A **game** is structured [playing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Play_(activity)), usually undertaken for [enjoyment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enjoyment) and sometimes used as an [educational](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education) tool. Games are distinct from [work](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manual_labour), which is usually carried out for [remuneration](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/remuneration), and from [art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art), which is more often an expression of aesthetic or ideological elements. However, the distinction is not clear-cut, and many games are also considered to be work (such as professional players of spectator sports/games) or art (such as [jigsaw puzzles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jigsaw_puzzle) or games involving an artistic layout such as [Mahjong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahjong), [solitaire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solitaire), or some [video games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_games)).

Key components of games are goals, [rules](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/rule), [challenge](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/challenge), and [interaction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interaction). Games generally involve mental or physical stimulation, and often both. Many games help develop practical [skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skills), serve as a form of [exercise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exercise), or otherwise perform an[educational](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education), [simulational](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulation" \o "Simulation), or [psychological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology) role.

Attested as early as 2600 BC,[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game" \l "cite_note-1)[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-2) games are a universal part of human experience and present in all cultures. The [Royal Game of Ur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Game_of_Ur), [Senet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senet" \o "Senet), and [Mancala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mancala" \o "Mancala) are some of the oldest known games.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-3)

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Definitions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f8/Wiktionary-logo-en.svg/37px-Wiktionary-logo-en.svg.png | Look up [***game***](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/game) in Wiktionary, the free dictionary. |

**Ludwig Wittgenstein**

[Ludwig Wittgenstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Wittgenstein) was probably the first academic philosopher to address the definition of the word *game*. In his [*Philosophical Investigations*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophical_Investigations),[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-wittgen-4) Wittgenstein argued that the elements of games, such as [play](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Play_(activity)), rules, and [competition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competition), all fail to adequately define what games are. From this, Wittgenstein concluded that people apply the term *game* to a range of disparate human activities that bear to one another only what one might call family resemblances. As the following game definitions show, this conclusion was not a final one and today many philosophers, like Thomas Hurka, think that Wittgenstein was wrong and that Bernard Suits' definition is a good answer to the problem. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-5)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Children.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Children.jpg)

[*Children's Games*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children%27s_Games_(Bruegel)), 1560, [Pieter Bruegel the Elder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder)

**Roger Caillois**

French sociologist [Roger Caillois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Caillois), in his book *Les jeux et les hommes (Games and Men)*,[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game" \l "cite_note-callois-6) defined a game as an activity that must have the following characteristics:

* *fun*: the activity is chosen for its light-hearted character
* *separate*: it is circumscribed in time and place
* *uncertain*: the outcome of the activity is unforeseeable
* *non-productive*: participation does not accomplish anything useful
* *governed by rules*: the activity has rules that are different from everyday life
* *fictitious*: it is accompanied by the awareness of a different reality

**Chris Crawford**

Computer game designer [Chris Crawford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Crawford_(game_designer)), founder of [The Journal of Computer Game Design](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Journal_of_Computer_Game_Design&action=edit&redlink=1), has attempted to define the term *game*[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-craw-7) using a series of [dichotomies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dichotomy):

1. Creative expression is [*art*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art) if made for its own beauty, and [*entertainment*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment) if made for [money](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Money).
2. A piece of entertainment is a [*plaything*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Play_(activity)) if it is [interactive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interactive). [Movies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movies) and [books](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book) are cited as examples of non-interactive entertainment.
3. If no goals are associated with a plaything, it is a [*toy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toy). *(Crawford notes that by his definition, (a) a toy can become a game element if the player makes up rules, and (b)* [The Sims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sims) *and* [SimCity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SimCity) *are toys, not games.)* If it has goals, a plaything is a *challenge*.
4. If a challenge has no "active agent against whom you compete," it is a [*puzzle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puzzle); if there is one, it is a *conflict*. *(Crawford admits that this is a subjective test. Video games with noticeably*[*algorithmic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algorithm)[*artificial intelligence*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence)*can be played as puzzles; these include the patterns used to evade*[*ghosts in Pac-Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pac-Man#Ghosts)*.)*
5. Finally, if the player can only outperform the opponent, but not attack them to interfere with their performance, the conflict is a *competition*. *(Competitions include*[*racing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racing)*and*[*figure skating*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figure_skating)*.)* However, if attacks are allowed, then the conflict qualifies as a game.

