**Conflict in Game Design Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**In its very essence, a board game is about conflict, which can be defined as:**

* **The mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands (Merriam Webster)**
  + **You want something, and someone else wants it too.**
  + **Or, you want to do something, and someone else gets in the way.**

**Conflict presents itself in different ways in a game. The game board itself models the conflict using physical resources that players can interact with, manipulate, and maneuver to achieve the desired, stated goals. Understanding conflict is key to understanding game design, because, without conflict, there is no game.**

**At the “big picture” level, the whole game should present EXTERNAL conflict, a simulated problem with opposing sides that all players must face. The game can present a war or battle, or even something seemingly silly and frivolous like rabbits trying to eat lettuce. The large-scale conflict that a game presents must fit the theme logically and encourage players to interact enthusiastically in addressing the conflict as they play.**

**List three games you played in class, and explain the large-scale, external conflict in each:**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**On a smaller level, each player endures INTERNAL conflict on each turn. Players have incompatible or opposing needs, drives, and/or wishes. Conflict may present itself in the choices that players make that may advance their own game or hinder another player’s chances. Good game design makes the conflict meaningful and manageable on each turn—players know what their options are and can make decisions about those choices. Each turn may mean a different set of choices to be made, depending on board and resource configuration, but players should be equipped to make choices in response. Satisfactory resolution of the conflict should coincide with the end of the game.**

**Examples of small-scale internal conflict (on player turns) in game: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**1.**

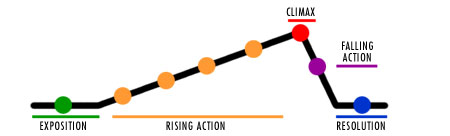
**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**Mapping a Game’s Conflict Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Often in Language Arts, the plot of books’ storylines are analyzed to determine the key elements that propell a story forward. We can do the same thing to analyze a board game, and this can help to shape the overall “plot” of your designed game.

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**Explain how each step of the plot diagram above can be used to explain a game’s plot in general terms and then explain a specific game’s plot.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Board Games in General** | **Specific Game:** |
| **Exposition:**  **the beginning, characters and setting are established, conflict is introduced.** |  |  |
| **Rising Action**  **a series of events lead up to the conflict, excitement and tension build** |  |  |
| **Climax**  **The turning point of the story, the moment of highest interest and emotion. The reader wonders what is going to happen next.** |  |  |
| **Falling Action**  **the winding up of the story. Events and complications begin to resolve and the result of actions of the main characters are seen** |  |  |
| **Resolution**  **the end of a story and ends with either a happy or a tragic ending.** |  |  |

**Conflict in Games We’ve Played Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Think about the games you’ve played in class. Choose three of them, and explain how large-scale conflict was represented in each game as a whole and small-scale conflict was present during players’ turns.**

**Write the game name on the line, and explain how the game presents conflict on the whole and small-scale on players’ turns.**

**1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Conflict in the game as a whole (external):**

**Conflict on each player’s turn (internal):**

**2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Conflict in the game as a whole (external):**

**Conflict on each player’s turn (internal):**

**3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Conflict in the game as a whole (external):**

**Conflict on each player’s turn (internal):**