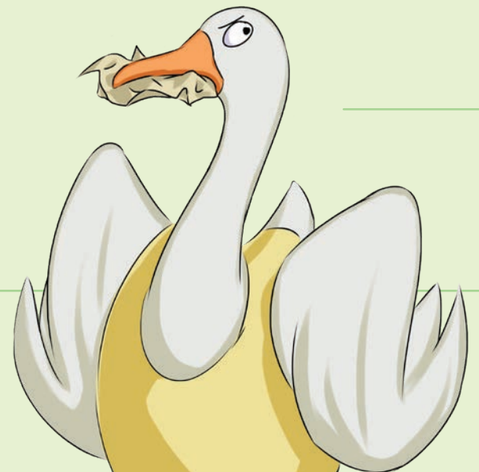

BaMotopia

Grace Kusuma

BaMotopia

An animal-themed politics game

Grace Kusuma

BFA GD Senior Thesis Project

BaMotopia

Grace Kusuma

Senior Thesis Project

BFA Graphic Design

San José State University

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Abstract

Overview

The US has been described as a representative democracy, and yet considering the current age demographic of voters who actually participate, how can this be considered representative? Turnout rates for voters 18–24 year old in presidential elections have always been lower than the national average, compared to 65+ age voters who are well above the average by 2020. The majority of this younger age group votes for Democrats, while ages 30–44 are split evenly between the two parties. Those in the older range favored GOP. If this is the case, then the representatives that we have in congress is not a true representation of its population.

There are many reasons that scholars have attributed to low turnout rates: voter apathy, restricting laws and policies, hard barriers to voting, the current economic environment... One prevalent theory that would increase political involvement is better educational involvement in schools. There are many studies that show that involving students in role-play and debates/discussions allow students to tackle difficult topics and understand the importance of getting involved. Sparking interest early, increasing the personal quality of politics, and getting students more constantly involved has shown to keep interest as they continue to grow into young adults. Some say you can start in elementary school with concepts that are easy enough to understand and move on from there. And in school, there are a diverse collection of experiences and opinions that can further push students to investigate and critically think for themselves in the future.

But how do we introduce students to these topics without being daunting? How do we make sure students are engaged without being turned off right at the beginning? This is something I'd like to pursue with my thesis.

Thesis Statement

Turnout rates for young voters have always been low compared to older age groups. Researchers say that education is the key. I would like to focus my project on how to introduce politics to students in an undaunting and friendly way, possibly through forms of both role-play and mock debates. Games have been shown to be a good tool for education.

Questions

1. At what age should we start teaching politics?
2. What elements of teaching keeps students engaged?
3. How effective is learning as a group vs individually?

Research

Thesis Range

On my first proposal (not shown in this process book), I stretched my range too far. The topic of increasing younger voters via education seemed too broad based on feedback, and whatever I make needs to really focus on solving the issue of lack of voter turnout for young voters, and that overarching concept might be to difficult to tackled within the semester. Instead I should change the goal to better political education in schools. An aid that will allow easier learning of the subject matter, but is that still too broad?

I focused in on the introduction of politics to high school students so that they could learn and approach political systems and agendas more easily. If the game I made was able to be played by middle school or younger, that would be a huge plus, but high school is the biggest pivotal moment as they turn the corner of voting age.

I thought a card game would help do that in a different setting than the one we have in modern day that can be analogous. The winners would be the politician with the most votes plus the people who voted for them, but the ultimate goal of the game would be to teach students how political topics and debates work by including them in their own role. But if this is too conventional, what else should I pursue? Research says the best way to get students interested is to make things personal to them and to have them role-play and debate, so it needs to be experienced based that has their own involvement. What other mediums could I explore instead? Instead of an intro to politics, should it be more anchored in more present day politics? I didn't think putting things in something that is just involves reading and studying will be as effective.

People

~~Animals~~, Places, Things

3 physical places where your thesis thinking might be found:

- High School
- College
- Teacher Conference

3 huge objects related to your thinking:

- Projector Screen
- Whiteboard
- Auditorium/Classroom

3 huge objects related to your thinking:

- Note Cards
- Pencils
- Hourglass

3 abstract qualities related to your thesis:

- Educational
- Challenging
- Transforming

3 physical qualities related to your thesis:

- Sketchy
- Bright
- Concrete

3 supermarket items that could nourish your thesis:

- Bananas
- Organic Orange
- Paper and Pencil

3 films that are the start of your curated thesis film series:

- Zootopia
- Good Will Hunting
- Resolved

3 white collar jobs that your thesis performs:

- Teacher
- Educational Supervisor
- Data Analyst

3 Foundations or organizations that commission your thesis:

- CIRCLE (Tufts University)
- Department of Education
- Harvard University

3 historical events that give your thesis context:

- Standards Movement
- The Invention of Google
- Brown V.S. Board of Education

3 designers who could give a workshop related to your thesis:

- Steven Braun
- Joseph Schwartz
- Anna Wiederkehr

3 news items from the last two days where your thesis lives in the present:

- COLUMN: Is the school system fighting against us? (The Daily Eastern News)
- Legislators discuss school choice funding at town hall (KREM2)
- NC school leaders search for new way to measure school performance without socioeconomic bias (WRAL News)

Manifesto

Education in America is rapidly declining as it takes attacks from multiple sides. Lack of funds, bans on books, little to no compensation for teachers, lowering educational standards... this list could go on forever.

The ability to think critically and learn can't solely be taught from home. We need others to help us learn, whether it be teachers or from many others, both of similar or different opinions.

We should be wanting to learn and treasuring our education. The future is held by those who come after, and those years are critical for improving our society as a whole. Yet, we continue to see a rise in anti-intellectualism, no doubt being part of an agenda to help those with loud, selfish mouthpieces to easily manipulate. And many can see that this mission is politically based and selfishly motivated.

This is alarming. As a person who enjoys helping through teaching others and is being pulled into politics despite my distain from it before. If we don't try to change this situation, I can't imagine how far downhill we'll roll. We have to do something to help teachers and students.

This attack on education is an attack on us, the people.

Readings

There are a few topics I researched to ensure that my thesis topic works properly: engagement of youth in the classroom, age of youth and politics, and designing games for education.

Engaging the Youth

There is a general consensus that **role-play, debate, and inclusiveness** are effective ways of engaging students, and different opinions lead to more open-mindedness and reduces chance of political extremism. Research shows that conflict within politics often make students steer away from it, but the classroom can normalize conflict. **Open political engagement** (in being able to express one's opinion freely) in the classroom **can lead to more care for issues being discussed and motivation for political engagement.**

How Early Can We Teach Politics

Early political socialization has also been shown to be effective in creating higher political interest in young adults. Political leanings of youth often change once they leave their families and become independent. There are methods of introducing politics to younger people, such as talking about ads, or books specifically made to explain politics for kids. Preschoolers are able to grasp the basics of voting as a democracy, and by middle school they will be able to grasp tougher topics and the electoral process. Of course, none of this can be really be reinforced as it is not in the educational curriculum before high school.

Game Design For Education

As for game design, the game has to be both interesting and fun for students to be able to pay attention to it. Laine and Lindberg in their study called "Designing Engaging Games for Education: A Systematic Literature Review on Game Motivators and Design Principles," they were able to observe overarching categories for design principles in educational games that have multiple motivators linked to them.

These categories are:

- Challenge
- Control
- Creativity
- Exploration
- Fairness
- Feedback
- Goals
- Learning
- Profile and Ownership
- Relevance and Relatedness
- Resources and Economy
- Social Play
- Storytelling and Fantasy

They say that these are simply guides for game designers to use and are not necessarily must haves.

Framing Reference

To really understand how high school students function and to better cater to them, I needed to interview someone who works with high school students.

Interviewee:

Mark Armstrong (thesis advisor): Taught high school students for 15+ years, with a Bachelors in Political Science and a Masters in Education

What I need to know:

- What are students attitudes/interest levels towards politics
- What part of politics and debate really engages students
- Attention span of students

Meeting:

Zoom

Question Framing:

I tried to make these not overwhelming or take too much time consuming as time is limited (and he will be driving, I don't want to distract him too much). I will need something that can be answered straight away. Answers can be on the long side but doesn't have to be.

Interview Summary:

Mr. Armstrong provided very valuable insight with his answers. He affirmed many things that I had assumed and what I've researched, such as shorter attention spans, further disconnections due to COVID-19, greater interest in topics that they can relate to, morality and justice, and civic engagement.

One thing that surprised me was the student's ability to stay engaged with a topic for a very long time, provided that the topic was interesting to the students.

1. **What are your concerns with the current status of education of politics with students?**

   "I think my biggest problem is 2 things: **getting them to pay attention to it and getting them to talk about it**. I think often times, even in my AP class, many of the kids don't pay attention to current events, they don't follow the news… **they keep in their own little bubble**, their own little world. And if it's not on Instagram and if its not on TikTok, then they don't see it. The other problem is getting them to engage in class. That's something I've been working hard on is class engagement and students, especially post pandemic—just wanting to check out. **Give me something to do, let me stare at the screen, and don't ask me to communicate with people. So getting them to be comfortable and realizing that it's fun!** And it's a good way to learn and it's a good way to spend class."

2. **How do students usually react when you bring up politics for the first time?**

   "Well, I think they know it's coming in the class because I kind of go over something we're going to be doing in Government and Politics. They know that that's gonna be part of it… some are really excited. **There's that small group—it used to be a larger group; it used to be the exception that didn't want to talk and wasn't interested in the world. Now that's the exception group. That's the group, who wants to talk, are like "cool we're gonna talk about politics, talk about all these things,"** but most of them… yeah, they just don't want to… they feel like they know a lot about the world around them and they feel like maybe politics is something that either… I don't know whether they think it's broken, whether they think that it's damaged, whether they think it's not fair, whether they think it's a rigged system… The people in power want them to not be engaged so they can do what the want. But I try to teach the students over the course of the class that being ignorant is what they want. So trying to get them to realize that their actually fighting the man by learning about politics."

