UNBORED zine 02

Unbored Zine highlights different activities to get you interested to try something outside of your normal routine. Each issue has a theme, so you can select which (or all) you'd like to try.

All issues are initially released for free digitally on my blog, *larajla.com*. They will be available for a week before they move to my Etsy shop, larajlacreates.

## larajla.com / larajlaenrich.com

Make Games

Game Adaptation

A second way to create games is to adapt one you already own into something new. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- Move a game from one category to another
- Combine two or more games
- Adjust one feature of a game you currently play
- Change the items you use for playing a game
- Change a rule or two (How many ways can you play Uno or Tenzi?)

While this will also give you a "new" game, it isn't nearly as unique as creating your own. You'll still do the playtesting and tweaking.

If you're short on time or want an easy way to start, this is it!
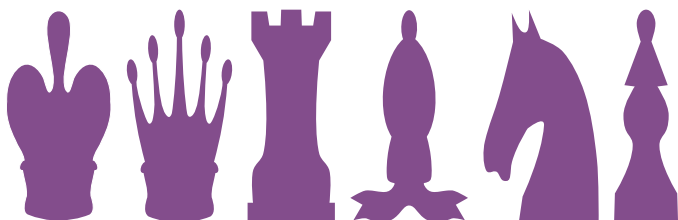
A Bit About Games . . .

I heard you all the way over here. Just so we're on the same page, I'll give you a brief description of game categories and some that fit into each category. I am looking at my own game shelves right now for this list just like you will be doing yourself. I'm also trying to remember what I've played. No, I won't strain myself with the heavy thinking (sigh).

5 OR Sky S1 S2

Earth E1 E2
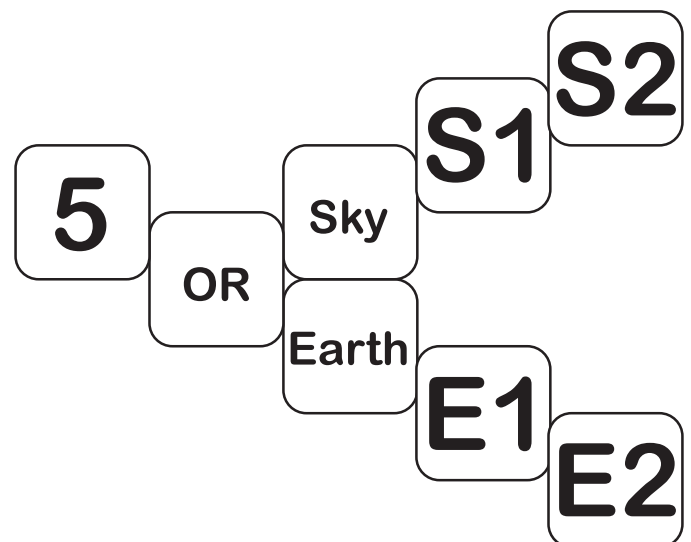
Let's make a game!

You probably have stacks of games around your house. Why play something again when you can make something unique?

Grab a notebook. As you go through the activities in this issue of *Unbored Zine*, you may have ideas pop into your head, remember an instance when you really loved a board game or even document a great story about when you were playing. Make notes . . . lots of notes. Of course, if you don't want to write, grab your phone and make voice recordings. In the end, you still have the information to review.

Before you start with the "I can't do that" speech, let's explore a bit about games to get your creative juices flowing!

Board Games
These games typically have a type of board.
- Checkers
- Chess
- Clue
- Monopoly
- Risk
- Scrabble
- Twister

Card Games
These games may be used with a standard 52-card deck or a specialty deck.
- Apples to Apples
- Cards Against Humanity
- Crazy 8s
- Euchre
- Hearts
- Old Maid
- Spades

Happy Days!

When you're happy with your game, you can share it with others.

You can do a demonstration to show how your game is played. Your demonstration can be live or recorded so you have video to share.

You can run an event and invite people to play your game as well as others. You can share the game physically or digitally.

Planning to sell it is an option, but this zine isn't big enough to go into product creation, marketing and distribution. At this point, you're on your own, buddy.

DO IT AGAIN!

