# 1. Traffic Escape

I played Traffic Escpae until level 75 and took notes about the things I noticed during the gameplay. Based on these notes, I wrote my analysis in different categories and added some suggestions to make the game better.

## 1.1.1 First Time User Experience

**Analysis:**

The game launches directly into Level 1 after displaying the Fomo Games logo. The player is shown a simple "Tap to move cars" instruction, with three separate roads and three vehicles on the screen. Upon completing the level, a "Level Completed" screen appears with confetti and the amount of in-game currency (gold) earned.

The first two levels function as a light tutorial. While directional hints are shown, the player is not required to interact with specific vehicles — this optional guidance creates a smooth and pressure-free onboarding experience. Starting from Level 3, full control is handed over to the player.

The user interface is clean and not confusing. The tutorial phase feels intuitive and allows the player to explore the mechanics independently. At the start of Level 5 (after completing Level 4), the player is introduced to the main menu. However, no guidance or explanation is provided regarding the menu's features, which may cause confusion for first-time users.

Shortly after, a new feature called Level Race is introduced, where five players compete to complete 30 levels as fast as possible. It seems that the top three earn rewards. From Level 7, the pedestrian mechanic is added. Players are clearly informed that hitting a pedestrian causes the level to fail. By Level 9, two-lane roads begin to appear, increasing complexity.

At Level 10, the first interstitial ad is shown. In Level 11, a special offer screen is presented. From this point on, a visible progress bar appears at the bottom of each level, showing the player's position in the ongoing race. Also at Level 11, the game introduces a move limit system. Two types of hints are made available: a helicopter, which removes one vehicle, and a lightbulb, which shows a suggestion.

**Suggestions:**

- Include a brief onboarding or tooltip for the main menu at Level 5 to explain sections like shop, skins, and race.
- When new features are introduced (e.g. pedestrian, move counter), display short animations or info pop-ups for better clarity.
- Highlight what the player earns and why it matters (e.g. "Gold can be used to buy hints or skins") to reinforce the reward structure.

## 1.1.2 Game Mechanics

**Analysis:**

The core gameplay revolves around vehicles placed on directional lanes. Each car has a fixed direction, and the player must tap on them in the correct order to send them forward and clear the puzzle. The level is completed when all vehicles have exited the screen without collisions or mistakes.

Strategic thinking is essential for solving levels, while timing only becomes relevant in stages involving pedestrians. Multiple cars can move on the same lane at once, but there are no collision effects or failure conditions related to cars bumping into each other. The game does not rely on reflexes or reaction speed, making it feel calm and methodical.

The mechanic is simple, clear, and forgiving. If a mistake is made, the car returns to its original position, allowing the player to try a different sequence without penalty. Most levels support multiple valid solutions. For instance, when five cars are facing different directions, players can often start with any of them depending on their strategy — there is no single correct solution.

The mechanic remains consistent across all levels, with complexity increasing through added obstacles rather than core mechanic changes.

**Suggestions:**

- Consider adding optional challenge modes that reward optimized solutions or fastest completions.
- Introduce mild visual feedback (e.g., a soft bump animation) when vehicles overlap or are released too closely, to make actions feel more responsive.
- To enrich the mechanic, small twists like one-way tiles, moving pedestrians, or delayed triggers could be added in later levels.

## 1.1.3 Level Design

**Analysis:**

The game's level structure follows a clear and consistent pattern. New features such as vans and pedestrians are gradually introduced, but the underlying layout remains the same across levels. Each level begins on a linear path and concludes with a nearly identical completion screen, which may feel repetitive and unremarkable over time.

While the difficulty increases steadily, the visual and structural templates remain mostly unchanged. Levels seem to follow a predefined format, with certain mechanics added or removed to create variation — for example, introducing a two-lane road or a pedestrian hazard. This results in a familiar and predictable flow, which may help onboarding but can also reduce engagement in later stages.

There is no strong sense of environmental evolution or level diversity, and although players may make one to three mistakes per level, the repetitive structure might limit long-term satisfaction.

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce visual and thematic variation every 10–15 levels (e.g., changing background environments or time of day).
- Add unique entry or exit animations to break the monotony of the level transitions.
- Consider using dynamic elements in some levels (e.g., moving obstacles or temporary hazards) to differentiate layout and increase design variety.

## 1.1.4  Level Difficulty

**Analysis:**

The difficulty curve increases gradually and follows a roughly linear progression. It can be imagined as a smooth slope. By Level 10, the player feels around 10% challenged, while by Level 30 the difficulty has increased proportionally to about 30%. The game does a good job at slowly introducing complexity without overwhelming the player.

To pass a failed level, the player is offered the option to watch a video ad or spend 2,000 gold to receive +5 extra moves. When out of moves, a pop-up message appears with "Out of Moves" and "Keep Playing" text. However, the way this is presented lacks emotional or motivational energy; it feels functional but not encouraging.