3. **How do you personally introduce politics to students?**

   "The first way I really introduce it is… I don't like to call it politics, I like to call it **community engagement**. One of the things our students have to do is they have to do **10 hours of community service during government**. And so we introduce that project in one of the first days, and we kind of do this stuff—we do this circle where they come around and they have to stand if they've done these different things, and, you know, you've got teenagers. So you've got kids who are starting to have jobs, some of them have drivers licenses, they have their bank accounts, they sometimes have to pay for their own gas, look at their taxes, seeing where their money's going, their paychecks are going to taxes. And **so you start doing things like that and you start to make them try to realize that politics affects them, and so to get engaged with their community… at all the different levels. Whether you're engaging with school, whether you're engaging with your city, whether you're doing something for your state, for the national government—trying to get them to realize that they have to be… engaged in society.**"

4. **What parts of politics or debate do students get really interested in?**

   "I find that the **civil liberties part gets them really engaged**, both in my regular class and my AP class. **They love when they get to criminal justice, and freedom of speech, and freedom of religion, and the right to bear arms, and your rights when you're accused of a crime.** I find that really engages them. I also take a lot of… **cases that relate to students**, so… hey, **you can relate to this person** and they are a 16 year old cheerleader like you… it's affected people like them… And you need something with a gray area; something that they can debate and can argue."

5. **How long do students usually stay engaged with topics?**

   "I think it depends on the topic. **Their attention span is definitely shorter than it used to be… but in high school, if kids are really into something, they can do it for a long period of time**. Our class periods are an hour and 20 minutes, and **if something is really engaging they can be into for the whole hour and 20 minutes**, but because of all the distractions we have, if something isn't engaging kids can check out very quickly because they won't give it as much of a chance as they used to because there's other things to distract their attention."

Repository of Insight

1. "The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment." Robert Maynard Hutchins (1952).

2. "We estimate that 27% of youth (ages 18-29) cast a ballot in 2022, making this the midterm election with the second-highest youth voter turnout in almost three decades. We also estimate that youth turnout was even higher in some battleground states." Tufts (2022).

3. "According to this exit poll data, youth ages 18-29 are the only age group in which a strong majority supported Democrats. Voters ages 30-44 split their votes nearly evenly 51%-47% between Democrats and Republicans, while older voters favored the GOP. The youth share of all votes cast is 12%, on par with the 13% youth share from the 2018 midterm election. Vote choice and share data may continue to shift in the coming hours." Tufts (2022).

4. "'Parties do what it takes to win,'" Mr. Fraga said. If young people voted at higher rates, politicians would cater to them. 'If Latino turnout in Texas was as high as white turnout in Texas, I think the campaign strategies of both Ted Cruz and Beto O'Rourke would be quite different.'" Badger (2018).

5. "Parents' level of political engagement this play a dual role in the political socialization of the young. It boosts the intensity of pre-adult political learning, strengthening the transition of political attitudes from parent to child. It also makes children more politically engaged themselves. Taken together, a seemingly counter-intuitive hypothesis arises. Youth from politicized homes may be more likely to acquire an initial partisan orientation from their parents, but they are also more likely to abandon that preference as they enter adulthood and experience politics for themselves" Dinas (2014).

6. "The more politicized the parents are, the more successful the transition of political interest to the child. Thus a person who exhibits high levels of political engagement in young adulthood is likely to come from a home in which parents were highly politically engaged too." Dinas (2014).

7. "Educational models often focus on youth during adolescence—a critical time for civic and political identity development" Joseph et. al (2012).

8. "The political classroom is essential, according to Hess and McAvoy (2015), because it teaches students that they can disagree over issues, but they are and should treat each other as political equals. Therefore, Hess and McAvoy (2015) begin the book by arguing that schools should be "political sites"... By introducing questions like this in high school, students can get a better grasp of how to live together with other people of different backgrounds and beliefs." Mullins Jr. (2015).

9. "Concern regarding this inattention grew due to a spate of studies detailing the low levels of c and political engagement among youth (Macedo et al., 2005). For example, in 2008, 55% of those less than 30 years of age were judged to be "disengaged" in a report by the National Conference Citizenship (2008)" Joseph et. al (2012).

10. "The four phases of interest development are sequential and distinct: triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, emerging individual interest, and well-developed individual interest." Lo and Tierney (2017).

11. "'Engagement first' occurs when students begin project work and role-play before they are presented with lectures and readings. In this model, students ask questions about the topic through their roles, which may help them develop a need to know important content information." Lo and Tierney (2017).

12. "Hess and McAvoy (2015) highlight the aims of the political classroom. The aims are: political equality, tolerance, autonomy, fairness, political engagement, and political literacy. When teachers try to reach these aims, there are barriers. The most common being social class and political polarization." Mullins Jr. (2015).

13. "The authors effectively show that "we" matters within the classroom (p.87). By emphasizing the classroom as a collective unit, the students are able to address the aforementioned question, "How should we live together?" (p.4). That question cannot be addressed without asking the student to quit thinking solely about I in context of political issues; they have to turn their attention to 'we.'" Mullins Jr. (2015).

14. "It appears that the conflictual nature of politics makes many youth (and adults) hesitant to engage. There is hope that normalizing this conflict will increase engagement with politics. In addition... civic educators posit that opportunities for youth to discuss social issues with peers will foster construction of moral and civic understandings. These factors combined with the fact that discussions are often more engaging that other classroom activities, may lead students to care more about issues being discussed and be motivated toward political engagement." Joseph et. al (2012).

15. "Open-classroom climates (rooms where a diverse range of views are discussed and where individuals are encouraged to express their perspectives) and opportunities to discuss controversial public issues promote an individual's knowledge of concepts and principles of democracy. These studies also found that such experiences promote individuals' intentions to civically and politically engage." Joseph et. al (2012).

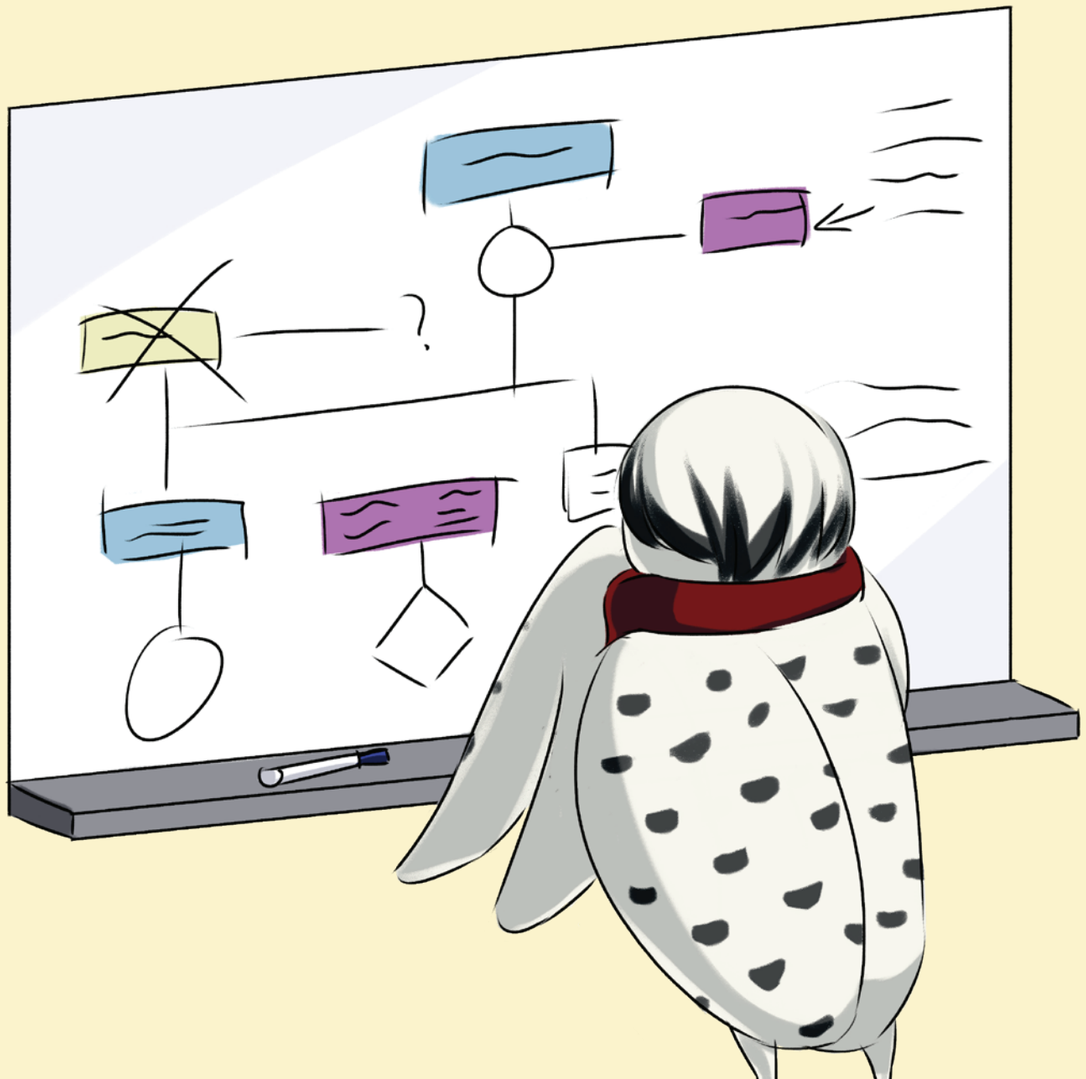
16. "Effective educational interventions require sufficient learner engagement, which can be difficult to achieve if the learner is inadequately motivated. Games have been shown to possess powerful motivators that fuel a person's desire to engage in unattractive activities, such as learning theoretical material." Laine and Lindberg (2020).

Quote #14 is a big crux point of what my thesis is aimed towards. Conflict is usually unpleasant and without much regards to one another. Rather than talking to each other, it is more like yelling at a brick wall. Having differing opinions is not a bad thing, and often times people learn from each other by laying out the facts and their viewpoints. Often times this can get emotionally or personally charged, which leads to the uncomfortable nature of conflict that we are used to. Plus, we don't like acknowledging the fact that we might be wrong. If we can start from a spot where we can ease people into understanding how to argue and listen better, that will give them the tools to tackle the more difficult and serious topics with everyone else. The ability to reason and critically think with empathy is important to have going into adulthood.

Morality and civics are important parts of why people get involved in politics, whether local or otherwise. The need to right something that is wrong will help everyone, not just one person. The idea that there is a collective "we" (mentioned in quote #13), is something that we can't forget. Society is both independent and dependent on each other. Education in schools is a small, but essential stepping stone.

Schools are meant to be a safe space for opinions to be heard and to challenge ideas. To be able to practice both in a social environment is crucial. This can't be learned from simply reading about it. Engagement with others is key to growth and understanding, and this will help push society as a whole forward. After all, these children are our future.