Another Game Creation Challenge

When you get done creating your game, put this zine in a box with the game pieces so you can return to create another game. You might even want to continue collecting items for next time..

Playtesting

Now, it's time for the fun part . . . playtesting.

Invite a few friends over. Provide some refreshments. Plan on a long, and perhaps loud, game.

As you play your game, you'll find that things rarely work exactly as you imagined them. You will have to adjust your game to make it work. This might be balancing the game mechanics so the game isn't too easy or too hard. Each time you play, have a copy of the rules for each player. Write down what adjustments you think might improve play. At the end, share with each other and choose those that seem to work best.

You might want to do post-its if that works for you so you can sort the notes out according to what you were doing at the time each occurred.

When you play next time, you can incorporate your changes and try again. Repeat until you're happy with your game. Create the final, official rules.

That's it! You have created the basics of your own game.

Prototype

Now, you want to create the board, pieces, rules, etc. for your game. Basically, you need every part of your game to create a working prototype. In the beginning, pieces may be hand drawn, crafted from items around your house, etc. As you work more on this, you may notice that your "prototype" starts to look more defined and professional. But, let's not get ahead of ourselves. We need to do the first one!

STOP.

Before you play, take a picture of your prototype. Make sure you can read all the text and see any artwork easily. Take group and individual shots.
You want to know why you're taking pictures?

Improving your product photography is a good skill to have. Beyond that, you may lose a piece and have to recreate it. You may have someone destroy part of your game in a fit of anger. Of course, your small cousin may decide to see which pieces will flush down the toilet.

This documentation of your prototype allows you to see where you've been and you can use it to recreate any pieces necessary.

Only 15 Minutes?

You might spend 15 minutes to create a game and another 15 sharing it with the other teams. That's not the end of your game creation.

Remember you got feedback from the other team(s)? Incorporate it and improve your game.

Dice Games
These games are based on dice.
- Boggle
- Put 'n' Take
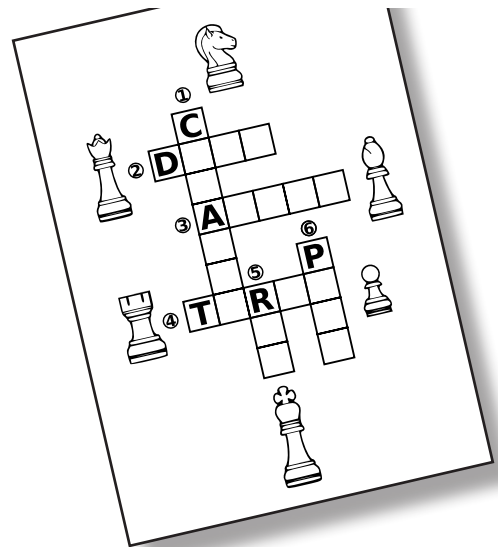- Tenzi
- Yahtzee
- Zombie Dice

Logic Games
These are thinking games.
- Brain Teasers
- Mastermind
- Rubik's Cube

Outdoor Games
Some games, because of their nature, must be created and played outdoors.
- Bocce
- Capture the Flag
- Cornhole
- Croquet
- Horse Shoes
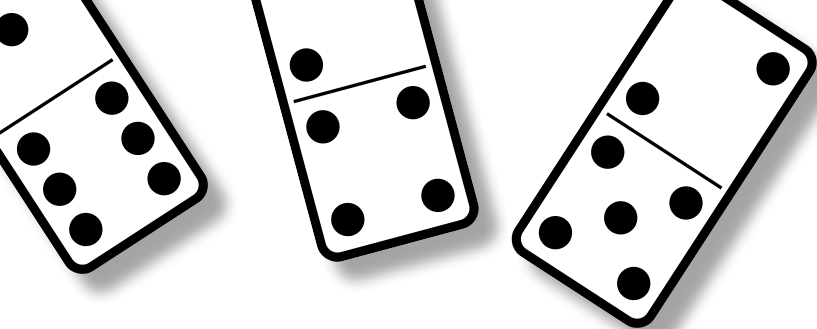- Ladder Toss
- Sports (various)

Puzzle Games
While these might be considered "paper" games, puzzles are a category of their own.
- Crossword
- Fill-It-In
- Maze
- Scavenger Hunt
- Scramble
- Sudoku
- Word Find / Search

Hopefully, this review of game categories had you in the closet pulling out the games you'd forgotten about. Now, we're going to look at your resources.

