

Contents:

- Introduction
- Quick How-To / Rules Reminder
- Game Flow
- General Rules
- Values
- Rewards
- Dialogue Choices
- Goals
- Pre-Turn Actions
 - Mindset Cards
 - Insight Actions
- Reaction Cards
- Heuristics

Introduction:

Welcome to the prototype of the UinU's conversation system. If you're reading this, I've invited you to help me playtest this piece of trash. Thank you so much! I trust that through your participation in tearing it apart at the seams, we'll be able to reconstruct this system into something more fun, whether on a systematic level or on a granular one.

This subsystem, currently emulated in Board Game Simulator--let me know if you don't have this and I can buy it for you--is a representation of various conversations in the UinU. It's an attempt to make choosing dialogue options more ludonarrative without opening the 'the players actions should all matter' can of worms. If the system works, it should be a moderate-paced experience that weaves gameplay together with dialogue to give a bit more perspective on the characters participating.

Quick How-To / Rules Reminder:

If you're itching to get straight to it and not read the rest of this wundabar manual, here's the long and short:

When reading this Quick How-To, if anything seems like it needs more details, but it's bolded, then you can assume that another section goes into explaining it in more detail.

As a general rule, the cards do what they say. Read them to know what to do. Any rule below applies *unless a card says otherwise*.

As a general rule, any values in a *box with sharp edges* will cost or require something.

As a general rule, any values in a *box with round edges* will grant you something.

As a general rule, all cards start off hidden. The exceptions are your **Goals**, your **Mindset Deck**, and your hand. *Hidden* cards can be revealed through **Insight Actions**.

Your objectives in each conversation are: pick **Dialogue Choices**, achieve **Goals**, and gain **Rewards**. You'll have three major tools to get there: **Mindset Cards**, **Insight Actions** and a **Reaction**.

Upon achieving **Goals** and **Dialogue Choices**, players receive certain **Rewards** in the form of **Ethos**, **Logos** and **Pathos**.

Ethos, in this context, represents growing respect for one another. It is depicted by the golden pentagon. At the end of a conversation, Ethos may be spent to acquire new cards from other players.

Logos, in this context, represents a growing appreciation for one another's thoughts. It is depicted by the titanium hexagon. In the full game, the reward would act as experience toward improved teamwork and combos in combat.

Pathos, in this context, represents a growing appreciation for one another's feelings. It is depicted by the purple heptagon. In the full game, the reward would act as experience toward new abilities in combat.

Each conversation, there is at least one AI player trying to achieve their own **Goals** and aim toward a **Dialogue Choice**. Your job is to work with them (or against them) to reach **Choices** together and maybe help them achieve their **Goals** as well.

The AI's behavior is always detailed on cards called **Heuristics**. This behavior is separated out into a green **Pre-Action** and red **Reaction** card. They start hidden, but you can reveal them through **Insight Actions**. Rules at the top come into play before rules on the bottom.

Investment and **Intrigue**--the red circle and green square respectively--are values that grow throughout the conversation. They primarily exist to direct the **Dialogue Choices**. Raising them the right amount to get the **Dialogue Choices** you want.

Patience--the grey diamond--is a special value that goes up and down in ranks rather than accumulating. It can never go below one (1) or above five (5). Many **Dialogue Choices** require **Patience** to be a particular rank.

Insight--the blue diamond--is a value spent to take **Insight Actions**. This allows players to learn more about other players. Get more to reveal other players' cards.

Goal Cards are cards that state various actions the characters would feel positively toward if achieved, even if they aren't always aware of it. The card will note the requirements that must be met to receive its **Reward**.

If a **Goal** opens up a new action for you to take, this is considered a **Pre-Turn Action** and can be taken as many times as you are able.

Goal Cards are optional. If they seem too hard to get, focus on **Dialogue Choices**.

Dialogue Choices are cards that represent potential routes the players' conversation may take. At the top of each card is the equation representing the value requirements to achieve that particular choice. Below that is a blurb representing your perspective when that choice is taken. At the bottom of the card is any immediate **Reward** you would get from picking that particular choice.

Dialogue Choices are mutually exclusive. If you're meeting the requirements for one, you won't be meeting the requirements for another.