Design Process



Establishing the Base

Before I could start any real visual design, I had to start off with the game design. The rules and flow of the game had to be able to help teach and engage students into the subject of debate. Not only that, it needs to be fun, replayable, and simple enough for students to understand.

One big problem that I don't want to happen is to push students away due to the unappealing feeling of politics. So, instead of using real life examples directly, I chose a setting adjacent to real life but still be in the fantasy realm. Inspired by the movie "Zootopia" I created a setting where animal civilization thrives. Many real life issues that are used in debates can be translated into a funnier and more lighthearted topic that students can more easily engage in and debate upon.

Essential Pieces:

First off, I had to establish what roles were needed in this game. The big 3 roles that were necessary are:

- Politicians: the ones who are arguing and debating to try to sway voters
- Moderator: (originally called Newscaster) someone who will help guide the debate rounds
- Civilians: the ones who will ultimately decide who will be their representative

One other necessary card type would be the issue cards that would be the arguing point for politicians.

Roleplay:

The basis of this game is putting yourself into someone else's shoes to help understand how other people think. This includes people who are very different from you or even people you don't like. By understanding why, you will be able to better empathize and argue your points, or even find that your opinions may not be as full proof as you may think.

As mentioned before, the setting in an animal world will ease people into adapting this strategy in real life.

General Game Flow:

There are 3 essential stages that need to be implemented for this game a debate stage with the politicians where 3 issues are discussed, a discussion stage where citizen players can get involved, a voting stage to declare the winner.

Replayability:

The ability to replay the game brings more worth to it, and replayabilty in is meant to create a better understanding of how debate and politics work. To ensure that the game is fun on repeat rounds is also another issue in tandem with the other game mechanics.

Characterstics
1) Truthful | Liar
2) Take responsibility when appropriate | Blame others for issues
3) Assuring | Fearmongering
4) Calm | Angry
5) Proving your point | Mudslinging and Name Calling without proof
6) Address problems straight on | Avoiding and redirecting topics

Parties	Description
Naturalist	The Naturalist Party are true to their name: they want to keep the laws of nature alive. This includes appealing to norms of predator and prey and accepting the differences between all animals. In general, returning to nature as best they can
Farsight	The Farsight Party is an aerial based progressive group that focuses on ensuring that avian rights are equal to that of other land and sea based animals. As such, breaking norms of other animal types is also key to their mission.
Farmhouse	The Farmhouse Party takes its namesake from the old religion. They believe in not only the natural order of things before civilization, but also the spiritual aspect. They believe everything happens for a reason.
Dash	The Dash Party is all about racing toward the future. They are accepting of all types of animals as their goal is equalizing everyone, despite their differences, as all animals can "dash" towards the finish line.
Garden	The Garden Party focuses on ensuring that the nature of predation goes extinct. The world has become evolved enough where predators have alternatives to eating prey. In turn, they also focus on progressing all of animal civilization to a state of ultimate peace.

Base Rules		
1) Count your players. Subtract that number by 3. That will be the number of citizen cards you will pick.		
2) Shuffle the politician and citizens deck. Select 2 politician cards and the number you calculated of citizen cards. Take these cards and the newscaster cards and shuffle them together		
3) Hand out cards randomly. Players will share who they are with each other.		
4) Shuffle the issue deck.		
Beginner	**Intermediate**	**Advanced**
5) Pull 1 issue	5) Pull 2 issues	5) Pull 3 issues
6) The newscaster will introduce the both politicians, their parties, and the issue they will be addressing. State the description of the issue, but do not talk about the example implications or policies.	6) Shuffle and pull an event card	6) Shuffle and pull 2 event cards
7) Hand the issue card to the politicians. They are allowed to read the description and the example implications.	7) Have the politicians roll 1 positive and 1 negative trait from the list and their party. Note that they cannot roll the same number (ie: if you roll 4 twice, you cannot be both a liar and a truth teller). Politicians can have the same party.	7) Have the politicians roll 1 positive and 1 negative trait from the list and their party. Note that they cannot roll the same number (ie: if you roll 4 twice, you cannot be both a liar and a truth teller). Politicians can have the same party.
8) Based on this issue, politicians will need to create a 1 minute speech to try to convince the citizen players for their votes. Give politicians 3 minutes to formulate their speech. They can use strategies such as logical appeal, promises, or policy creation to sway votes. Citizens can discuss among each other in the meantime to understand how these issues can affect them. For the beginner round, the politicians and newscasters will be truthful.	8) The newscaster will introduce the both politicians, their parties, and the issues they will be addressing. State the description of the policies, but do not talk about the example implications or policies.	8) The newscaster will introduce the both politicians, their parties, and the issues they will be addressing. State the description of the policies, but do not talk about the example implications or policies.
9) Once time is up, the newscaster will introduce the debate and the politicians. Choose which politician goes first. Again, each politician will have 1 minute to speak.	9) Hand the issue cards to the politicians. They are allowed to read the description and the example implications.	9) Hand the issue cards to the politicians. They are allowed to read the description and the example implications.
10) Citizens will vote by placing their cards in the corresponding ballot box. The newscaster will then count the votes and declare the winner. If there is a tie, the newscaster will vote as a tiebreaker.	10) Based on these issues, politicians will need to create a 2 minute speech to try to convince the citizen players for their votes. Give politicians 4 minutes to formulate their speech. They can use strategies such as logical appeal, promises, or policy creation to sway voters. Citizens can discuss among each other in the meantime to understand how these issues can affect them. For the intermediate round, the politicians must give their speeches based on the traits they rolled.	10) Based on these issues, politicians will need to create a 3 minute speech to try to convince the citizen players for their votes. Give politicians 4 minutes to formulate their speech. They can use strategies such as logical appeal, promises, or policy creation to sway voters. Citizens can discuss among each other in the meantime to understand how these issues can affect them. For the advanced round, the politicians must give their speeches based on the traits they rolled.
11) Discuss amongst each other your thought processes for a few minutes.	11) Once time is up, the newscaster will introduce the debate and the politicians. Choose which politician goes first. Again, each politician will have 2 minutes to speak.	11) Once time is up, the newscaster will introduce the debate and the politicians. Choose which politician goes first. Again, each politician will have 3 minutes to speak.
	12) Once the speeches are done, the newscaster will share the event card they pulled. Newscasters may spin or twist the way they talk about the event to benefit the party they'd like to win, but that's not necessary.	12) Citizens are allowed to ask questions after the speeches. Each politician will have an opportunity to answer the question and even have a rebuttle to the other politician. Swap the order of which politician spoke first beforehand (ie: if Politician A spoke first in the speech portion, have Politician B speak first in answering questions) Limit answers to questions to 1 minute max. Have at least 2-3 questions before wrapping up.
13) Citizens will vote by placing their cards in the corresponding ballot box. The newscaster will then count the votes and declare the winner if there is a tie, the newscaster will vote as a tiebreaker.		13) Once the speeches are done, the newscaster will share the event cards they pulled. Newscasters may spin or twist the way they talk about the event to benefit the party they'd like to win, but that's not necessary.
14) Discuss amongst each other your thought processes for a few minutes. Politicians will reveal their traits and tactics for winning votes, and the newscaster can talk about what they did if they chose to twist the news.		14) Citizens will vote by placing their cards in the corresponding ballot box. The newscaster will then count the votes and declare the winner. If there is a tie, the newscaster will vote as a tiebreaker.
		15) Discuss amongst each other your thought processes for a few minutes. Politicians will reveal their traits and tactics for winning votes, and the newscaster can talk about what they did if they chose to twist the news.

Parties	Description	Base
Naturalist	The Naturalist Party are true to their name: they want to keep the laws of nature alive. This includes appealing to norms of predator and prey and accepting the differences between all animals. In general, returning to nature as best they can	Traditional, Predatory
Farsight	The Farsight Party is an aerial based progressive group that focuses on ensuring that avian rights are equal to that of other land and sea based animals. As such, breaking norms of other animal types is also key to their mission.	Progressive, Aerial
Farmhouse	The Farmhouse Party takes its namesake from the old religion. They believe in not only the natural order of things before civilization, but also the spiritual aspect. They believe everything happens for a reason.	Religious, Traditional
Dash	The Dash Party is all about racing toward the future. They are accepting of all types of animals as their goal is equalizing everyone,	Progressive.

First Iteration

During the first drafts of the game, I really wanted to get the nuances of politicians and how they might debate based on their personality. Randomness was also very much emphasized in development due to concern of replayability. Traits and parties of politicians were randomized by dice rolls. In addition, there were 3 different difficulty options built into to help with learning and replayability as well.

1. **Beginner** — No Politician traits, 1 issue discussion, no Q&A, Moderator stays honest
2. **Intermediate** — Politicians roll 1 good and 1 bad trait, 2 issue discussion, no Q&A, Newscaster can twist the news
3. **Advanced** — Politicians roll 2 good and 2 bad traits, 3 issue discussion, Q&A, Newscaster can twist the news

Play Test 1 and Revisions

The game had its first test with fellow BFA students. We played 2 rounds of both beginner and intermediate difficulties. We didn't reach advanced due to time and intermediate being a satisfactory point for gameplay.

Important observations made on this first test:

- People forgot what was going on and what the parties stood for and their
- Players didn't know the setting so not enough context
- People didn't really write down anything so they just winged it, might be because we're not a debate class?
- 1 min per policy seemed good
- People interrupted speeches, need to clarify not to
- Not sure if we need advanced, we got stuck up to intermediate
- They liked the issues, unsure if we need to connect them to real life examples so blatantly for the education part
- Players weren't sure what traditional meant, esp when it came to traditional vs religious, might be confused what it means to be both traditional and non-religious or progressive and religious
- Players had fun

Players also made some suggestions:

- Introduce setting in the beginning
- More info of society
- More about/bullet point info of party
  - List of the two+ biggest priorities
  - Need to be shown at all times
- Elaborate the characteristics and what they mean and have 1 sentence that describes them
- Folded cards possibly for more info
- Have the characteristics of the politicians (lair, calm, etc) be at the bottom but the party be random
- Add events and have that be after speeches but before Q&A
- Have one issue per minute
- Maybe QR codes on the back of the card to describe the allusion to real life
- Move Q&A to intermediate along with advanced

These were the changes that were made in response to this test:

- Advanced difficulty stayed at 2 issues
- Added rolling for a random party for politicians, personality characteristics were assigned to each one
- Changed timing for planning and speaking
- Added events to try to sway player's perceptions of candidates and add more nuance
- Added implications of issues to help guide players at the beginning of the game to understand how their characters may react

Play Test 2 and Revisions

After the 2nd test and feedback from advisors, gameplay was simplified to make sure that the game was easy to understand and the rounds faster to play:

- Difficulty and events were removed
- Removed some randomness with politicians by taking out personality traits
- Returned to assigning parties to each politician
- Made debate stage compose of 3 issues
- Time for speech prep was increased to 3 minute and Q&A answers increased to 1 minute
- Issue descriptions were reduced so it reads quickly
- Removed newscaster's ability to twist or lie about topics

3rd Play Test

One last test was played with a group of friends that were more used to playing games, but not designers. Even though this was a meeting online, overall they were able to give different types of observations, feedback, and suggestions for improvement.