No noticeably unbalanced or unfair levels were encountered. The increasing challenge comes primarily from more complex layouts and feature stacking (move limits, pedestrians), but these additions are modest and don't dramatically shift the difficulty.

**Suggestions:**

- Improve the motivational tone of failure messages (add soft encouragement like "You're close!" or "Almost solved it!")
- Introduce milestone challenge levels every 10–15 levels to add variety and encourage mastery.
- To deepen difficulty progression, add advanced mechanics such as time-limited moves or multi-step obstacles in higher levels.

## 1.1.5 Monetization

**Analysis:**

The game encourages spending primarily through special offers and purchase prompts that appear after a failed level. Players are not required to spend money in order to progress, but they are nudged toward doing so in order to remove ads or obtain convenience-based items such as hints or extra moves.

Ads are shown approximately once every two levels. While not overly aggressive, their frequency can become annoying, especially during longer play sessions. The "Remove Ads" option is clearly visible in the main menu, making it easy for users to opt out of the ad-based experience.

The in-game shop focuses mainly on the sale of gold and hint packages. Skins cannot be purchased directly from the shop. Instead, when players enter the skin section, they discover that skins become available as they progress. Once unlocked, these cosmetic items can be purchased using either in-game currency or real money. This system allows both free and paying players to access visual customizations, but it is not strongly emphasized or promoted during gameplay.

**Suggestions:**

- Consider creating limited-time cosmetic offers that are featured more prominently, such as during special events or races.
- Make unlocked skins more noticeable by highlighting them with animations or menu alerts to encourage engagement.
- Expand the shop with more content, such as boosters or race-related items, to make it feel more dynamic and appealing.

## 1.1.6 Visual Effects & Animations

**Analysis:**

When vehicles are idle, they still display small movements, which gives the impression that the engine is running. This subtle animation adds a nice touch of realism. The directional arrows shown on each vehicle, indicating where they will go when tapped, cannot be customized by the player.

Sound effects are present but offer limited variety. While they are not entirely unsatisfying, they could be improved in both quantity and impact. Visual effects are well-synchronized with player actions, which supports smooth gameplay feedback. There are no noticeable delays or lag in the animations.

However, the animations themselves are repetitive and lack variation. The overall animation design remains the same throughout the game, with no progression or enhancement. As a result, the game may give the impression that it has not received recent visual updates, which can affect how fresh or polished it feels over time.

**Suggestions:**

- Consider adding new animations or effects that unlock as the player progresses through levels, to create a stronger sense of advancement.
- Allow basic customization of visual elements, such as changing arrow styles or vehicle effects, to enhance player ownership.
- Introduce occasional visual themes or seasonal updates to refresh the game's aesthetic and increase long-term visual appeal.

## 1.1.7 Core Loop

**Analysis:**

The core gameplay loop follows a simple yet effective structure: play a level, complete it, unlock new visible rewards on the progression path, and use the gold earned from levels to purchase those rewards. Short-term goals focus on reaching the next reward checkpoint, which typically occurs every 10 to 15 levels. Long-term goals are centered around unlocking cosmetic items and skins as they become visible through continued level progression.

There is also a daily login reward system, structured as a 7-day cycle. In addition, the game features a ranking system based on the number of trophies earned. This ranking is divided into weekly leagues, such as bronze and silver tiers. The top 30 players each week are promoted to the next league. For example, the first-place player receives 1,000 gold, while the 30th place earns 190 gold. Players ranked below this threshold typically receive 100 gold, and do not advance.

Progression is visually represented through a linear path shown on the main menu, which helps reinforce a sense of advancement. However, once a player breaks away from the loop, it may be difficult to re-engage them. While Day 1 and Day 7 retention is likely strong due to the clear reward structure and fast gameplay, Day 30 retention is expected to be weaker, given the repetitive nature of the loop and the absence of deeper systems to sustain long-term motivation.

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce additional long-term systems such as unlockable events, mid-season goals, or character progression to strengthen late-game retention.
- Add surprise rewards or hidden milestones to give players unexpected reasons to continue.
- Consider light social elements like friend leaderboards or shared progress to reinforce commitment beyond the individual loop.

## 2. Color Blocks 3D: Slide Puzzle

I played "Color Blocks 3D: Slide Puzzle" until level 82 and took notes about the things I noticed during the gameplay. Based on these notes, I wrote my analysis in different categories and added some suggestions to make the game better according to my experience.

### 2.1.1 First Time User Experience

**Analysis:**

The game begins directly with Level 1 after the Fomo Games logo is shown. A simple three-step tutorial appears at the start. The first two moves are demonstrated with visual pointers, while the third move is left to the player. This lightweight approach avoids overwhelming the player and keeps the onboarding process smooth.

Upon completing a level, players are greeted with a celebratory screen that includes confetti and a small 2D animation, similar to what is seen in Traffic Escape. The screen also displays the amount of gold earned. However, the game does not explain what this currency is used for, which creates a gap in understanding player progression.