Sometimes there will be an obviously better dialogue option. Sometimes not.

At the beginning of play, a **Context Card** is revealed, noting the cards each player will be able to play as well as any special rules for those turns. After this, all players draw five (5) cards for their opening hand.

Your turn can be split into two segments: **Pre-Turn Actions** and **The Reaction**.

Pre-Turn Actions do not take up your turn. These include, but are not limited to: **Mindset Actions**, **Insight Actions**, **Context Actions** and **Goal Actions**. They may not end your turn, but they may have other limitations.

The Reaction ends your turn. To repeat, as soon as you play a **Reaction Card**, the turn ends.

Mindset Cards are constant changes to the way a player is viewing the situation. These are persistent effects that change the nature of the game in some way over time.

Your mindset deck and all cards in it are available to you at all times.

A player may take *exactly one* of these mindset actions a turn: *play a mindset card* or *dismiss a mindset card*. Playing a **Mindset Card** usually costs some value. Dismissing a **Mindset Card** usually costs some value.

Exactly one **Mindset Card** per player may be in play at any point in time. To play another, the card must be dismissed.

Insight Actions represent the nonverbal transference of information. In game, this means revealing a hidden card. *To reveal any hidden card will cost two (2) **Insight**.*

Players may reveal an *indefinite number* of cards in a turn, as long as they have **Insight** to spend.

There is a particularly important **Insight Action** called **Signalling**. For the sake of this description, the player taking the **Signal** action will be known as the **Sender** whereas the player whose card is being **Signalled** will be called the **Receiver**.

Senders cannot **Signal** their own cards.

Senders can **Signal** any revealed cards at the cost of *one (1) **Insight***. Additionally, they may pay an extra cost of *up to two (2) of any non-Patience value*. This extra cost is known as the **Ante**.

If the **Receiver** takes an action involving the **Signalled** card (e.g. playing it, dismissing it, activating an effect, targeting it, etc.) they will receive the **Ante**.

Players can signal *exactly* once a turn.

The **Signal** and **Ante** lasts until your next turn. After which, the value put into the **Ante** is lost.

Some rounds, the **Context Card** will reveal a special action that can be taken that round. This is known as the **Context Action**. Unless stated otherwise, these may be taken an *indefinite number* of times, limited only by whether the player meets the requirements to take the **Context Action**.

Some **Goals** request special actions known as **Goal Actions** to achieve their **Reward**. Unless stated otherwise, these may be taken an *indefinite number* of times, limited only by whether the player meets the requirements to take the **Goal Actions**.

Reaction Cards are cards hidden in your hand that, when played, increase (or in very rare cases *decrease*) values. When played, gain the value noted on the card and activate any effects noted.

Once you play a Reaction Card, your turn ends.

If you are ever unable to play a **Reaction Card**, discard your hand and draw a new one.

At the end of your turn, draw a card.

You have a maximum hand size of five (5). If, at the end of your turn, you have more than five (5) cards, you must discard down to the maximum hand size.

Game Flow:

In general, Conversations progress in this format:

*Opening > **Select Approach** > **Play** > Dialogue Snippet > **Play** > Dialogue Snippet > ...*

Each instance of **Play** listed above breaks down as such:

Reveal Context Card > Game Start > *Pre-Turn Actions* > *Play Reaction Card* > **End of Turn Actions** > *Pre-Turn Actions* > ... [For X Turns]

Now let's decode all that...

Macro-Flow:

Opening:	This is the dialogue that sets the scene. It narratively contextualizes the situation that will be playing out.
Select Approach:	This is a gameplay element that allows the player to select a general 'approach' to the conversation. These are previews of the ways the perspective character is capable of responding. The player is provided a preview of the associated Goals, a blurb summarizing the character's reasoning for the approach, and a preview of potential rewards down that route.
Play:	The point where players use cards to change values leading to particular choices.
Dialogue Snippet:	Dialogue to contextualize the choice determined during Play, setting the scene for the next segment of Play, or ending the scene if there are no more rounds of Play available.