- The setting is important to include
- The importance or status of humans should be addressed
- Parties and characteristics together seemed like a lot to keep in mind, so reducing them might help
- Have the issues tailored to politicians' parties rather than characteristics to help direct them
- Politicians would like to hear what civilians are feeling about topics to know what to say
- Civilian discussions on issues in small groups will help include everyone and encourage them to participate in comparison to a whole classroom

There are some pieces of feedback that I won't address (though they were still valuable), but for the ones that I did, these are the changes that I made in the remaining time frame that felt I could accomplish:

- Include setting in the instructions
- Increase round timing to include a few minutes of civilian discussions and summaries for politicians to hear how to cater to their audience

Branding

I tested various different typefaces to see which would work best with the concept of the game. After testing a couple of them, a particular one sparked my interest as I could flip one of the "l"s to make a check box. Afterwards, I tried out different types of imagery paired with the name to give it the animal feel.

Stage 1: Typeface Choice

Ballotopia

Ballotopia

BALLOTOPIA

Ballotopia

BALLOTOPIA

Ballotopia

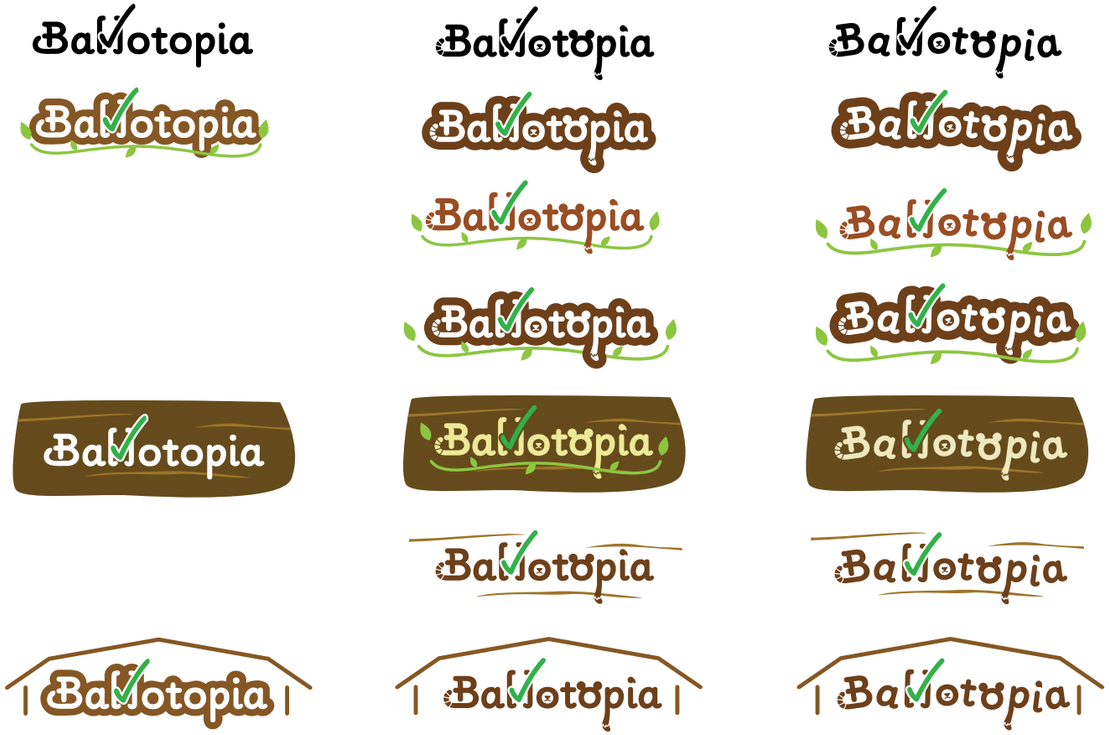
Ballotopia

BALLOTOPIA

Ballotopia

BALLOTOPIA

Stage 2: Styling

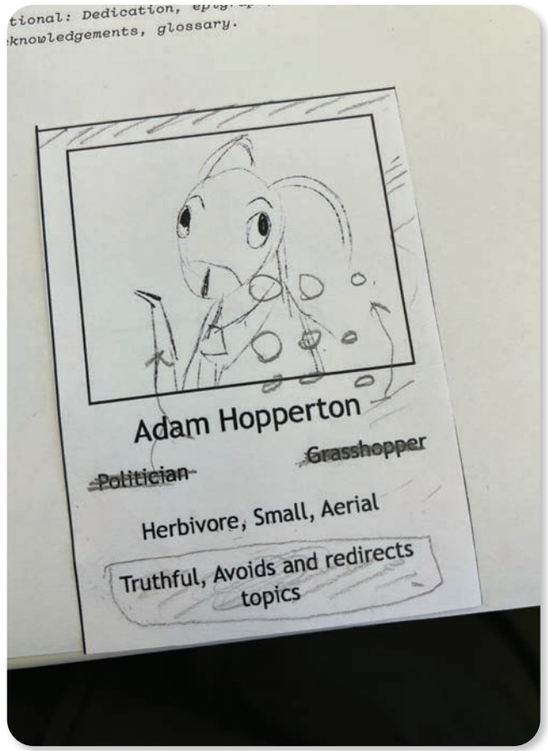


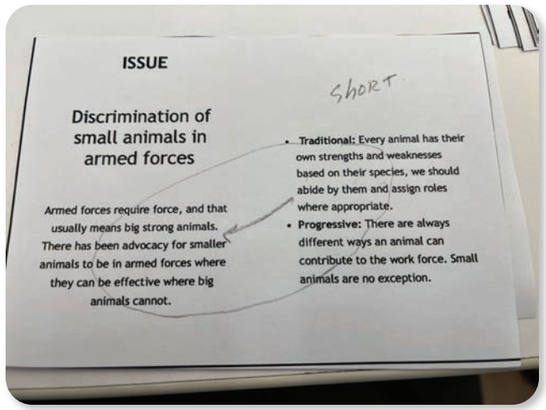
Stage 3: Refinement

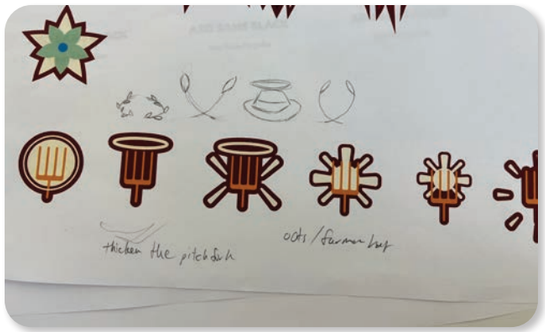
Balmotopia

Balmotopia

Balmotopia







Card Design

After the 2nd round of testing, I started on card design. Since the game itself is light hearted, the colors chosen were bright and saturated, with each role having their own designated color. Border designs and placement of elements was something I wanted to play with to see what would be most effective.

Characters

It was important to have the portraits be the centerpiece, so to differentiate it from the rest of the cards, which are vector based, the character portraits were hand drawn. Backgrounds of each habitat were also added with different variations to make sure the characters pop out.

Icons

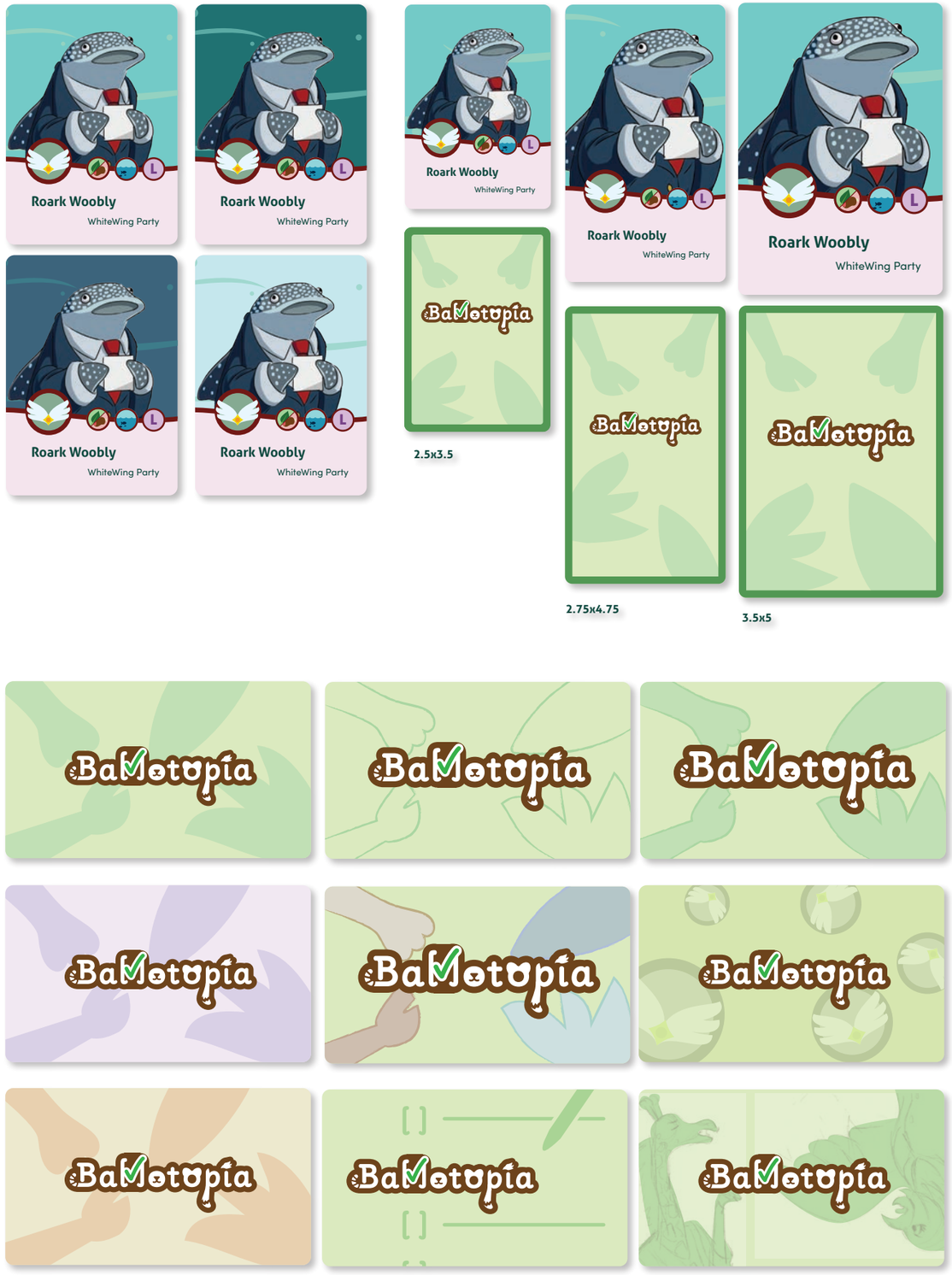
A large variety of icon designs were tried, including different imagery, color, and borders. In the end, the icons landed on a set of outlined icons.