During gameplay, a move limit is displayed under the level number, but there is no tutorial or guidance explaining its function or consequences. By Level 10, the player is introduced to the main menu for the first time. The interface is not complex but lacks any form of walkthrough or instructional support. The menu consists of a vertical path representing level progression, but it does not clearly explain its components or interactive elements.

At Level 10, players also encounter one of the two available hints, called the Jelly Bomb. This is introduced through a pop-up explanation. However, despite being the first time the feature is shown, it is not offered for free. Instead, players must use their gold or watch an ad to access it. While the first few minutes of gameplay are smooth and visually rewarding, the game fails to answer a key question: "Why should I keep playing?" This could result in a high churn rate after the early levels.

Suggestions:

- Introduce a clear, short explanation of what gold is used for, preferably after the first level completion.
- Add a tutorial overlay to explain the move limit mechanic and how it affects level outcomes.
- When a power-up like Jelly Bomb is introduced for the first time, allow the player to try it once for free to encourage adoption.
- Consider implementing a brief message or teaser around Level 8–10 that hints at upcoming features or goals, to create long-term motivation and reduce early churn.

## 2.1.2 Game Mechanics

**Analysis:**

The core gameplay takes place inside a square grid. Within this grid, there are colored blocks that feature horizontal or vertical movement arrows. Along the edges of the square, there are colored holes that match the block colors. The objective is to slide each block into its matching hole until none remain on the board.

The game requires strategic thinking but is not time-limited, allowing players to plan their moves calmly. Blocks can obstruct one another, and finding the right order and direction becomes essential. The mechanics are clear and easy to understand, with no reliance on reflexes or complex gestures.

One helpful feature is that if a player sends a block toward the wrong hole, it will stop nearby rather than disappearing or being lost. This prevents frustration and encourages learning through experimentation. However, some elements—such as edge holes occasionally having two different colors—could confuse new players without proper guidance. So far, no additional mechanics or features were introduced in the levels played.

**Suggestions:**

- Add a few more tutorial steps to clarify edge cases, such as double-colored holes or overlapping paths.
- Consider implementing guided examples in early levels to help players fully grasp how block interactions and direction indicators work.
- Introducing new features over time, such as rotating blocks or movable obstacles, could help the mechanic stay fresh and engaging in later stages.

## 2.1.3  Level Design

**Analysis:**

The difficulty curve progresses in a linear fashion, but compared to Traffic Escape, this game allows for more room to make mistakes within each level. Players are less punished for experimenting, which adds flexibility to the puzzle-solving experience.

Levels are accessed through a path-based layout, and while this creates a sense of progression, the end-of-level screens are repetitive and do not provide a strong sense of reward. Visually and structurally, the levels follow a uniform template. Once inside a level, the layout and visual environment remain largely the same.

Occasionally, minor elements such as multi-colored goal holes are introduced or removed to create slight variation, but overall, the level design remains consistent throughout the experience.

**Suggestions:**

- Enhance visual variety by refreshing background elements or introducing themed level batches every 10 to 15 stages
- .Improve the sense of accomplishment at the end of each level with dynamic animations or visual effects.
- Consider adding new level objectives or mechanics to shake up the standard structure and keep the experience feeling fresh.
- 

## 2.1.4 Level Difficulty

**Analysis:**

The game's difficulty increases steadily, following a mostly linear curve. For example, by Level 10, the challenge level might feel around 10 percent, reaching 20 percent by Level 20, and so on. This gradual rise in complexity provides a smooth learning curve, though it may not be strong enough to satisfy players looking for a sharper difficulty spike.

To complete a failed level, players are offered the option to either spend 2,000 gold or watch a video ad to receive five extra moves. When the move limit is reached, a message saying "Out of Moves" and "Keep Playing" appears, but the overall presentation lacks motivational feedback. A more encouraging message or animation could make players more willing to try again.

No major difficulty spikes or imbalanced levels were observed. The challenge tends to increase through more complex block arrangements rather than through punishing mechanics. However, the absence of major new gameplay elements means that the perceived difficulty might plateau over time**.**

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce milestone challenge levels every 10 to 15 stages to offer short bursts of higher intensity and variety.
- Add more emotionally engaging failure screens, such as personalized encouragement or animations that reflect progress.
- As the game progresses, gradually introduce mechanics that create deeper puzzle complexity, such as limited directions, movable holes, or obstacles.

## 2.1.5 Monetization

**Analysis:**

Players are primarily directed toward purchases through special offers and gold packs shown after a failed level. Outside of these instances, they must actively visit the shop menu in order to make purchases. The shop contains only gold and hint bundles, with no additional monetization layers such as cosmetics or boosters.

Monetization is not tied to game progression. Players are not required to spend money to advance, but they are encouraged to do so in order to remove ads or gain convenience, like extra hints. Ads appear approximately every two levels and, while skippable, they can still disrupt the game's rhythm and may become frustrating during long sessions. The "Remove Ads" option is clearly displayed in the main menu, making it easy to access for those who prefer a premium experience.