Crawford's definition may thus be rendered as[*[original research?](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:No_original_research" \o "Wikipedia:No original research)*]: an interactive, goal-oriented activity, with active agents to play against, in which players (including active agents) can interfere with each other.

**Other definitions**

* "A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome." ([Katie Salen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katie_Salen) and [Eric Zimmerman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Zimmerman))[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-8)
* "A game is a form of art in which participants, termed *players*, make decisions in order to manage resources through game tokens in the pursuit of a goal." ([Greg Costikyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greg_Costikyan))[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-9) According to this definition, some "games" that do not involve choices, such as [Chutes and Ladders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chutes_and_Ladders),[Candy Land](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candy_Land" \o "Candy Land), and [War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_(card_game)) are not technically games any more than a slot machine is.
* "A game is an *activity* among two or more independent *decision-makers* seeking to achieve their *objectives* in some *limiting context.*" ([Clark C. Abt](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Clark_C._Abt&action=edit&redlink=1))[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-10)
* "At its most elementary level then we can define game as an exercise of voluntary control systems in which there is an opposition between forces, confined by a procedure and rules in order to produce a disequilibrial outcome." ([Elliot Avedon](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Elliot_Avedon&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Brian Sutton-Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Sutton-Smith))[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-11)
* "A game is a form of play with goals and structure." ([Kevin J. Maroney](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kevin_J._Maroney&action=edit&redlink=1))[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-12)
* "to play a game is to engage in activity directed toward bringing about a speciﬁc state of affairs, using only means permitted by speciﬁc rules, where the means permitted by the rules are more limited in scope than they would be in the absence of the rules, and where the sole reason for accepting such limitation is to make possible such activity." ([Bernard Suits](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bernard_Suits&action=edit&redlink=1))[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-13)
* "When you strip away the genre differences and the technological complexities, all games share four defining traits: a goal, rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation." ([Jane McGonigal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_McGonigal))[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-14)

Gameplay elements and classification

Games can be characterized by "what the player does."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-craw-7) This is often referred to as [gameplay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gameplay). Major key elements identified in this context are tools and rules that define the overall context of game.

**Tools**

Games are often classified by the components required to play them (e.g. [miniatures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miniatures_game), a [ball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball_game), [cards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Card_game), [a board and pieces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_game), or a [computer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_game)). In places where the use of [leather](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leather) is well established, the ball has been a popular game piece throughout recorded history, resulting in a worldwide popularity of ball games such as [rugby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_football), [basketball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball), [football](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_football), [cricket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricket), [tennis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis), and [volleyball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volleyball). Other tools are more idiosyncratic to a certain region. Many countries in Europe, for instance, have unique standard decks of [playing cards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_card). Other games such as [chess](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess) may be traced primarily through the development and evolution of its game pieces.

Many game tools are tokens, meant to represent other things. A token may be a pawn on a board, [play money](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Play_money), or an intangible item such as a point scored.

Games such as [hide-and-seek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hide-and-seek) or [tag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_(game)) do not utilise any obvious tool; rather, their interactivity is defined by the environment. Games with the same or similar rules may have different gameplay if the environment is altered. For example, hide-and-seek in a [school](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School) building differs from the same game in a [park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park); an [auto race](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auto_race) can be radically different depending on the [track](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_track) or [street](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Street_racing) course, even with the same cars.

**Rules**

Whereas games are often characterized by their tools, they are often defined by their rules. While rules are [subject to variations and changes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_rules), enough change in the rules usually results in a "new" game. For instance, [baseball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baseball) can be played with "real" baseballs or with [wiffleballs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiffleball" \o "Wiffleball). However, if the players decide to play with only three bases, they are arguably playing a different game. There are exceptions to this in that some games deliberately involve the changing of their own rules, but even then there are often immutable [meta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta)-rules.