Issues

Card design for issues were based off the character cards. The wave was reused and given a dark, saturated red, allowing the issue to pop out. This is followed by a short description and suggestions of how an animal of a certain characteristic could feel. This is to help players understand how the setting works. This can be omitted after the first issue or the first round if educators or players wish to go encourage critical thinking.

Stage 1: Card Design

Stage 2: Card Size, Backs and Refinement



S M L
S M L
S M L
S M L
S M L
S M L

Further Color Experimentation

Original

Type and Lines

Body

Backs

Type and Lines

Body

Backs

Type and Lines

Body

Backs

Type and Lines

Body

Backs

Type and Lines

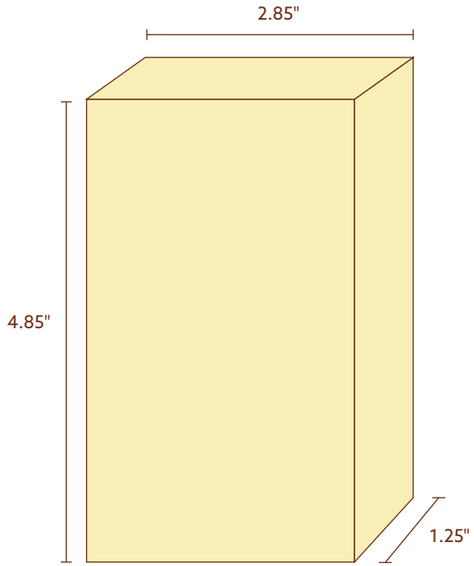
Body

Backs

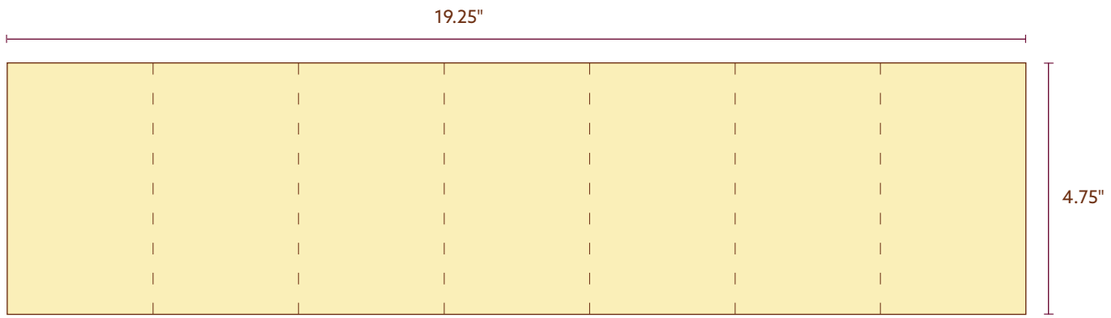
Product Sizing

Based on feedback, the card size was determined to be a Tarot Card sized (2.75"x4.75"), which further determines the size of the other parts of the product.

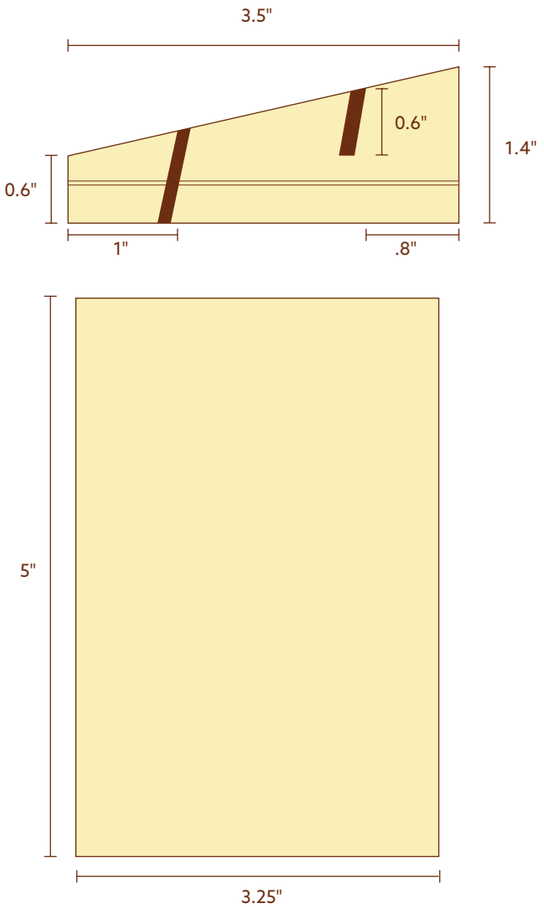
Tuck Box

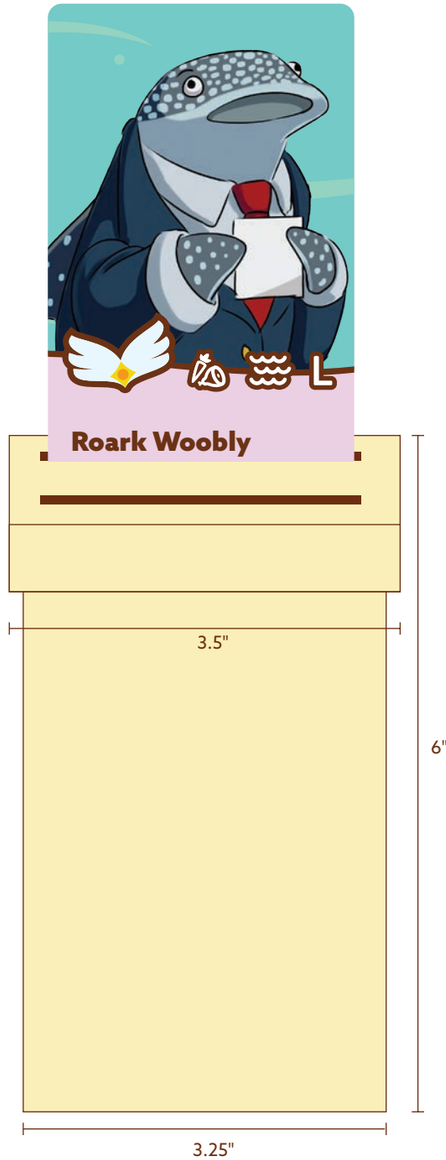


Instructions (fits in tuck box)



