

# The Sabotoad

A Game of Escape, Cooperation, and Betrayal

## Design Document:

### Target Experience:

**High Concept:** You are astronauts in a space station that has been boarded by some hostile alien life form. You must gather resources and work towards the repairing of the ship so you can activate the escape pods to leave with your life under the pressure of the ships oxygen leaking out and the alien toad attempting to cut off your oxygen supply faster. You also must realise there are only two escape pods, while there are three astronauts, so someone will have to be left behind.

**Fellowship:** The game is a four-player game with one known “enemy of all” player, the Sabotoad. The players who share the common objective of escape should feel the requirement to work together to escape as it’d increase their chance of survival, but a feeling of distrust is created with the knowledge that only two of the three may escape. The Sabotoad should feel the need to exploit this fact by pushing all the players to have them turn on each other.

**Challenge:** Players will need to strategically play their cards by placing them in a specific combo or keeping track of the sabotage cards and finding ways to play around them. Players will also need to think how they are going to keep their lead or secure their place in victory. The Sabotoad will need to strategically place their cards in a manner that’d cause issues for the other players as well as severely negate the progress the players have made.

**Drama:** The presence of Oxygen, knowledge of the Sabotoad trying to kill them, and that only two of three players can escape should apply a pressure on the players in the form that they’re in a race against the clock as well as that they may have to betray one another at some point.

**Fantasy:** The game should have a consistent theme of outer space, to support the idea of a space station in space with damaged parts and a hostile alien toad on the loose.

### Game Rules:

#### Players:

This game requires 4 players, of whom 3 are Astronauts onboard a space station, and the remaining player is the Sabotoad, an alien toad who is attacking the space station.

The goal of the Astronauts is to escape from the collapsing space station before they run out of oxygen, and the goal of the Sabotoad is to kill the Astronauts before they escape.

However, there are only two escape pods on the space station, and as a result one Astronaut may be left behind.

## Goals:

In order to activate the escape pods, the Astronauts must collect and spend Material cards in order to complete the 5 objectives placed in the centre of the table. Once an objective has been completed, it cannot be undone.

If all 5 objectives are completed, the two players with the most Victory Points are the winners.

## Cards:

There are the following cards in the game:

1. **Objectives:** The objectives needed to win the game.
2. **Abilities:** The abilities the Astronauts can use, at the cost of Materials or Victory Points.
3. **Sabotages:** The abilities the Sabotoad can use to hinder the Astronauts.
4. **Materials:** Iron Bars, Steel Plates, Copper Wires, and Ion Batteries.

## Setup:

From the objectives deck, 5 cards are drawn and are placed on the table.

The Astronauts draw a 7 card hand from the Abilities and Materials decks. They can choose however many of each card they want, so long as their hand remains at 7 cards (For example, 5 Materials and 2 Abilities). The Sabotoad draws a 10 card hand from the Sabotages deck.

The Astronauts begin with 10 O2 tokens each.

## Play:

Play starts from the Sabotoad and moves clockwise.

During the Sabotoad's turn, they can place down one Fast Sabotage card and one Slow Sabotage card on the table. The Sabotoad must also keep track of how many turns have elapsed on each Slow card in play. They also have the option to discard a card from their hand, which is shuffled back into the Sabotage deck.

At the end of their turn, they must replenish their hand to 10 cards (Note that the Sabotoad's hand includes the cards in play, as they may return to the hand and so avoids an overfilled hand).

During the Astronaut's turn, they may play Ability cards and Material cards up to the size of their hand. They also have the option to discard cards from their hand, where both Ability and Material cards are shuffled back into their decks.

The Astronauts expend one O2 point at the **end** of their turn. Once they have paid their O2, they must replenish their hand with Ability and Material cards, in whichever configuration they like.

## Deck Types:

### **Objectives:**

A deck containing different objectives with different requirements of materials to have game diversity each time it's played. If a player completes a resource row on an objective, they get a victory point. For example, objective A requires 3 wires and 2 steel bars. If a player spends 2 steel bar Material cards, or whatever the remaining requirement is, on objective A, they are awarded a victory point.

### **Materials:**

A deck containing material cards that are used in conjunction with Ability cards or Objective cards. There are 4 different types of Materials: Iron Bars, Steel Plates, Copper Wires, and Ion Batteries.

### **Abilities:**

A deck shared among the 3 Astronauts. Contains abilities to regain Oxygen, hinder the Sabotoad, or hinder other Astronauts. Abilities may cost certain amounts of Materials or Victory Points depending on their power. If the card has a cost, it must be paid upfront.

### **Sabotage:**

A deck only available to the Sabotoad that contains Fast cards and Slow cards to hinder the Astronauts. Fast cards are ones that have an immediate effect that cannot be removed by Astronauts without the aid of specific Ability cards. Slow cards are ones that take a set amount of turns to activate that have a powerful effect. The Astronauts can spend resources specified on the Slow Sabotage card to resolve the attack and cancel its effect.

## Resource Inputs and Outputs:

### Oxygen (O2)

The Oxygen level decreases every turn, and an Astronaut dies when they run out of O2. There are a few Ability cards which can be used to gain more O2, but its main function is to serve as a time limit for the game. As such, the Astronauts need to be wary of the level of O2 they have remaining throughout the game. Starting with 10 O2 tokens was the appropriate number we found in the first playtest, where it was not too short and not too long.

### Victory Points

Victory Points are only awarded once a resource row on an Objective card is completed, which keeps them a relatively rare resource. There are some Abilities which allow the Astronauts to spend Victory Points, but they're intended to be high-risk Abilities since the number of Victory Points an Astronaut has decides whether or not they win the game, or are left behind. As for balancing, a future playtest may include an additional way to earn Victory Points but as it currently stands they seem to be well balanced. Most players typically end up with a similar number of Victory Points by the end of the game.