Rules generally determine turn order, the rights and responsibilities of the players, and each player’s goals. Player rights may include when they may spend resources or move tokens. Common win conditions are being first to amass a certain quota of points or tokens (as in [Settlers of Catan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Settlers_of_Catan)), having the greatest number of tokens at the end of the game (as in [Monopoly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monopoly_(game))), or some relationship of one’s game tokens to those of one’s opponent (as in chess's [checkmate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Checkmate)).

**Skill, strategy, and chance**

A game’s tools and rules will result in its requiring [skill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skill), [strategy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategy), [luck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luck), or a combination thereof, and are classified accordingly.

[Games of skill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Games_of_skill) include games of physical skill, such as [wrestling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrestling), [tug of war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tug_of_war), [hopscotch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopscotch), [target shooting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shooting_sport), and [stake](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stake_(lawn_game)&action=edit&redlink=1), and games of mental skill such as [checkers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Checkers) and [chess](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess). [Games of strategy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Games_of_strategy) include checkers, chess, [go](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Go_(board_game)), [arimaa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arimaa" \o "Arimaa), and [tic-tac-toe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tic-tac-toe), and often require special equipment to play them. [Games of chance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Games_of_chance) include gambling games ([blackjack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackjack), [mah-jongg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mah-jongg), [roulette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roulette), etc.), as well as [snakes and ladders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snakes_and_ladders) and [rock, paper, scissors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock,_paper,_scissors); most require equipment such as cards or [dice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dice). However, most games contain two or all three of these elements. For example,[American football](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_football) and [baseball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baseball) involve both physical skill and strategy while [tiddlywinks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiddlywinks), [poker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poker), and [Monopoly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monopoly_(game)) combine strategy and chance. Many card and board games combine all three; most [trick-taking games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trick-taking_game) involve mental skill, strategy, and an element of chance, as do many strategic board games such as [Risk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk_(game)), [Settlers of Catan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Settlers_of_Catan), and [Carcassonne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carcassonne_(board_game)).

**Single-player games**

Most games require multiple players. However, single-player games are unique in respect to the type of challenges a player faces. Unlike a game with multiple players competing with or against each other to reach the game's goal, a one-player game is a battle solely against an element of the environment (an artificial opponent), against one's own skills, against time, or against chance. Playing with a [yo-yo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yo-yo) or playing [tennis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis) against a wall is not generally recognized as playing a game due to the lack of any formidable opposition.

It is not valid to describe a [computer game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_game) as [single-player](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-player_video_game) where the computer provides opposition. If the computer is merely record-keeping, then the game may be validly single-player.

Many games described as "single-player" may be termed actually puzzles or recreations.

Types

*See also:*[*List of types of games*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_types_of_games)

Games can take a variety of forms, from competitive [sports](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport) to [board games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_game) and [video games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game).

**Sports**

*Main article:*[*Sport*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UEFA-Women%27s_Cup_Final_2005_at_Potsdam_1.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UEFA-Women%27s_Cup_Final_2005_at_Potsdam_1.jpg)

[Association football](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_(soccer)) is a popular sport worldwide.

Many sports require special equipment and dedicated playing fields, leading to the involvement of a community much larger than the group of players. A [city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City) or [town](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Town) may set aside such resources for the organization of sports leagues.

Popular sports may have [spectators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spectator_sport) who are entertained just by watching games. A community will often align itself with a local sports team that supposedly represents it (even if the team or most of its players only recently moved in); they often align themselves against their opponents or have traditional rivalries. The concept of [fandom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fan_(aficionado)) began with sports fans.

[Stanley Fish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Fish) cited[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*] the balls and strikes of baseball as a clear example of [social construction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_construction), the operation of rules on the game's tools. While the [strike zone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_zone) target is governed by the rules of the game, it epitomizes the category of things that exist only because people have agreed to treat them as real. No pitch is a [ball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_zone#ball) or a [strike](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_zone#strike) until it has been labeled as such by an appropriate authority, the plate [umpire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umpire_(baseball)), whose judgment on this matter cannot be challenged within the current game.