Paper Games

These games are printed on paper and usually only need a pencil to play.
- Battleship
- Connect the Dots
- Dots and Boxes
- Hangman
- Pictionary
- Tic-Tac-Toe

Playing Piece Games

These games are based on the playing pieces themselves.
- Dominoes
- Jacks
- Jenga
- Marbles
- Mikado
- Pickup Sticks
- Tangram

Add a Theme

Playing a game with a bunch of random items can be fun. Adding a theme will make your game epic.

Collecting tokens to be the one who has the most is a cool idea. Changing those "tokens" into animals would entice younger players. So why are they collecting the animals? The zoo keeper felt bad and let them all out? Did they escape from the animal catcher? Think of a reason why the animals (tokens) need to be collected.

Collecting the pieces to build a rocket ship for older players would be a starting point to more extensive play. It might be the first step in the quest to get to the moon or reclaim Pluto as a planet. I like Pluto as a planet.

Brainstorm what you can "collect" instead of a bunch of dice or blocks. You can do this by creating your own tokens, using miniatures or even small stuffies . . . that's small stuff animals.

For each activity in your game, brainstorm how to incorporate your theme so it sounds like a story.

I'm sure you get themes without more explanation. You do, don't you? Good. I'm starting to ramble.

Your Games

Start with looking at the board games you own. You might want to make a list here. Did you think I mentioned a notebook just because I could? And what do you mean you don't have something to write with? Okay, so I didn't tell you that. Go grab a pen or pencil. Yes, I'll wait until you get back.

Eventually, we'll look at more than board games but it's easier to start with a single category. We'll go through all the categories mentioned previously, depending on your preferred game play. There are also games that don't fit into any of these categories. Remember you're making a game, so you want to include all the play elements you enjoy.

Alright, back to your games. Note those that you particularly enjoy. Why do you enjoy them? Is it because of the game play or the results amongst the players? Do you have a trick or two that allows you to win? Note these things down.

Also, if you've got rules, pull them out. Look through them. See a rule you particularly like? Write that down as well. Don't want to write? Take a picture with your phone so you have the information for reference. Easy peasy.

Game Creation Rules

Some rules for game creation can help you make this more fun.

1. Each team may have one person or several. Make sure the teams have an equal number.
2. Each team chooses the same number of items from the main pile of playing pieces. Of course, you could have the teams choose for each other. You might even have one person who is "in charge" and not on a team to choose for everyone.
3. Each team ONLY uses the game pieces set before them to create a game. Every team should have paper and a way to write as they brainstorm and create it. As you determine the game mechanics, write it down. If you have a great idea, write it down. If you don't write it, you might lose it.
4. Each team cannot duplicate any game previously played.
5. Each team has fifteen minutes to come up with a game featuring the items on their own table only. The items might be the same or different.
6. Each team presents their ideas and gets feedback from the other team(s).
7. The teams (or appointed person) chooses a winner.

Mechanics to Include

I'm sure you guessed another bulleted list was about to come your way. {poof}

- Age of players
- Number of players
- Area needed to play
- How to play / objective
- Time to play
- How to win

I'm glad you noticed this is the first time a bulleted list isn't alphabetized. I struggled with my inner editor, but it made more sense in a chronological fashion. If you want to move them around so they're alphabetical, draw some arrows. Be sure to use a contrasting color to brighten up this page.
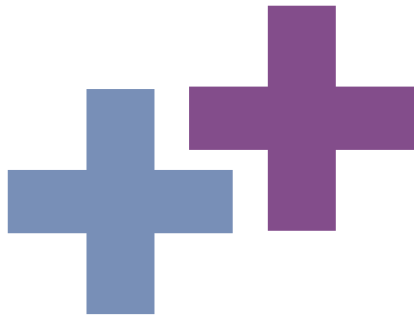
Team Creation

While you can do this yourself, having someone else providing alternative ideas for play or rules can make your game that much better. For this activity, I would recommend a minimum of four people, two per team.