## Material cards

The 4 Material cards are designed to be abundant to allow the players to use them freely. To prevent players from being able to do whatever they want, however, the 4 types of Materials are shuffled together randomly to give each of them enough value that the Astronauts have to think before using them. For balancing, a player can only have a maximum of 7 Material cards (provided they don't draw any Ability cards) and so only have access to those 7 per turn. The abundance of the Materials was intentional, since nearly everything in the game costs Materials such as Objective cards, Ability cards, and to dispel the Sabotoad's Sabotage cards. The only issue when playtesting the game was that we had printed too many Material cards, and so there was a greater chance of only drawing lots of one type of Material without being able to use them.

## Cards:

8 unique Objective cards

- Print one copy of each (8 cards)

13 unique Sabotage cards (4 Fast, 9 Slow)

- Print two copies of each (26 cards)

16 unique Ability cards

- Print three copies of each (48 cards)

4 unique Material cards

- Print ten copies of each (40 cards)

Power Box Rewiring

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

3 Copper Wire  
3 Copper Wire

Bulkhead Door Failure

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

2 Steel Plates  
2 Iron Bars  
1 Copper Wire  
1 Ion Battery

Busted Pipes

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

4 Steel Plates

Reboot Shields

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

4 Ion Batteries  
3 Copper Wires

Fuel Tank Leak

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

3 Steel Plates  
3 Iron Bars

Engine Malfunction

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

2 Steel Plates  
2 Copper Wire  
1 Ion Battery  
1 Iron Bar

Navigation Calibration

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

2 Ion Batteries  
2 Copper Wires  
1 Steel Plate

Hull Repair

Cost:  
(1 Victory Point per row)

4 Steel Plates  
4 Iron Bars

Slow  
Steal Steel

After 3 turns,  
removes all Steel Plate  
materials played and  
returns to deck

Cost: 3 Ion Batteries  
2 Copper Wire  
1 Iron Bar

Slow  
Ion Meltdown

After 3 turns,  
removes all Ion Batteries  
materials played and  
returns to deck

Cost: 3 Copper Wire  
2 Steel Plates  
1 Iron Bar

Slow  
Wire erosion

After 3 turns,  
removes all Copper Wire  
materials played and  
returns to deck

Cost: 3 Ion Batteries  
2 Steel plates  
1 Iron Bar

Slow  
Iron Oxidation

After 3 turns,  
removes all Iron Bar  
materials played and  
returns to deck

Cost: 3 Ion Batteries  
2 Steel plates  
1 Copper Wire

Slow  
Hyperventilation

After 2 turns,  
all O2 lost is doubled  
for 3 turns

Cost: 2 of every material

Slow  
Disintegrate

Remove all Materials  
from an objective after  
2 turns

Cost: 1 Steel Plate  
1 Copper Wire  
1 Ion Battery

Fast  
Carbon-Dioxide Sabotage

Remove 1 O2 from  
a target player

Slow  
A Dire Fire

Remove 1 O2 from  
all players after 1 turn

Cost: 1 of each material

Slow

Random Explosion

Double an objectives  
cost after 1 turn

Cost: 3 Steel Plates

Slow

Hunt

Kill a player after 4 turns

Cost: 3 of every material

Fast

O2 Balance

Give all players O2 equal  
to the player with the  
highest, and allows you  
to play the immediate  
effect of a played slow  
card

Fast

Recall

Return a played Slow  
card to hand, sending all  
material cards played on  
it back to the deck

Fast

Placeholder name

Remove all materials  
from a chosen objective  
at the cost of your next  
turn

Rummage

Cost: None

Look through Materials  
and find 1 Ion Battery

Rummage

Cost: None

Look through Materials  
and find 1 Iron Bar

Rummage

Cost: None

Look through Materials  
and find 1 Steel Plate

Rummage

Cost: None

Look through Materials  
and find 1 Copper Wire

Say hello to my little friend

Cost: 6 Ion Batteries

Clear 3 slow spells

Switcheroo

Cost: None

Exchange O2 for  
Victory points

- or -

Exchange Victory points  
for O2

Temporary O2 Plant

Cost: 1 Iron Bar  
1 Ion Battery  
1 Steel Plate  
1 Copper Wire

No O2 loss for every  
player for one round.

Yoink

Cost: 1 Victory Point

Gain 2 O2

- or -

Steal 2 O2 from  
another player



Material

Copper Wire

Material

Ion Battery

Material

Copper Wire

Material

Ion Battery

Material

Steel Plate

Material

Iron Bar

Material

Steel Plate

Material

Iron Bar

Big Shield

Cost: 2 Steel Plates

Immune to all effects

Call of the Toad

Cost: 2 Ion Batteries

Slow card canceling costs  
halved for the turn  
(rounding up)

- or -

Slow card canceling costs  
doubled for the turn

Friend or foe

Cost: Any 3 Materials

Steal 1 O2 from all  
players

- or -

Gain 1 Victory Point

Hold your breath

Cost: None

No O2 loss this turn  
for the player who played it

Cyberbullying

Cost: 2 Copper Wires

Take 2 O2 from a player,  
split between other  
two players

Mania

Cost: 5 Iron Bars

All players lose 2 O2

Your Victory points are  
mine-inator

Cost: 2 Ion Batteries  
2 Copper Wires



All Victory points gained  
by the next player go to  
you

Placeholder name

Cost: None

Player gains 1  
victory point

- or -

Skip sabotoad's turn