Currently, monetization opportunities are limited and passive. The game does not proactively present special offers beyond post-failure moments, which could be a missed opportunity.

**Suggestions:**

- Consider adding more frequent and time-limited special offers through targeted pop-ups. For example, a discounted pack such as "10 hints for 15 TL, valid for 5 minutes" could create a sense of urgency.
- Introduce light personalization in offers based on player behavior, such as failure frequency or hint usage.
- Expand the shop with additional content types to make it more engaging, such as skins, power-ups, or exclusive bundles tied to events or milestones.

## 2.1.6 Visual Effects & Animations

**Analysis:**

The visual presentation is generally clean but lacks motion and variety. Blocks remain static, with no idle animation or feedback effects. However, the colored holes on the grid have a grinder-like animation, which adds a satisfying sense of interaction when a block is correctly placed. When a block enters a hole, it breaks apart with a brief visual effect that mimics shredding. This is a strong visual touch that enhances the feeling of completion.

Directional arrows on each block, which indicate horizontal or vertical movement, are functional but cannot be customized. The background is plain white and offers no customization options, which may contribute to visual fatigue over longer sessions. Sound effects are limited and lack impact, which results in an underwhelming sensory experience overall.

Animations are consistent and free of lag, but there is no variety throughout the game. Hint icons appear on the screen but do not actively encourage usage. For example, even if the player stays idle for 30 seconds, there is no animation or visual nudge prompting them to interact with hints.

**Suggestions:**

- Add subtle idle animations for blocks or background elements to make the gameplay feel more alive.
- Introduce alternative animation effects for block destruction to create variation and reward progress.
- Allow basic UI or background customization, such as color themes or visual styles, to improve personalization.
- Consider having hint icons glow or pulse if the player remains inactive for a certain time, encouraging interaction without forcing it.

## 2.1.7 Core Loop

**Analysis:**

The game's core loop follows a basic structure: play a level, complete it, and progress along a visual path. However, compared to Traffic Escape, the loop feels less rewarding and lacks deeper systems that give players a strong reason to return regularly. The game does not offer a clear in-game store or system that allows players to spend gold on meaningful upgrades or visual customization, such as block skins or hole effects. This weakens the sense of long-term purpose.

Short-term goals revolve around earning rewards every 10 to 15 levels through the progression system. Longer-term goals are centered on ranking up in the game's weekly league system. Players receive trophies after completing levels, which determine their rank. The ranking system is tiered, with divisions such as bronze and silver. Each week, the top 30 players move up to a higher league, while the rest remain in their current tier. First-place players receive 1,000 gold, 30th place receives 190 gold, and players below that receive 100 gold.

The sense of progress is visually communicated through a vertical path shown on the main screen. While the early stages of the loop are smooth and engaging, there is little to re-engage lapsed players later on. The loop may support strong Day 1 retention due to its simplicity and accessibility, but Day 7 and Day 30 retention are likely to be significantly lower, as the loop lacks depth and personalization.

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce unlockable content that can be purchased with in-game currency, such as block skins, visual effects for holes, or animation upgrades.
- Add milestone-based rewards or unlocks that provide a longer-term objective beyond level completion.
- To improve retention, consider implementing surprise mechanics or progression-based missions that bring players back after a break.

## 3. Color Block Jam

I played Color Block Jam until level 55 and took notes about the things I noticed during the gameplay. Based on these notes, I wrote my analysis in different categories and added some suggestions to make the game better.

### 3.1.1 First Time User Experience

**Analysis:**

The game begins after the Rollic Games logo, followed by a short animation and a fast-loading screen. Players are then taken directly into Level 1 with almost no tutorial. The absence of guidance may be confusing at first, but the simplicity of the early gameplay helps ease the onboarding.

Upon completing the level, a celebration screen appears with confetti and displays the amount of gold earned. However, the game does not explain what gold is used for, leaving players uncertain about its purpose. During gameplay, a countdown timer is shown below the level indicator, implying a time limit for completion. Still, there is no explanation or tutorial addressing how this mechanic works or what happens if time runs out.

Access to the main menu is locked until after Level 15. From that point onward, players are presented with an optional video ad offer at the end of each level, allowing them to double their in-game currency rewards. At Level 16, the game introduces four types of hints, but unlike in other Fomo Games titles where using hints is optional, here their usage is mandatory. The four hints include freezing time, removing a single pixel, eliminating a full block, and clearing all blocks of a specific color. Also there is a lock image on the bottom right of the screen, but player cannot understand what does it mean.

The game also includes a life system, with players having a maximum of five lives at a time, similar to the system in Royal Match. Overall, while the game may cause some initial confusion due to the lack of onboarding and clarity, the difficulty and challenge it presents in the early stages can actually motivate players to keep playing. The first five minutes are satisfying, but also slightly chaotic.