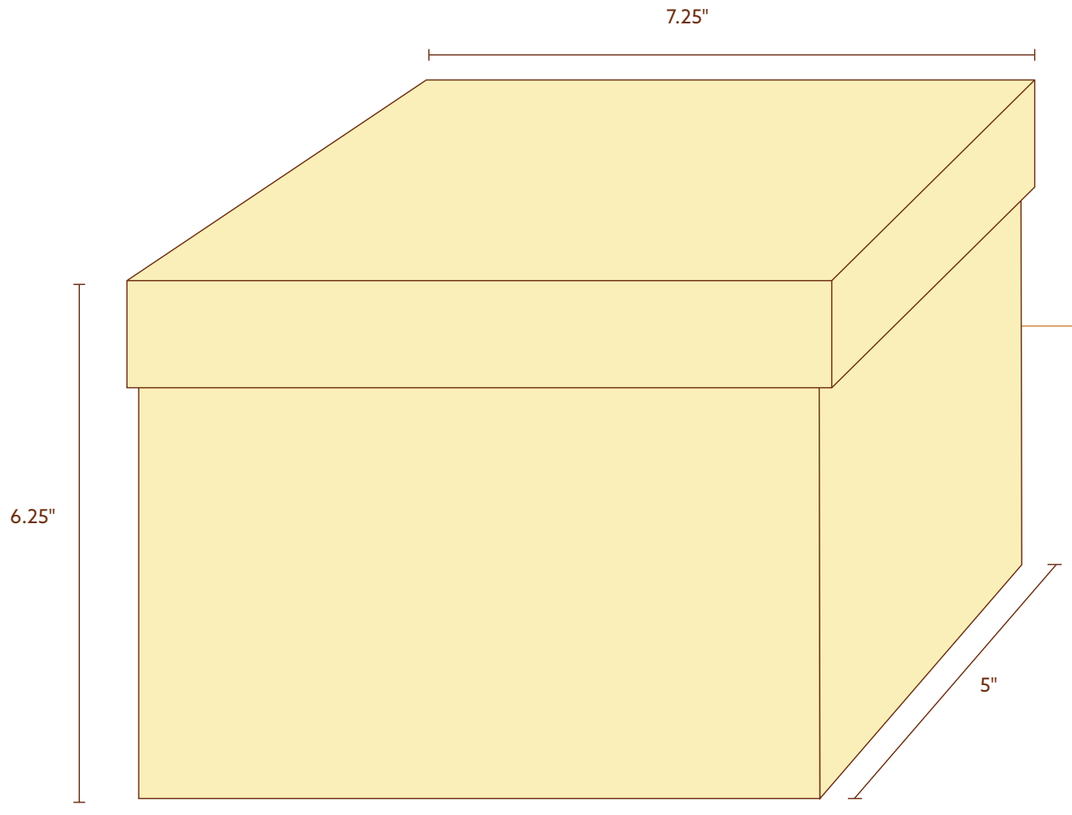
Ballot Box



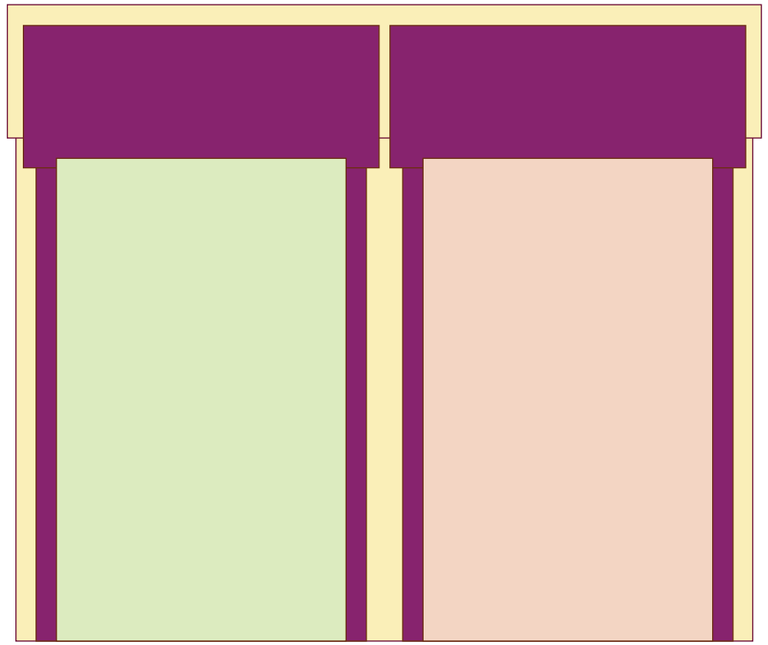


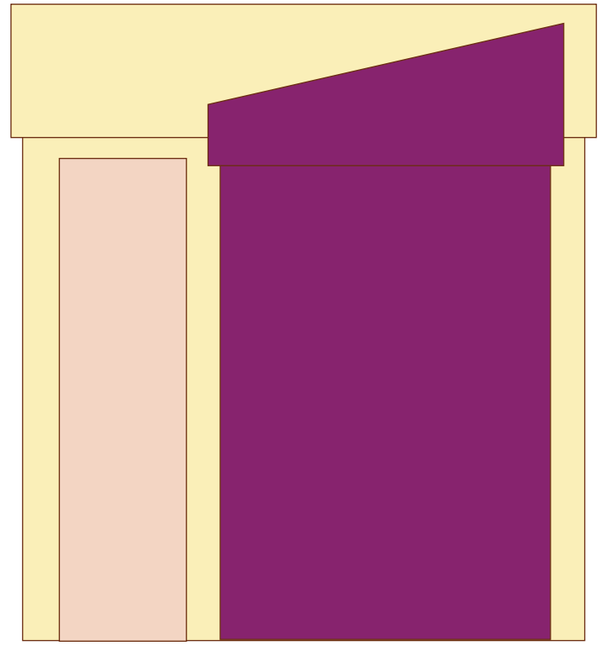
Product Sizing (cont.)

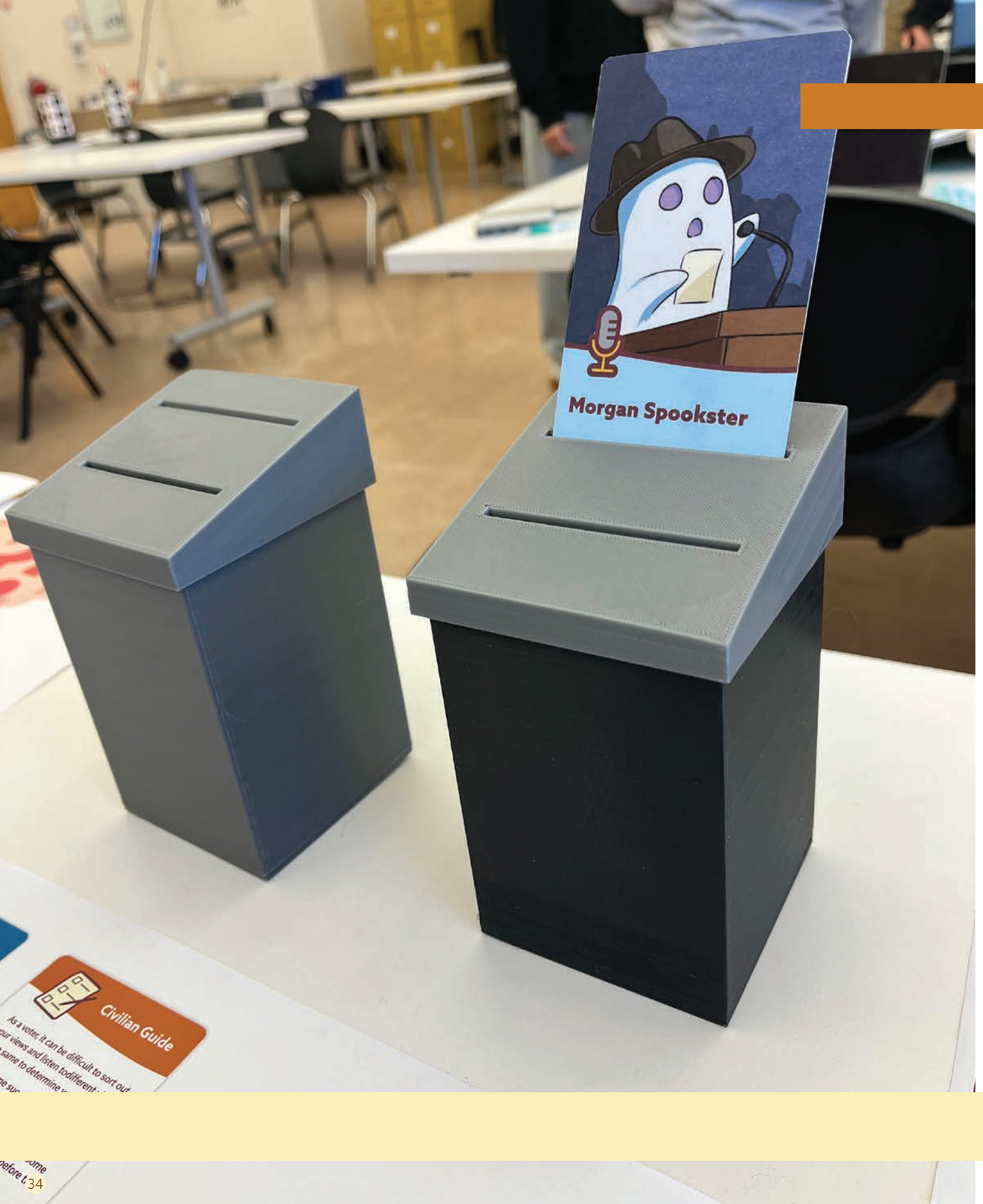
Product Box



Product Box with Items Inside



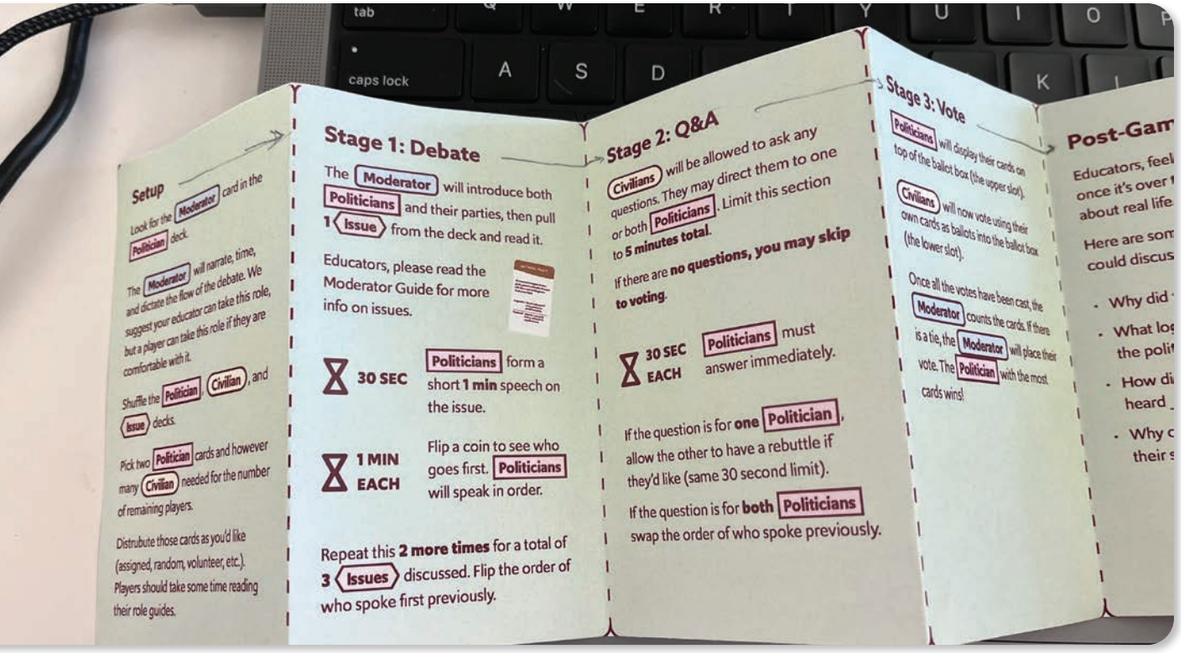




Ballot Box

Originally, citizens were going to just place cards in a simple open-top box, 1 in front of each politician. But, to make it feel more like a ballot box you place your votes in real life, I made the boxes with a cover where players can slip cards from the top and be hidden from view afterwards. To add a little bit of interaction from the politicians as well, a slot was created so that the politician's portrait, name, and icons can be shown.

Colors for the ballot box were based on the brand colors as well.



Packaging and Instructions

Both were designed using the character cards as a base. Showing the characters were important to make the game attractive. Additional elements were kept as vector.

The storage box has text describing the game and the setting. The instructions are set in an accordion folded booklet that describes how to read the character cards and how to play the game step by step. Different placements were played with to ensure easier reading.