Certain competitive sports, such as [racing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racing) and [gymnastics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gymnastics), are not games by definitions such as Crawford's (see above) – despite the inclusion of many in the [Olympic Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Games) – because competitors do not interact with their opponents; they simply challenge each other in indirect ways.

**Lawn games**

[Lawn games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawn_game) are outdoor games that can be played on a [lawn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawn); an area of mowed grass (or alternately, on graded soil) generally smaller than a "field" or [pitch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_(sports)). Variations of many games that are traditionally played on a [pitch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_(sports)) are [marketed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing) as "lawn games" for home use in a front or back yard. Common lawn games include [horseshoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horseshoes), [sholf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sholf" \o "Sholf), [croquet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croquet), [bocce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bocce), [lawn bowls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawn_bowls), and [stake](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stake_(lawn_game)&action=edit&redlink=1).

**Tabletop games**

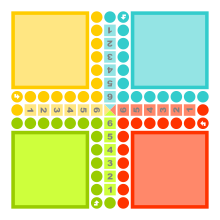
*Main article:*[*Tabletop game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabletop_game)

A tabletop game generally refers to any game where the elements of play are confined to a small area and that require little physical exertion, usually simply placing, picking up and moving game pieces. Most of these games are, thus, played at a table around which the players are seated and on which the game's elements are located. A variety of major game types generally fall under the heading of tabletop games. It is worth noting that many games falling into this category, particularly [party games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_game), are more free-form in their play and can involve physical activity such as mime, however the basic premise is still that the game does not require a large area in which to play it, large amounts of strength or stamina, or specialized equipment other than what comes in the box (games sometimes require additional materials like pencil and paper that are easy to procure).

**Dexterity and coordination games**

This class of games includes any game in which the skill element involved relates to manual dexterity or hand-eye coordination, but excludes the class of video games (see below). Games such as [jacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knucklebones), [paper football](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_football), and [Jenga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jenga" \o "Jenga) require only very portable or improvised equipment and can be played on any flat level surface, while other examples, such as [pinball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinball), [billiards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billiards), [air hockey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_hockey), [foosball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foosball), and [table hockey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_hockey_games) require specialized tables or other self-contained modules on which the game is played. The advent of home video game systems largely replaced some of these, such as table hockey, however air hockey, billiards, pinball and foosball remain popular fixtures in private and public game rooms. These games and others, as they require reflexes and coordination, are generally performed more poorly by intoxicated persons but are unlikely to result in injury because of this; as such the games are popular as [drinking games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drinking_games). In addition, dedicated drinking games such as [quarters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarters_(drinking_game)) and [beer pong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beer_pong) also involve physical coordination and are popular for similar reasons.

**Board games**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PetitsChevaux1.svg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PetitsChevaux1.svg)

[Parcheesi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parcheesi) is an American adaptation of a board game originating in [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India).

*Main article:*[*Board game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_game)

Board games use as a central tool a board on which the players' status, resources, and progress are tracked using physical tokens. Many also involve [dice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dice) and/or cards. Most games that simulate war are board games (though a large number of video games have been created to simulate strategic combat; see "Video Games" below), and the board may be a map on which the players' tokens move. Virtually all board games involve "turn-based" play; one player contemplates and then makes a move, then the next player does the same, and a player can only act on their turn. This is opposed to "real-time" play as is found in some card games, most sports and most video games.

Some games, such as [chess](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess) and [Go](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Go_(game)), are entirely deterministic, relying only on the strategy element for their interest. Such games are usually described as having "perfect information"; the only unknown is the exact thought processes of one's opponent, not the outcome of any unknown event inherent in the game (such as a card draw or die roll). Children's games, on the other hand, tend to be very luck-based, with games such as [Candy Land](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candy_Land) and [Chutes and Ladders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chutes_and_Ladders) having virtually no decisions to be made. By some definitions, such as that by ([Greg Costikyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greg_Costikyan)), they are not games since there are no decisions to make to effect the outcome.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game#cite_note-15) Many other games involving a high degree of luck do not allow direct attacks between opponents; the random event simply determines a gain or loss in the standing of the current player within the game, which is independent of any other player; the "game" then is actually a "race" by definitions such as Crawford's.