### 3.1.2  Game Mechanics

**Analysis:**

The overall visual structure of the game resembles "Color Blocks 3D: Slide Puzzle," but the mechanics differ in several ways. In this game, blocks do not have directional indicators. Instead, players must drag these blocks from their starting positions into matching colored pixels located around the edges of the square board. The blocks move as pixel units, and each move must be carefully planned to avoid collisions.

The drag-and-drop mechanic is simple and responsive, but the game does not provide a tutorial to explain how dragging works. Players are left to discover it through trial and error. While blocks can obstruct each other, there are no harsh penalties for mistakes. If a block is moved incorrectly, it simply returns to its original position, allowing for repeated attempts without frustration. There is also a pause button that allows player to stop time, so the player is not affected by the time limit when they need to remain AFK in the live game.

The puzzle design supports multiple valid solutions. Players can complete each level by trying different combinations of moves, and there is no fixed path or single correct sequence. This flexible approach makes the mechanic feel accessible and strategic at the same time, similar to Color Blocks 3D.

### 3.1.3 Level Design

**Analysis:**

The difficulty of the levels increases linearly. Unlike games that limit the number of moves, this game introduces a time constraint, which allows players to make unlimited mistakes within the given time frame. This design creates a more forgiving environment while still maintaining challenge through time pressure.

Each level begins via a path-based layout, and the end-of-level screen remains visually unchanged throughout. Although the structural template of the levels is consistent, the growing difficulty introduces more puzzle variety. The use of time constraints rather than move limits allows the game to present more complex and demanding layouts without overly penalizing the player.

The level environments and board designs remain largely the same, following a uniform structure. Within levels, features such as multi-colored blocks are introduced or removed to provide some variation. Unlike Color Blocks 3D, there are no dual-colored goal tiles in this game.

Additionally, before entering certain levels, players gain access to two different boost features: one that adds extra time and another called "rocket." These boosters are unlocked at Level 19 and Level 22, offering more strategic options as the game progresses.

## 3.1.4  Level Difficulty

**Analysis:**

The overall difficulty increases as the player progresses, but the curve is not strictly linear. For example, while Level 15 might reflect around 10 percent difficulty, the game intentionally lowers the challenge in specific stages following the introduction of new features. After a new mechanic is added, the next 10 levels typically remain easier to ensure players have time to fully understand how it works. This temporary drop in difficulty creates a smoother onboarding for complex elements.

When players run out of time, a message appears stating "Out of Time" along with a "Keep Playing" prompt. However, this message lacks emotional engagement and does not strongly encourage retrying. Despite this, no major difficulty spikes or unfair level designs were encountered. The challenge generally increases through more intricate layouts and block interactions rather than through punishing mechanics.

One newly introduced mechanic involves a block with no visible color. This block cannot be moved until the player clears a certain number of colored blocks. Once this condition is met, the transparent block becomes visible and usable. The placement of this element within a level significantly increases its complexity and adds strategic depth.

### 3.1.5 Monetization

**Analysis:**

The game encourages spending primarily through special offers and gold purchase prompts that appear after a failed level. Outside of these moments, players must manually access the in-game shop to make purchases. A separate pop-up is occasionally displayed, promoting a no-ads upgrade as a standalone purchase.

Spending money is not required to make gameplay progress. However, due to the frequency of ads—often shown after nearly every level—players are subtly pressured to consider paid options to maintain a smooth experience. This high ad frequency can feel intrusive and may disrupt engagement, especially during longer sessions. The "Remove Ads" option is clearly displayed in the main menu for those looking to eliminate interruptions.

The in-game shop offers gold, extra lives, and hints. The game uses a life system that limits play attempts, which adds another incentive to spend for those who run out of lives. This mechanic increases monetization opportunities but can also create frustration if not properly balanced.

### 3.1.6 Visual Effects & Animations

**Analysis:**

The game features a minimalistic visual style with limited movement or feedback animations. The blocks remain static until moved, and no idle animations or dynamic transitions are used to enhance visual interest. The holes located around the grid do not feature any effects or animation cues, which makes interactions feel less impactful compared to similar games.

When a block is successfully placed, it breaks apart with a basic visual effect. While this is a nice touch, it lacks polish and depth—there is no grinding or transformation animation that reinforces satisfaction. The directional arrows on the blocks, which show whether they move horizontally or vertically, are fixed and cannot be customized.

Sound design is minimal and lacks variation. This contributes to a somewhat flat sensory experience. However, one effective visual element is the time bar at the top of the screen. As time runs out, the bar pulses and becomes more visible, subtly pushing the player to act faster. On the other hand, hint icons remain static and do not actively encourage interaction, even when the player is inactive for extended periods.

The overall visual environment, including the white background, is consistent but unchanging. The absence of visual variation or customization options may reduce long-term engagement, especially for players who value feedback and style.