Flow of Play:

Reveal Context Card:	Happens at the beginning of any round of Play. Determines the number of turns available to both players--for example, if the card
-----------------------------	---

reads '5', *each* player will be able to play five cards before the next Dialogue Snippet. Also determines any other rules that may need to be followed this round--for instance, maybe for a round, all Investment gains are halved.

Game Start: All players draw five (5) cards. All of a player's mindset cards are available from the beginning.

Pre-Turn Actions: The point in play where one can play or dismiss mindset cards, take Insight Actions, or respond to context cards. Essentially anything in the turn that doesn't involve playing a Reaction Card.

Play Reaction Card: What It Says On The Tin. Ends the turn.


End of Turn Actions: Drawing a card, discarding down to five, moving the Reaction Card played to the discard pile. Moves on to the next player's Pre-Turn Actions.


General Rules:


Drawing a card, discarding down to five, moving the Reaction Card played to the discard pile. Moves on to the next player's Pre-Turn Actions.

Values:

We've mentioned values here and there, so let's get to answering the implicit question: what *is* a value? Values are a representation of how much and in what way a character is involved in the conversation. There are four major values:

 Patience, depicted by a grey diamond, is a value that represents the energy the character has to continue the conversation. Patience can never go below one (1) or above five (5). Many **Dialogue Choices** require **Patience** to be a particular rank.

 Insight, depicted by a blue triangle, is a value that represents the nonverbal transference of information. Insight is usually not a value that is usually considered in Dialogue Choice equations, and is mostly used to spend on gathering more information about the other characters. **See more in Insight Actions.**

 Intrigue, depicted by a green square, is a value that represents a character's interest in the topic of discussion. Intrigue is primarily used to manipulate Dialogue Choice equations.



Investment, depicted by a red circle, is a value that represents a character's emotional connection to the conversation. Investment is primarily used to manipulate Dialogue Choice equations.

The game generally revolves around controlling these values and moving them in the direction toward the choices you are aiming for.

Rewards:

Rewards represent a deepening of the bond between the characters conversing. There are three major types of reward.



Ethos, in this context, represents growing respect for one another. It is depicted by the golden pentagram. At the end of a conversation, Ethos may be spent to acquire new cards from other players.



Logos, in this context, represents a growing appreciation for one another's thoughts. It is depicted by the titanium hexagon. In the full game, the reward would act as experience toward improved teamwork and combos in combat.



Pathos, in this context, represents a growing appreciation for one another's feelings. It is depicted by the purple heptagon. In the full game, the reward would act as experience toward new abilities in combat.

Dialogue Choices:

Dialogue Choices are your targets when you're playing through the conversation. By manipulating the values, you can skew a conversation toward one or another **Dialogue Choice**.

Dialogue Choices are split up into three segments:

1. Equation
2. Blurb
3. Bonus

The equation is a statement that must be true for the dialogue option to be selected.

The blurb is a characterization of the choice from the perspective character.

The bonus is any **Reward** value gained from directing toward that **Dialogue Choice**.


$$\downarrow V + 2 * \uparrow V \geq 40$$

I've gotta be careful about this... consider my words. Any wrong word could give the wrong impression.



Goals:

Goal Cards are cards that state various actions the characters would feel positively toward if achieved, even if they aren't always aware of it. These are generally less important than getting the **Dialogue Options** and exist to add extra challenge, however, they may also lead to some optional dialogue or events down the line.