Most other board games combine strategy and luck factors; the game of [backgammon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backgammon) requires players to decide the best strategic move based on the roll of two [dice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dice). Trivia games have a great deal of randomness based on the questions a person gets. [German-style board games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German-style_board_game) are notable for often having rather less of a luck factor than many board games.

Board game groups include [race games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_games), [roll-and-move](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Roll-and-move_board_games) games, [abstract strategy games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abstract_strategy_games), [word games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_games), and [wargames](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wargaming" \o "Wargaming), as well as the [trivia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trivia) and German-style board games mentioned above. Some board games fall into multiple groups and even incorporate elements of other genres: [Cranium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cranium_(game)) is one popular example, where players must succeed in each of four main skills: artistry, live performance, trivia, and language skill.

**Card games**

*Main article:*[*Card game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Card_game)

*Further information:*[*Collectible card game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectible_card_game)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Theodoor_Rombouts_-_Kaartspelers.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Theodoor_Rombouts_-_Kaartspelers.JPG)

*Playing Cards*, by [Theodoor Rombouts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodoor_Rombouts" \o "Theodoor Rombouts), 17th century

Card games use a deck of cards as their central tool. These cards may be a standard [Anglo-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_card#Anglo-American) (52-card) deck of [playing cards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_cards) (such as for [bridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract_Bridge), [poker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poker), [Rummy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rummy), etc.), a regional deck using 32, 36 or 40 cards and different suit signs (such as for the popular German game [skat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skat_(card_game)" \o "Skat (card game))), a [tarot deck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarot_card_games) of 78 cards (used in Europe to play a variety of [trick-taking games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trick-taking_game) collectively known as Tarot, Tarock, and/or Tarocchi games), or a deck specific to the individual game (such as [*Set*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Set_(game)) or[1000 Blank White Cards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1000_Blank_White_Cards)). [Uno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uno_(card_game)) and [Rook](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rook_(card_game)) are examples of games that were originally played with a standard deck and have since been commercialized with customized decks. Some [collectible card games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectible_card_game) such as [*Magic: The Gathering*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic:_The_Gathering) are played with a small selection of cards that have been collected or purchased individually from large available sets.

Some board games include a deck of cards as a gameplay element, normally for randomization and/or to keep track of game progress. Conversely, some card games such as [Cribbage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cribbage) use a board with movers, normally to keep score. The differentiation between the two genres in such cases depends on which element of the game is foremost in its play; a board game using cards for random actions can usually use some other method of randomization, while Cribbage can just as easily be scored on paper. These elements as used are simply the traditional and easiest methods to achieve their purpose.

**Dice games**

*Main article:*[*Dice game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dice_game)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Math_games_-_Big_Brother_Mouse_activity_day.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.24wmf8/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Math_games_-_Big_Brother_Mouse_activity_day.jpg)

Students in Laos use dice to improve numeracy skills. They roll three dice, then use basic math operations to combine those into a new number which they cover on the board. The goal is to cover four squares in the row.

Dice games use a number of [dice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dice) as their central element. Board games often use dice for a randomization element, and thus each roll of the dice has a profound impact on the outcome of the game, however dice games are differentiated in that the dice do not determine the success or failure of some other element of the game; they instead are the central indicator of the person's standing in the game. Popular dice games include *[Yahtzee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahtzee" \o "Yahtzee)*, [Farkle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farkle" \o "Farkle), [Bunco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunco), [Liar's dice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liar%27s_dice)/[Perudo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perudo" \o "Perudo), and [Poker dice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poker_dice). As dice are, by their very nature, designed to produce [apparently random numbers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Random_number_generator), these games usually involve a high degree of luck, which can be directed to some extent by the player through more strategic elements of play and through tenets of [probability theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Probability_theory). Such games are thus popular as gambling games; the game of [Craps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craps) is perhaps the most famous example, though Liar's dice and Poker dice were originally conceived of as gambling games.