### 3.1.7 Core Loop

**Analysis:**

The game's core loop is built around a simple cycle: play a level, complete it, earn gold, and optionally double the rewards by watching an ad. Progress is visualized through a vertical level path, but there is no deeper structure beyond this flow. Compared to other puzzle titles, the loop in Color Block Jam feels lightweight and lacks any long-term goals, collection mechanics, or meaningful customization options.

Players are not given a clear reason to accumulate gold, as there are few opportunities to spend it in ways that enhance engagement. The in-game store only offers gold, lives, and hints, with no upgrades or cosmetic rewards that could reinforce player investment. This weakens the overall loop by limiting progression to repetitive level completion without a sense of advancement or ownership.

A life system is also in place, limiting the number of attempts a player can make. When lives run out, players must either wait, spend gold, or watch ads to continue. While this creates moments of urgency, it also increases the risk of player drop-off, especially in the absence of deeper engagement systems.

The loop may be effective for short play sessions and early retention, especially due to the game's fast pace and initial challenge. However, in the absence of broader progression or meta-elements, the game is likely to struggle with longer-term retention, particularly after Day 30.

## 4. Crowd Express: Boarding Puzzle

I played Crowd Express: Boarding Puzzle until level 64 and took notes about the things I noticed during the gameplay. Based on these notes, I wrote my analysis in different categories and added some suggestions to make the game better.

### 4.1.1 First Time User Experience

**Analysis:**

After the Rollic logo and a brief loading screen, the game starts from the main menu. The first level includes a "Tap to move cars" instruction, introducing the basic interaction. The core setup consists of one parking zone, three buses, and 18 passengers. Each bus can carry six passengers, and no new bus can be selected until the current one is fully boarded. As levels progress, buses and passengers are assigned specific colors, which become central to gameplay. For instance, if yellow passengers are at the front of the queue, the yellow bus must be sent first.

There are no time limits or move restrictions, but if a parking space is filled with a bus that doesn't match the next passengers' color, the level fails. The tutorial is minimal and leaves several core mechanics unexplained. Three hint tools are included, which unlock at Levels 4, 8, and 12. These are: using a balloon to move a bus past obstacles, removing a parked vehicle, and changing the color of the next passengers in line.

By Level 10, a new mechanic called "Hurry Buses" is introduced. These are large-capacity buses that automatically move to the parking zone once blocking vehicles are cleared, without needing player input. At Level 13, a new daily mode named "Jam" becomes available. In this mode, players must drag multiple crashed buses out of the way to clear traffic.

After Level 15, a reward multiplier mechanic is introduced, where players can watch an ad to multiply the 40-gold prize. The game also features a life system, with a maximum of five lives. Each life regenerates over 30 minutes. As players progress through levels, a percentage-based progress bar appears for unlocking new features. This bar builds curiosity and encourages continued engagement.

## 4.1.2  Game Mechanics

**Analysis:**

The core mechanic involves directing color-coded buses to available parking spots so that passengers of matching colors, waiting at the entrance, can board them. The level is completed when all passengers have boarded and no vehicles remain on the board. The game emphasizes strategic thinking, as there are no time limits or move restrictions, but buses can block each other, requiring players to plan several steps ahead.

Mistakes are handled gently. If a bus is sent toward an occupied space or blocks another vehicle, it lightly bumps into the obstruction and returns to its previous position with a subtle animation.

This reinforces learning without penalizing the player harshly. The mechanics are clear and intuitive, making it nearly impossible to misuse them.

There is no single solution for most levels. Players can complete puzzles using different strategies and combinations, which keeps the gameplay flexible and rewarding.

### 4.1.3 Level Design

**Analysis:**

The game's difficulty increases in a linear and predictable way. Players are allowed to make mistakes freely, as there is no time or move limit. However, due to the limited number of parking spaces, wrong moves can block progress and require careful planning. Each level starts through a path-based navigation, but the end-of-level screens remain repetitive and visually unchanging, which reduces the sense of reward.

There is very little randomness in level design. The background visuals, parking lot layouts, and environment elements remain exactly the same across all levels. While the puzzle combinations themselves vary, the visual sameness makes progression feel less exciting over time. Although the game introduces new features to add variety, without these mechanics, levels often feel nearly identical and risk becoming monotonous.

### 4.1.4 Level Difficulty

**Analysis:**

The game's difficulty increases gradually, following a mostly linear curve. However, every 3 to 5 levels, a "Hard Level" animation appears, introducing a spike in challenge. When players fail a level, they are given the option to either spend 900 gold to unlock an additional parking space or

restart the level by losing one life. The failure screen displays a "Level Failed" message accompanied by a sad-face emoji, which does not offer strong motivational feedback.

The difficulty scaling is driven mainly by increased complexity in level layout. As more vehicles and color types are introduced, solving the puzzle becomes more demanding. In certain levels, specific patterns are used to create intentional blockages, where buses continuously obstruct one another, making it more difficult to guide the correct vehicle to the appropriate parking spot. These setups elevate the challenge and require multi-step planning to resolve.

