cards, the travel and boost tokens, token tray, and tourist pieces.
2. **Start of the game:** *Highlight* starts in the city closest to the current locations of the players. Each player will pick a tourist piece and place it in the city closest to the current city as this is where the game will start from. The player who had the highest score in the single die toss goes first and then the player to their left goes next and each additional player to the left plays next until all players take their turn.
3. **Game progression:** Before the first round, each player will be dealt 5 city cards. The remaining city cards will be turned face down on the table. Travel and boost tokens will be placed in the token tray next to the city and level cards. One level card will be drawn and turned face up and the remaining level cards will be stacked face down next to the city cards. The level card will show the players which 2 city qualities will be boosted for that round. The players will then assess their city cards, reference the city mileage key to see the total number of travel points from their current location to the destinations on each of the five city cards in their possession, and determine which city card they would like to play for the round, aiming to maximize the bonus they get from the 2 boost qualities as well as the travel miles. Players will place the city card they decide to play for that round face up in front of them. City cards can only be played twice so players are challenged to strategically use each play to maximize point accumulations. Once everyone has chosen a city card, players will add up their points for the round and determine a winner. At the conclusion of each round, every player receives 100 travel tokens and the winner receives an additional 100 boost tokens. Players will document their scores at the end of each round using their scorecards. Next, each player will draw a new city card from the stack and decide whether or not they wish to spend their travel tokens to acquire it. If they choose to purchase the new card, they will need to exchange it with an existing card in their set and place their spent travel tokens in the corresponding tray. This process will be repeated for the remaining 9 rounds, at which point the players will add their total scores to determine a winner.
4. **Winning State:** The winner of the game is the player who accumulates the most points at the conclusion of 10 rounds of gameplay.
5. **Failstate:** The losers of the game are all players that did not accumulate the most points at the conclusion of 10 rounds of gameplay.
6. **Player learning:** If the player loses the game, they will still learn the qualities of each city, the miles required to travel in between each of the cities, and how to strategically assess the qualities of their most optimal city card for each round.

Scoring, Rewards

The gamification activities of each round will be driven by points that the players will record on their scorecards. Each round the players will receive 100 travel tokens, which they will be able to

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spend to acquire new city cards. The player with the highest total level quality score for that round will receive an additional 100 boost points.

Important Game Design Attributes

Highflyer contains several game attributes: competition, feedback, and aesthetics. Competition is present throughout the game as each round offers the players an opportunity to outscore all the other players. Each player will strategically assess their 5 city cards to determine which one they will select to play for the round in order to maximize their score.

The second attribute present in *Highflyer*, feedback, is also seen in every round of gameplay. Players learn ways to improve their assessments of each of their city cards both by observing the choices of the round's winner and by refining their strategy as the rounds progress.

Aesthetics is another attribute we see present in *Highflyer*. From the tourist pieces, city cards and level cards to the colorful travel and boost tokens, each element of the game provides a visually cohesive set of components. Each city card has a unique illustration and the tokens are differentiated by color.