**Domino and tile games**

*Main articles:*[*Tile-based game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tile-based_game)*and*[*Dominoes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominoes)

Domino games are similar in many respects to card games, but the generic device is instead a set of tiles called [dominoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominoes), which traditionally each have two ends, each with a given number of dots, or "pips", and each combination of two possible end values as it appears on a tile is unique in the set. The games played with dominoes largely center around playing a domino from the player's "hand" onto the matching end of another domino, and the overall object could be to always be able to make a play, to make all open endpoints sum to a given number or multiple, or simply to play all dominoes from one's hand onto the board. Sets vary in the number of possible dots on one end, and thus of the number of combinations and pieces; the most common set historically is *double-six*, though in more recent times "extended" sets such as *double-nine* have been introduced to increase the number of dominoes available, which allows larger hands and more players in a game.[Muggins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muggins), [Mexican Train](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Train), and [Chicken Foot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken_Foot_(domino_game)) are very popular domino games. [Texas 42](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_42) is a domino game more similar in its play to a "trick-taking" [card game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Card_game).

Variations of traditional dominoes abound: [Triominoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triominoes" \o "Triominoes) are similar in theory but are triangular and thus have three values per tile. Similarly, a game known as [Quad-Ominos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quad-Ominos) uses four-sided tiles.

Some other games use tiles in place of cards; [Rummikub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rummikub" \o "Rummikub) is a variant of the [Rummy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rummy) card game family that uses tiles numbered in ascending rank among four colors, very similar in makeup to a 2-deck "pack" of Anglo-American [playing cards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playing_cards).[Mah-Jongg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mah-Jongg) is another game very similar to [Rummy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rummy) that uses a set of tiles with card-like values and art.

Lastly, some games use graphical tiles to form a board layout, on which other elements of the game are played. [Settlers of Catan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Settlers_of_Catan) and [Carcassonne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carcassonne_(board_game)) are examples. In each, the "board" is made up of a series of tiles; in Settlers of Catan the starting layout is random but static, while in Carcassonne the game is played by "building" the board tile-by-tile. [Hive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hive_(game)), an abstract strategy game using tiles as moving pieces, has mechanical and strategic elements similar to [chess](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess), although it has no board; the pieces themselves both form the layout and can move within it.

**Pencil and paper games**

Pencil and paper games require little or no specialized equipment other than writing materials, though some such games have been commercialized as board games ([*Scrabble*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrabble), for instance, is based on the idea of a [crossword puzzle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossword_puzzle), and [tic-tac-toe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tic-tac-toe) sets with a boxed grid and pieces are available commercially). These games vary widely, from games centering on a design being drawn such as [*Pictionary*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictionary) and "connect-the-dots" games like [sprouts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprouts_(game)), to letter and word games such as [*Boggle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boggle) and *[Scattergories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scattergories" \o "Scattergories)*, to solitaire and logic puzzle games such as [Sudoku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudoku) and[crossword puzzles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossword_puzzles).

**Guessing games**

*Main article:*[*Guessing game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guessing_game)

A guessing game has as its core a piece of information that one player knows, and the object is to coerce others into guessing that piece of information without actually divulging it in text or spoken word. [Charades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charades) is probably the most well-known game of this type, and has spawned numerous commercial variants that involve differing rules on the type of communication to be given, such as [*Catch Phrase*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catch_Phrase_(game)), [*Taboo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo_(game)), [*Pictionary*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictionary), and similar. The genre also includes many [game shows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_shows) such as [*Win, Lose or Draw*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Win,_Lose_or_Draw), [*Password*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password_(game_show)) and [*$25,000 Pyramid*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/$25,000_Pyramid).

**Video games**