

Playtesting Log: Insights and Quantitative Game Revisions

This log details the quantitative and design insights gleaned during the playtesting phase, outlining the intentional adjustments made to achieve a more balanced and engaging gameplay experience.

Movement and Pacing Adjustments

Early in playtesting, we focused on movement mechanics, specifically testing with one versus two dice. The finding was that utilizing two dice was essential, as it provided the necessary range of movement (2–12) required for players to effectively traverse the seven regions of the board (four large and three small). Using only one die proved too slow and predictable.

We also addressed the pace of the board, with the idea arising that we might need "possibly less squares." While the precise final count of squares is not specified, this insight guided us to ensure that critical squares—such as the two Thief squares found in each large region, the Dual squares scattered around the board, and the strategic Bank sections—were placed optimally to promote interaction and resource cycling, thereby preventing the game from feeling overly long.

Balancing Luck and Streaks

A major quantitative focus was controlling the advantage gained by "Rolling doubles." We confirmed that if a player rolls doubles, they move, complete the action of the square, and are granted an extra turn (roll the dice again). However, playtesting quickly showed that a runaway leader could dominate the game through successive lucky rolls. The solution implemented was a mandatory penalty: if a player rolls doubles three consecutive times, they must immediately go to the closest thief square. We adopted the flavor text of calling this mandatory resource loss "donating to the less fortunate" (Conversation History). This introduces a calculated risk for players on a hot streak, balancing raw luck with unavoidable punishment.

Resource Penalty and Hoarding Deterrent

Extensive testing of the Thief squares was required to ensure the penalty was severe enough to deter players from hoarding tokens. The final quantitative revision dictates that if a player lands on a thief square, they must dispose of 50% of their tokens back to the bank. Crucially, if the player possesses an odd number of tokens, the amount lost must be rounded up (e.g., three tokens mean two are lost). This maximized penalty forces resource holders to constantly prioritize cashing in their tokens at the bank.

square to convert them into points, encouraging active scoring over passive accumulation.

Task Scoring and Victory Progression

We determined during testing that we "needed to change some of the task's points" (Conversation History). This quantitative revision established the final points structure where completing tasks found on the Action Cards yields 1 to 3 points depending on their difficulty. This tiered scoring ensures that tasks requiring more complex token combinations (e.g., 2- or 3-point tasks) are rewarded more heavily than simpler ones (like the prince's 1-point "Host a Royal Banquet," which requires 1 Port Token and 1 Farm Token). This balance ensures that players have multiple paths to reach the victory condition of ten points. Since every character starts with eight Action Cards, the efficiency of completing these higher-point tasks is critical to winning with the initial hand.

Player Interaction and Strategic Commitment

Testing confirmed that the game played well with 3–5 players, aligning with the five available unique Character Cards (Farmer, Merchant, Prince, Princess, Knight).

In terms of combat interaction, we learned that forced duals were sometimes too punitive. Therefore, the rule for when two players land on the same square (not a designated dual square) was revised: they can duel, but only if both parties agree. This revision allows players agency over when to risk a high-stakes duel, where the winner gets to choose any token from the loser.

Finally, we addressed the strategic commitment required when dealing with bridges. The playtest idea, "Once you refuse to cross the bridge you cannot attempt again," informed the official Movement Restriction. The final rule is that once a player goes over a bridge, they are not permitted to change direction to circle back and collect the larger region token. This restriction ensures strategic commitment and prevents players from repeatedly attempting the fixed 50% chance coin flip used to acquire tokens from the small regions (Apothecary, Church, and Castle).