## 4.1.5 Monetization

**Analysis:**

Monetization in Crowd Express is minimal and mostly passive. The main menu features a 30-level "Boarding Pass" system and a shop that includes standard items like extra lives, gold, hints, and a no-ads purchase. Aside from these, there are no engaging or aspirational monetization layers that encourage players to spend. There are no skins, visual customizations, or progression-based unlocks for vehicles, passengers, or environments.

Gold is earned regularly through gameplay, but there is very little to spend it on. Its only functional use is to refill lives or occasionally unlock an extra parking spot after a failed level. This disconnect between reward and utility makes the currency feel hollow and removes any sense of progression tied to earning.

Special offers do appear occasionally after a level failure, but they lack variety and urgency. There is also almost no presence of ads in the gameplay loop — which may improve the player experience short-term, but it limits monetization potential and fails to create meaningful trade-offs. Without compelling uses for currency or personalized offers, the game provides no long-term financial incentive for players to invest.

### 4.1.6 Visual Effects & Animations

**Analysis:**

The game's visual presentation feels outdated and lacks polish. Buses remain completely static when idle, with no subtle motion or feedback to suggest activity, such as engine vibration or light flickering. When vehicles collide, the crash animation is minimal and lacks impact, making the interaction feel flat. Waiting passengers differ only by color and share identical idle poses, with no expression or variety in movement.

Animations are functional and do not suffer from lag or delay, but they are highly repetitive and lack diversity. The absence of visual flourishes or transitions contributes to the impression of a low-production, unpolished experience. The game does not evolve visually over time, making each level feel visually indistinct from the last.

The main menu features a static city background, which can switch between day and night modes, but this is the only visual variation offered. There is no visual level path or progression display to reinforce a sense of advancement. Overall, the game gives the impression that it has not received visual updates or refinements for a long time.

### 4.1.7 Core Loop

**Analysis:**

The core loop in Crowd Express is minimal and lacks depth: play a level, complete it, move on to the next. While this simplicity works for short-term sessions, it quickly reveals the game's lack of long-term engagement strategies. The only form of structured progression is a 30-stage boarding pass system, which tracks level completion. However, the rewards provided through this system are limited and underwhelming, failing to motivate players to continue through all stages.

The game features an in-game currency system, but its utility is extremely narrow. Gold is used almost exclusively to refill lives or, in rare cases, to unlock an additional parking space after a failed level. There are no upgrades, unlockable cosmetics, or mechanics tied to spending, which makes the currency feel redundant and strips the game of any meaningful progression.

There is no metagame, no collection mechanics, no personalization, and no evolving features that incentivize return play. Players are not building toward anything, which makes every session feel disconnected from the next. While Day 1 retention might be acceptable due to the intuitive gameplay and low entry barrier, Day 7 and Day 30 retention are likely to be significantly low, as there is no emotional hook or growth system keeping players engaged.

The loop does not offer challenge scaling, surprise elements, or mastery goals — all of which are important for long-term retention. Once the core mechanic is understood, there is little reason for a player to keep coming back.

## 5. Magic Sort!

I played Magic Sort! until level 85 and took notes about the things I noticed during the gameplay. Based on these notes, I wrote my analysis in different categories and added some suggestions to make the game better.

### 5.1.1 First Time User Experience

**Analysis:**

The game begins immediately with Level 1 following the Grand logo, accompanied by a basic "Tap to move bottle" instruction. The first level features two tubes containing different colored liquids. Levels 1 through 4 serve as a tutorial phase, clearly explaining the game mechanics. Starting from Level 5, the player is introduced to the main menu.

The menu offers a rich structure, featuring sections such as Daily Challenge, Journey, Home, Leaderboard, and Shop. The user interface is intuitive and avoids visual clutter. The top left corner includes the profile section, the top center shows the player's in-game currency and lives, and the top right provides access to settings. The layout and overall menu experience are strongly reminiscent of games like Royal Match.

The tutorial itself is sufficient in teaching the gameplay, but it does not introduce the menu or explain the broader progression systems. Within levels, there are three hints available: undo move, shuffle, and add a bottle. While their icons are relatively self-explanatory, there is no tooltip or pop-up guidance, which might create confusion, particularly for younger or casual players.

From Level 7 onward, new features are introduced, such as hidden liquid layers. In this mechanic, a blacked-out segment with a question mark conceals the color of a liquid until it rises to the top of the bottle. This adds variety and challenge to the gameplay. By Level 10, players begin to receive rewards through the "Journey" system, reinforcing progression.

## 5.1.2 Game Mechanics

**Analysis:**

The core gameplay revolves around sorting colored liquids within multiple bottles on the screen. Each bottle consists of four layers, which may contain different colors. The objective is to group all liquid segments of the same color into a single bottle so that it is fully sorted and capped. Once all bottles are organized correctly, the level is completed.