BaMotopia
An animal-themed politics game
Politicians, Moderators & Citizens
BaMotopia
An animal-themed politics game
BaMotopia
How To Play
Setup
Look for the Politician deck.
The Moderator will narrate, time, and dictate the flow of the debate. We suggest your educator can take this role, but a player can take this role if they are comfortable with it.
Separate the Politician and Citizen cards. Shuffle the Issues deck.
Pull two random Politician cards and however many Citizen cards needed for the number of remaining players.
Distribute those cards as you'd like (assigned, random, volunteer, etc.). Players should take some time to read the role guides.
Stage 1: Discussions and Debate
5 MIN TALK
Citizens will discuss the issues and how it affects them.
Again, if there is more than 1 group of Citizens, have the representatives of each group present a summary of what they talked about.
3 MIN PLAN
Politicians form a short 1 min speech on the issue.
1 MIN SPEECH
Flip a coin to see who goes first. Politicians will speak in order.
Repeat both discussions and debates 2 more times until a total of 3 Issues are discussed. Flip the order of the Politician who spoke first previously.
Stage 2: Q&A
Citizens will be allowed to ask any questions. They may direct them to one or both Politicians. Limit this section to 5 minutes total.
If there are no questions, you may skip to voting.
1 MIN EACH
Politicians must answer immediately.
If the question is for 1 Politician, allow the other to take a rebuttle (keep it like same, 30 second limit).
If the question is for both Politicians, swap the order of which one spoke previously (debate or question).
Stage 3: Vote
Politicians will display their cards on top of the ballot box (the upper slot).
Citizens will now vote using their own cards as ballots into the ballot box (the lower slot).
Once all the votes have been cast, the Moderator counts the cards. If there is a tie, the Moderator will place their vote. The Politician with the most cards wins!
Post-Game
Educators, feel free to discuss the game once it's over to help teach your students about real life politics and debate!
Here are some suggestions on what you could discuss:
Why did you vote for _____?
What logical fallicies were made by the politicians
How did students feel when they heard _____
Why did _____ use _____ in their speech/answer

Final Outcome

Branding

Logo: Pauline Bold (edited)

BaMotopia

Body Type: Azo Sans

Azo Sans Black
Azo Sans Bold
Azo Sans Medium
Azo Sans Regular

Colors

Finalized Game Flow

Setup

Moderator removed from the deck. Separate the politician and citizen cards and shuffle them separately. Shuffle the issue deck as well.

2 players will be assigned the politician roles and 1 will be the moderator. Take 2 random politicians from the deck. Count remaining players and pull that number of cards from the citizen deck.

Roles assigned by educator/players (random, assigned, volunteer, etc.)

Stage 1: Discussion and Debate

Moderator
Introduce the debate and the politicians.

Moderator
Pull an issue card from the deck. State the issue (and implications if decided on).

Are there more than 6 players?

No

Citizens stay together and discuss. Politicians will listen in.

Yes

Citizens are split evenly so there are no more than 6 per group. 1 person in each group takes notes of the discussion and reads a summary to the politicians.

5 MIN TALK — **Citizens**
Each citizen discusses how the issue will affect them.

Citizens summarize their talk with politicians.

3 MIN PLAN — **Politicians**
Form a 1 minute speech.

Coin is flipped to see who speaks first. If there was a previous round, the order of who speaks first is flipped.

1 MIN SPEECH — **Politicians**
Present speeches in order.

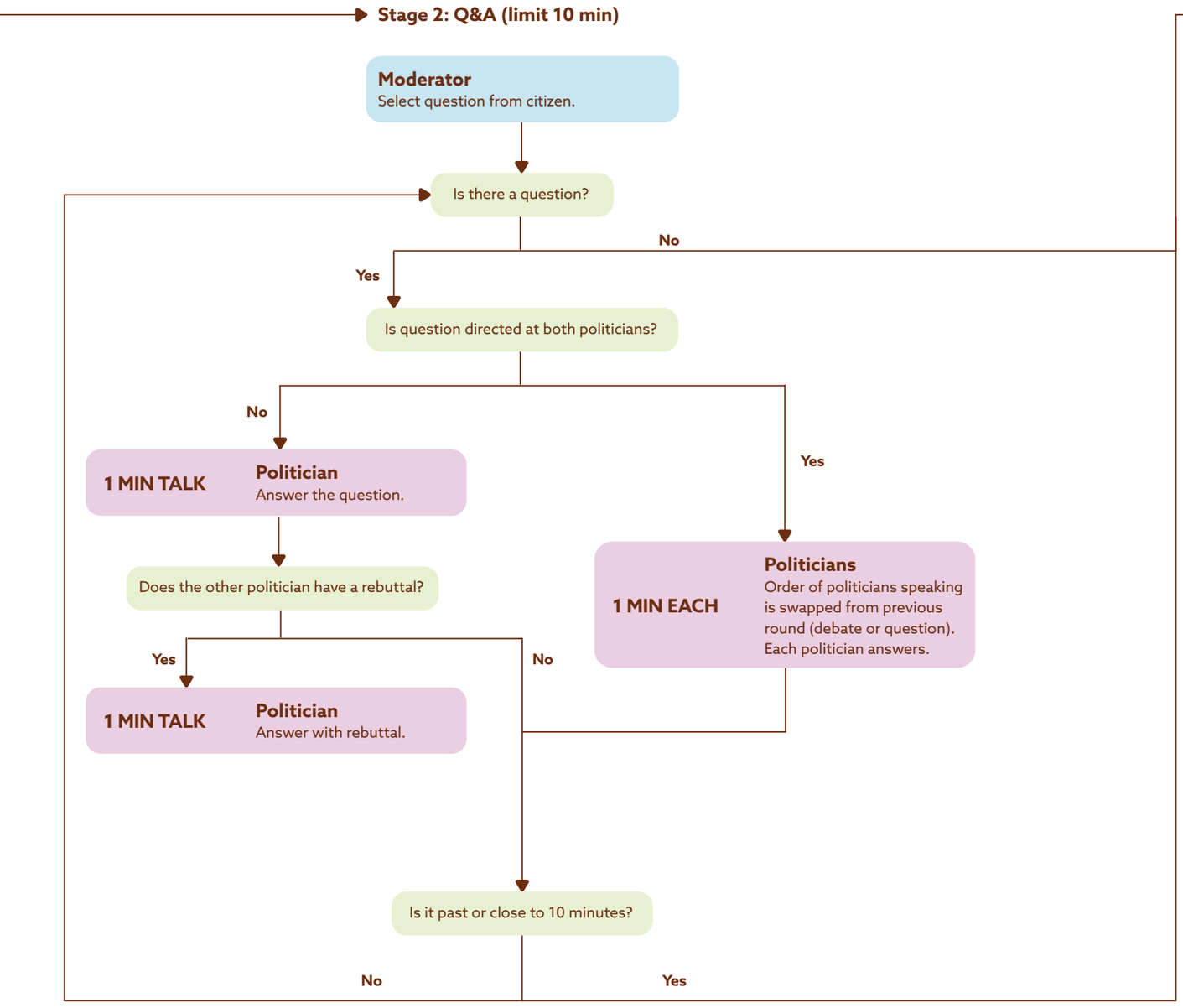
Have 3 issues been discussed?

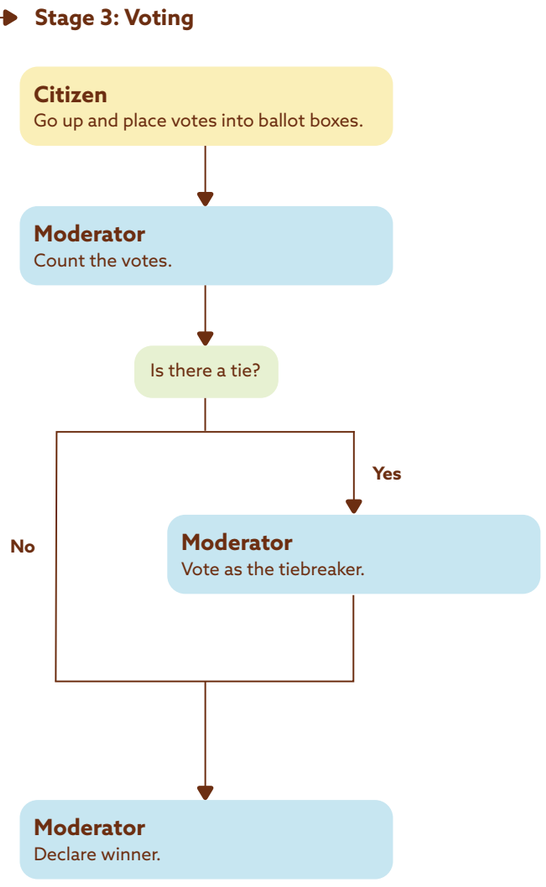
No

Yes

Please note that this is different than what is listed on the instructions booklet as this is supposed to represent game flow rather than instructions.

Finalized Game Flow (cont.)