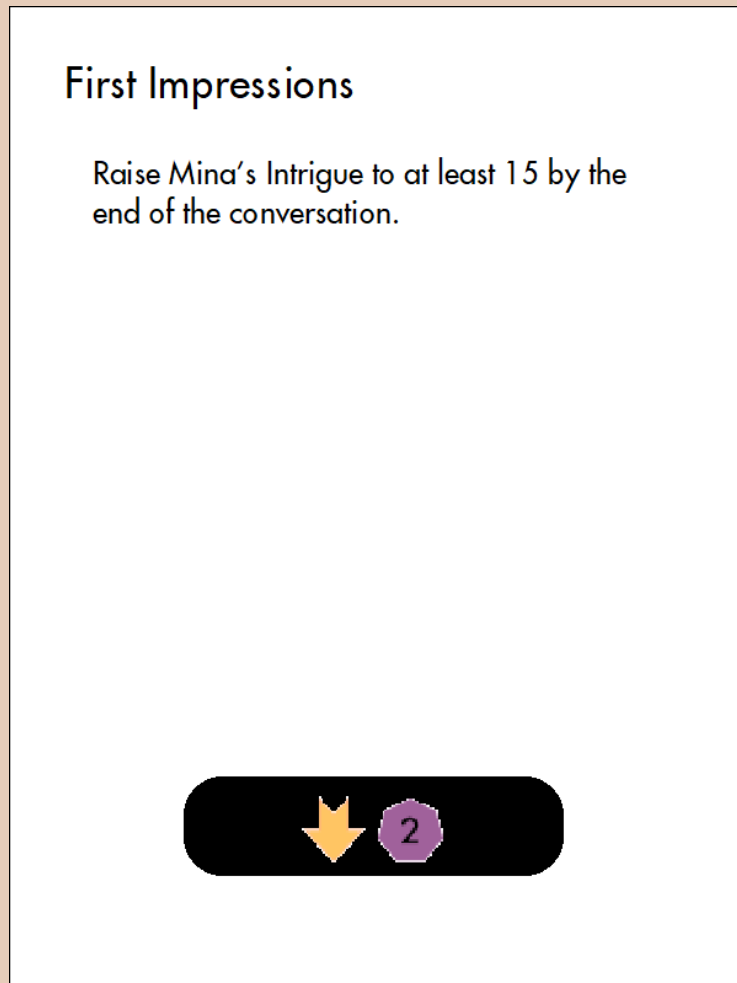
Goals are generally broken down into three parts:

1. Name
2. Description
3. Bonus

The name is the moniker of the goal, for identification purposes.

The description details what must be achieved to reach that goal.

The bonus represents any **Rewards** gained by completing the Goal.



Pre-Turn Actions:

A **Pre-Turn Action** is any action that can be taken that doesn't end the turn (unless a card says otherwise). These can broadly be broken down into **Mindset Card Actions** and **Insight Actions**.

Mindset Cards:

Mindset Cards are constant changes to the way a player is viewing the situation. By playing a mindset card, the player is essentially flavoring all the reactions they take in a certain direction. The result? Persistent effects that modify the nature of the game.

In general, Mindset Cards do something upon entering, have some persistent effect on the flow of play, and do something upon exiting. However, unless a card says otherwise, **only one mindset card may be in play per player at a time.**

During the Pre-Turn, a player may *either* **play a mindset card** or **dismiss a mindset card**. Unless a card says otherwise, only one of these actions may be taken a turn.

To play a Mindset Card, first you must pay any costs, as noted in the upper left-hand corner of the card. Then, the card is put into the field of play and any Enter Effect triggers.

To dismiss a Mindset Card, first you must pay any costs, as noted directly below the illustration. Then, the card is returned to the Mindset Deck and any Exit Effect triggers.

To help illustrate these concepts, I'll pull up an example:



Enter:

All other players gain your choice of either two (2) Investment or two (2) Intrigue. Place a token on this card indicating the chosen resource.

Effects

At the beginning of each other participants' turn, they gain three (3) of the resource indicated on the token on this card. At the beginning of your turn, lose one (1) rank of Patience.

Exit

This card, *New Start, New You*. This mindset card would start in the mindset deck and thus be available to the player from turn one (1). Looking to the top-left of the card shows the card's cost: three (3) Investment from oneself.

Let's say we pay that three (3) Investment. The card is put into the field of play and its Enter Effect activates: we now have a choice between other players gaining five (5) Investment or five (5) Intrigue. Let's say we pick 'Intrigue' and determine some marker to remember it.

From then on, the card stays in play until we dismiss it, gaining other players two (2) Intrigue and then for ourselves, losing one (1) rank of Patience.

It's important to note that we can't play the card and dismiss it in the same turn.

So, if we want to dismiss the card, we'll have to wait until our turn rolls around again and pay the dismiss cost--in this case, zero (0) Intrigue. Then, after it's dismissed, we return it to the Mindset Deck and the Exit Effect triggers--in this case, nothing happens.