Not only do more people on a team help generate more ideas, competition can push you to work harder to come up with a better idea than the other team. Of course, they're doing the same thing to beat you!
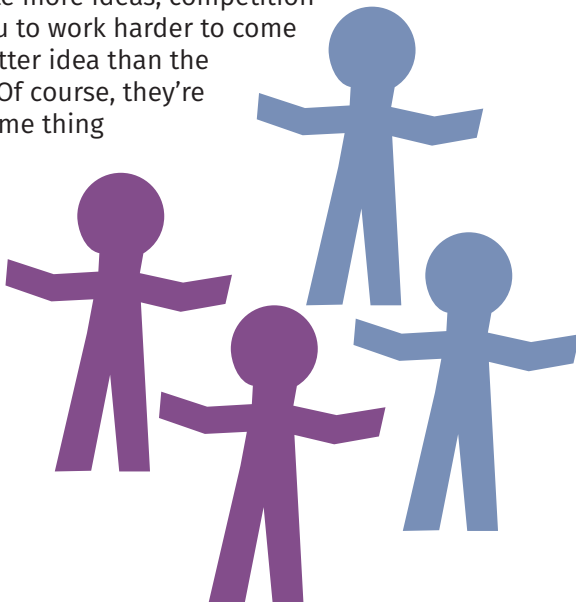
Antique Games

If you find you don't have enough games to get your brain going, check out old board games online. Old does not mean unusable. It just means they've been played and enjoyed for a long time. Longevity is a good thing, I tell you!

To get your search started, check out a few ancient games:
- Backgammon
- Go
- Mancala
- Patolli
- Senet
- Ur

Did you recognize a few of these? I bet you didn't realize some of these are thousands of years old.

Skip to Here!

If you don't feel like getting your brain moving into the game space, you can just start here. That means no notes, no digging through the closet . . . and no, I don't want to guess what you've found in your closet. I prefer to remain in the dark.

Grab a bunch of random game items and put them into a pile. If you did a bit of research, you might pick a few items specifically for game play. You're going to use the random items to create a game. Yes, really!

Public Domain Games

Like the antique games, there are many in the public domain. From grabbing a copy of Hoyle's card game rules to looking up some of the following, you can start thinking about games even if you have relatively few available to you at home.

- Canasta
- Charades
- Craps
- Cribbage
- Fox and Geese
- Lotto
- Mahjong
- Othello
- Pig
- Pitch
- Poker
- Shogi
- Sprouts
- Twelve Men's Morris
- Whist

Items to Collect

You can grab items from games around your house (complete or missing pieces), your junk drawer, toy box, office, etc. You can even purchase eclectic collections online or at garage sales. After all, you're looking to create a collection of odd pieces to help spark ideas in your head as well as possibly include the original function of the piece in your game.

The list on the right describes possible items you might want to include.

After creating a collection of game pieces, you can add any reference materials you've gathered.

Now, call up a few friends and let's have some fun!

Game Mechanics

As you look at each piece, it will trigger the games you've played with it and the function it served originally. Don't limit yourself to those activities.

For example, a coin can be used as a two-sided die. It might choose whether you go left or right. It might give you a yes or no answer. You might stack them as a challenge in a game. You might spin it to see how many dominoes you can knock over with a single spin. Spinning for a certain length of time might give you an extra turn. You might need to flip it into a cup to get a point. This single coin can do so much to the game play just by changing how it is to be used.

All these possible activities are called game mechanics. You not only want individual items to do something themselves, but you also want them to work together. This will be how the game is played.

Since you're the creator, you get to decide what will go into your game and what you won't include. Yes, if you must call yourself "god", go for it. Be sure to add the qualifier so people know what you're claiming to be the god of. I used the word "claim" for a reason.

- Ball
- Blocks
- Board, game
- Cards (full deck, partial deck, blank)
- Checkers
- Chips
- Coins
- Counters
- Dice (look for more than standard 6-sided dice)
- Dominoes
- Faux money
- Game mat
- Miniatures
- Paper and pen / pencil
- Pawns
- Ruler
- Score cards
- Spinner
- Sticks
- Tiles
- Timer
- Tokens
- Anything else that looks fun!