As the player progresses, new mechanics are gradually introduced. These include hidden colors, where the bottom layer of a bottle is obscured by a black fill and only revealed once it reaches the top, and locked bottles that remain inactive until others are fully sorted. The tutorial provided

in the first four levels explains the core mechanics clearly, and the rules are intuitive enough that misunderstanding is unlikely.

The game requires strategic thinking, but there are no time limits or move restrictions. Certain logic rules, such as being unable to pour a green liquid on top of red, reinforce puzzle discipline. Most puzzles can be solved in more than one way, allowing for flexibility in how players approach each level. There is no single correct solution, which encourages experimentation and replayability.

### 5.1.3 Level Design

**Analysis:**

Among all the games analyzed, this title presents the most consistent and gradual increase in difficulty. If we were to represent it hypothetically, Level 10 might feel like 5 percent difficulty, Level 15 like 7.5 percent, and Level 20 around 10 percent. These numbers are illustrative, but they reflect the game's smooth and predictable challenge curve, which allows players to grow with the mechanics at a steady pace.

Levels are accessed via a button in the main menu, and each stage builds upon the previous one with subtle increases in complexity. The layout remains visually consistent, but added features and more complex color combinations contribute to evolving puzzle dynamics. The progression feels fair and well-paced, which makes the game ideal for both casual players and those seeking deeper engagement over time.

### 5.1.4 Level Difficulty

**Analysis:**

The game introduces difficulty in a steady and accessible manner. While early levels are extremely simple and focused on teaching basic mechanics, the complexity increases through the

introduction of layered interactions, such as hidden colors and locked bottles. These features are spaced out gradually, giving players enough time to adapt before encountering more advanced logic challenges.

There are no time or move restrictions, which reduces stress and allows players to focus entirely on solving the puzzle. Difficulty is driven by an increase in the number of bottles, color variety, and visual obstructions. The challenge builds in a way that feels natural — never overwhelming, but always requiring more planning and foresight with each stage.

Notably, the absence of a fail state (like running out of moves or time) means players can experiment freely, which encourages problem-solving rather than punishing mistakes. This design supports a wide range of players, from casual to more dedicated puzzle fans, while still keeping the experience engaging throughout.

### 5.1.5 Monetization

**Analysis:**

Monetization in Magic Sort! is limited to a few standard options available in the shop: gold, lives, hints, and a one-time no-ads purchase. These are presented clearly within the menu, but there are no layered monetization systems or cosmetic purchases to deepen player engagement.

The gold earned through gameplay can be used to buy extra hints or refill lives, but beyond that, it lacks meaningful utility. There are no visual upgrades, collectible items, or progression-linked rewards to spend on, which reduces the sense of ownership or personalization. The shop does its job functionally, but it offers little incentive for ongoing investment.

Overall, the game takes a minimalist approach to monetization, which may be user-friendly for casual players but offers little appeal to more invested users looking for value, exclusivity, or progression-based purchases.

### 5.1.6 Visual Effects & Animations

**Analysis:**
Magic Sort! delivers a polished visual experience that feels current and well-maintained. The animations are smooth and responsive, contributing to a satisfying user experience. Bottles react with a subtle bounce or glow when tapped, providing tactile feedback that enhances player immersion. The liquid-pouring animations are fluid and visually engaging, clearly showing the movement and layering of different colors.

The main menu also features dynamic visuals, with soft transitions and UI elements that feel modern and intentionally designed. The use of celebratory effects after completing a level—such as fireworks and confetti—adds a rewarding emotional payoff, reinforcing a sense of achievement.

Unlike many similar puzzle titles that rely on static interfaces, Magic Sort! successfully integrates micro-animations and visual flourishes to maintain a sense of liveliness throughout the session. The game gives the strong impression of being recently updated or freshly launched, thanks to its clean UI, responsive animations, and attention to detail.

### 5.1.7 Core Loop

**Analysis:**

Among the games analyzed, Magic Sort! offers one of the most thoughtfully designed and engaging core loops. At its heart, the loop revolves around a satisfying puzzle mechanic: sort colors, complete the level, collect rewards, and return for more. However, what sets this game apart is how it extends that loop beyond basic level progression.

The Daily Challenge system plays a critical role in player retention. Each day, the game presents a new level using the same core mechanics but enhanced with unique visual effects and environmental changes. This makes returning to the game feel fresh while maintaining familiarity. Additionally, the daily reward calendar encourages consistent engagement, with higher-value rewards given at key milestones, such as the 30th day.

The Journey mode acts as a narrative-inspired progression track that visually marks the player's long-term advancement. Every 20 levels, the main menu background updates to reflect this journey, giving players a sense of movement and accomplishment. This subtle but effective change helps maintain emotional investment in the experience.

While the Leaderboard is relatively simple, it provides a baseline for competition and motivates some players to push further. Combined with the overall polish and strong visual design, the core loop manages to balance routine gameplay with just enough variety, reward, and personalization to keep players coming back regularly.

**Prepared by :**

Mehmet Hakan DURMAZ
+905052662509
durmazmhakan@gmail.com