Insight Actions:

Insight allows a player to learn more about their fellows. This comes mostly in the form of revealing cards that are hidden, making information known to you and also **Signallable**.

To reveal a card, a player must spend **two (2) Insight**. Information that can be revealed includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Cards in Other Players' Hands
- Other Players' Goals
- Other Players' Heuristics
- The Top Card of Your Reaction Deck
- The Top Card of Other Players' Reaction Decks
- The Top Card of the Context Deck

In general, if it's face down, you can reveal it.

Players may reveal an indefinite number of cards in a turn, as long as they have Insight to spend.

Once a card is revealed, you become able to **Signal** it. This generally represents a person trying to coax a certain reaction out of another.

For the sake of this description, the player performing the **Signal Action** will be known as the **Sender** whereas the player whose card is being **Signalled** will be called the **Receiver**.

Senders cannot **Signal** their own cards.

Senders can **Signal** any revealed cards at the cost of one (1) **Insight**. Additionally, they may pay an extra cost of up to two (2) of any **non-Patience** value. This extra cost is known as the **Ante**.

If the **Receiver** takes an action involving the **Signalled** card (e.g. playing it, dismissing it, activating an effect, targeting it, etc.) they will receive the **Ante**.

Players can **Signal** exactly *once* a turn.

The **Signal** and **Ante** lasts until your next turn. After which, the value put into the Ante is lost.

Reaction Cards:

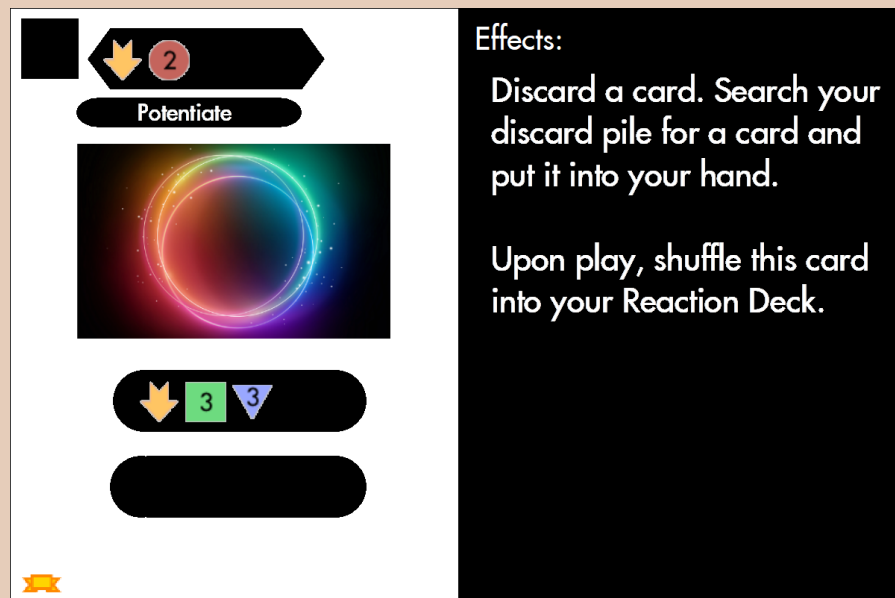
Reaction cards are the main mode of manipulating values in the game, and the bread and butter of play. They represent the direct 'reaction' the player has to what's said.

If you are ever unable to play a **Reaction Card**, discard your hand and draw a new one.

Reaction cards are generally straightforward, generally breaking down to reading the card and working with its rules:

1. Pay any associated cost.
2. Collect the values listed below the illustration.
3. Activate any effects on the card.

For example:



To play 'Potentiate,' first the player must pay two (2) Investment. Then, they gain three (3) Intrigue and four (4) Insight. Finally, activate the effect, searching for a card in the discard pile or drawing a card, then discarding.

Heuristics:

A **Heuristic** is a special kind of card that represents the behavior of the other players. When revealed, they note in detail the actions that their associated player will take.

Heuristic cards are split up into rules. Each rule describes a behavior a player will take, order in top to bottom precedence. What this means is that rules on the top will be completed before rules on the bottom, even if it means that the bottom rules never come into play.

The green card represents their Pre-Turn behaviors. The red card represents their Reaction Card behaviors.