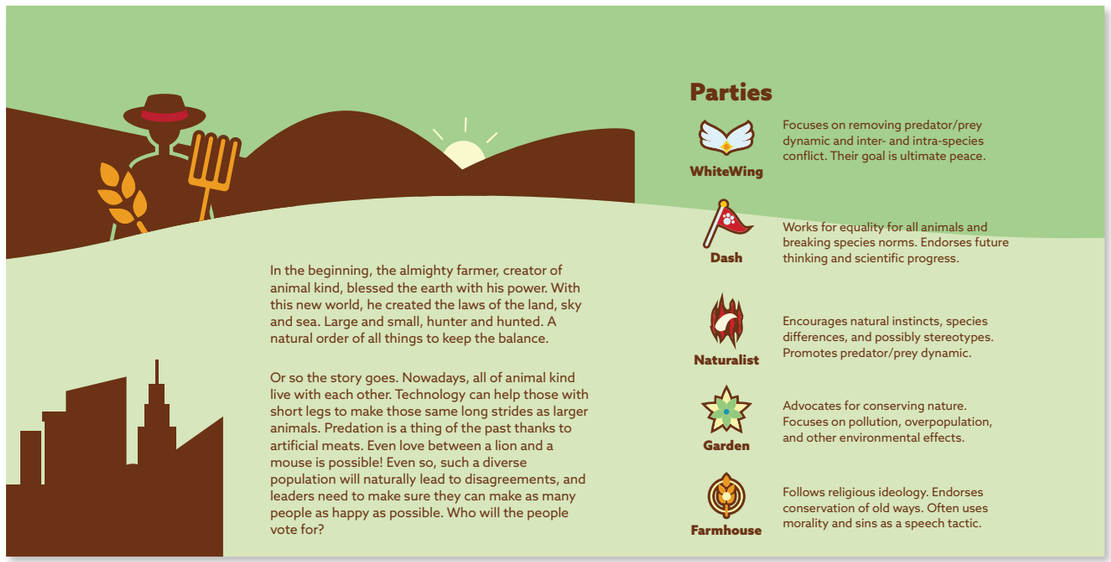


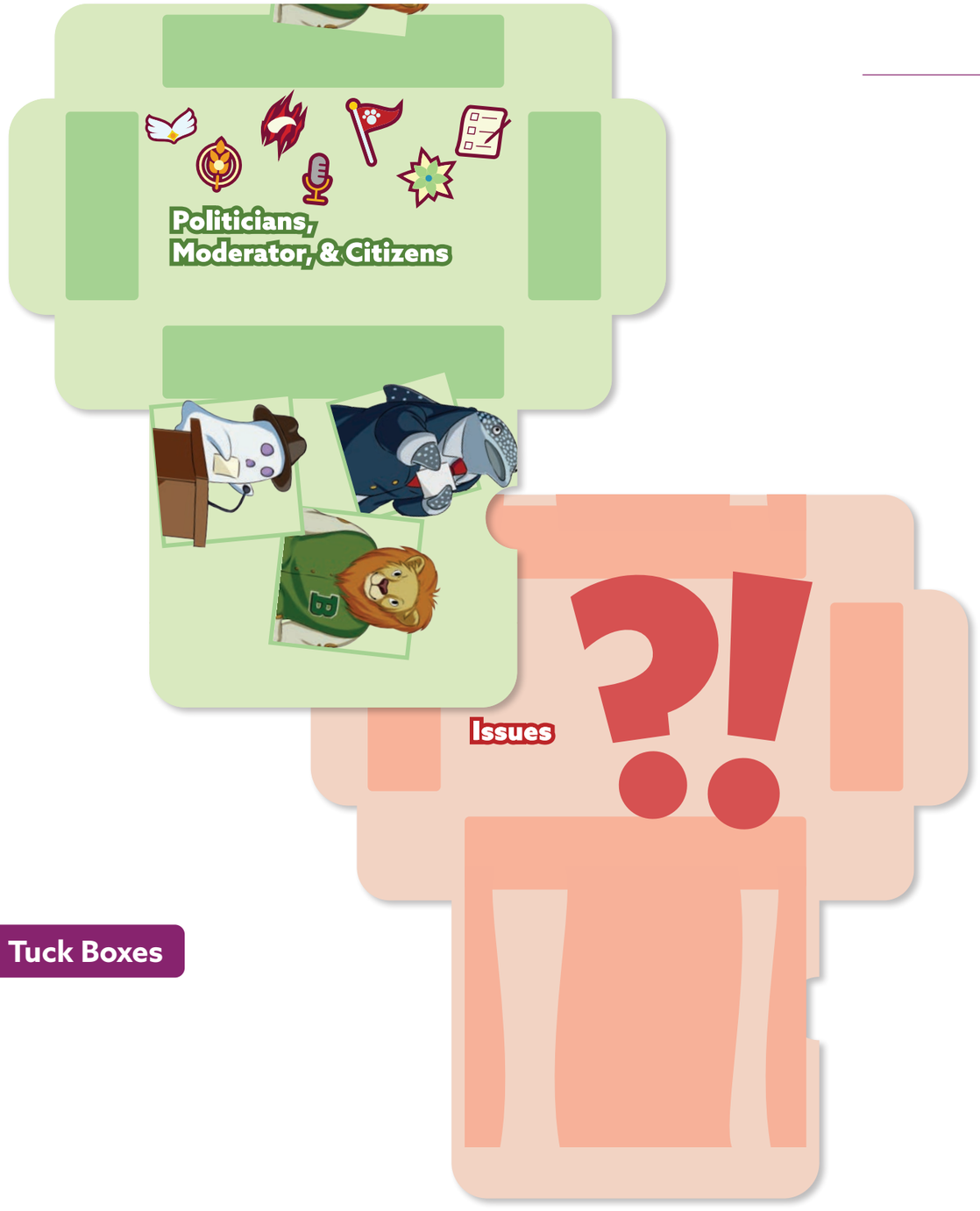
Package

Box Cover

Front and Right Side

Back and Left Side

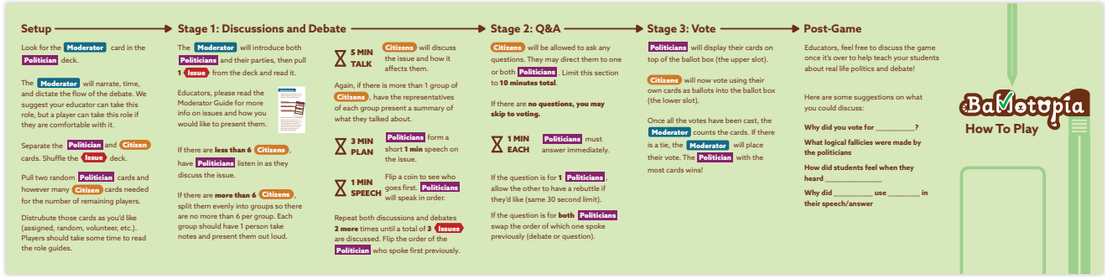




Tuck Boxes

Instructions

Booklet



Card Guides

Politician Guide

Poltcians can use a lot of honest and dishonest tactics with debate. What do you want to do to gain votes?

Are you going to be **honest** or **lie**?

Will you to appeal to **logic** or **emotion**?

Are you going to **slander or throw insults at your opponent**?

If you can't answer a question, will you **answer it head on** or will you **change the topic**?

Are you going to **generalize**?

Will you state **ca** and **effort**?

Who or what wi

Parties

Moderator Guide

As Moderator, you will be completely independent and neutral. You will need to guide the flow of the entire game.

For example:

- You will introduce the politicians, their parties, and the issues
- You will announce when to move on to the next stage
- You will be in charge of timing and stoping politicians from speaking over the time limit
- You will pick which civilians answer questions and the order in which politicians will speak
- You will count

announce the

Reading Issues

Depending on your educator, you can chose to read the whole card, or just the issue name and description.

"Implications of the Issue" will suggest what a civilian could think based on specific characteristics. This is to help players get a feel for the game setting. You can stop reading it after the 2nd or 3rd issue once the players are used to the game and setting to encourage critical thinking.

Citizen Guide

As a voter, it can be difficult to sort out your views and listen todifferent views at the same to determine your vote.

Here are some suggestions on what you can do to sort out your thoughts!

- **Write that down:** Quickly jot some notes about how you feel before the politicians' speeches
- **Listen carefully:** Write what you hear exactly, not your conclusions
- **Hone in on key points:** Try to think and understand why people think a certain way (doesn't mean you need to agree on it)
- **Does the argu** Some argume faulty logic or

Logical Fallicies

Watch out for these during politicians' speeches! These are just a small sample of a whole list of logical fallicies. Look online to learn more!

- **Ad Hominem:** Personal attacks towards the opponent rather than using logic
- **Straw Man:** Using misdirection by attacking a different subject
- **False Dichotomy:** Listing only two extremes as choices (ie: "take it or leave it)
- **Sunk Cost:** Continuing a practice or tradition because of the effort that is already put into it
- **Appeal to Pity:** Using emotions, not logic, to appeal to an audience

Instruction Close-Ups

Booklet Front

Setup

Look for the **Moderator** card in the **Politician** deck.

The **Moderator** will narrate, time, and dictate the flow of the debate. We suggest your educator can take this role, but a player can take this role if they are comfortable with it.

Separate the **Politician** and **Citizen** cards. Shuffle the **Issue** deck.

Pull two random **Politician** cards and however many **Citizen** cards needed for the number of remaining players.

Distrubute those cards as you'd like (assigned, random, volunteer, etc.). Players should take some time to read the role guides.

Stage 1: Discussions and Debate

The **Moderator** will introduce both **Politicians** and their parties, then pull **1 Issue** from the deck and read it.

Educators, please read the Moderator Guide for more info on issues and how you would like to present them.

If there are **less than 6 Citizens**, have **Politicians** listen in as they discuss the issue.

If there are **more than 6 Citizens**, split them evenly into groups so there are no more than 6 per group. Each group should have 1 person take notes and present them out loud.

5 MIN TALK — **Citizens** will discuss the issue and how it affects them.

Again, if there is more than 1 group of **Citizens**, have the representatives of each group present a summary of what they talked about.

3 MIN PLAN — **Politicians** form a short **1 min** speech on the issue.

1 MIN SPEECH — Flip a coin to see who goes first. **Politicians** will speak in order.

Repeat both discussions and debates **2 more** times until a total of **3 Issues** are discussed. Flip the order of the **Politician** who spoke first previously.

Stage 2: Q&A

Citizens will be allowed to ask any questions. They may direct them to one or both **Politicians** . Limit this section to **10 minutes total**.

If there are **no questions, you may skip to voting.**

1 MIN EACH — **Politicians** must answer immediately.

If the question is for **1 Politicians**, allow the other to have a rebuttle if they'd like (same 30 second limit).

If the question is for **both Politicians** swap the order of which one spoke previously (debate or question).

Stage 3: Vote

Politicians will display their cards on top of the ballot box (the upper slot).

Citizens will now vote using their own cards as ballots into the ballot box (the lower slot).

Once all the votes have been cast, the **Moderator** counts the cards. If there is a tie, the **Moderator** will place their vote. The **Politician** with the most cards wins!

Post-Game

Educators, feel free to discuss the game once it's over to help teach your students about real life politics and debate!

Here are some suggestions on what you could discuss:

Why did you vote for _____?

What logical fallicies were made by the politicians

How did students feel when they heard _____

Why did _____ use _____ in their speech/answer

BaMotopia
How To Play

Booklet Back

In the beginning, the almighty Farmer, creator of animal kind, blessed the earth with his power. With this new world, he created the laws of the land, sky and sea. Large and small, hunter and hunted. A natural order of all things.

Or so the story goes. The Farmer and their people are gone, and now all of animal kind live with each other. Technology can help those with short legs to make those same long strides as larger animals. Predation is in the past thanks to artificial meats. Even love between a lion and a mouse is possible! Even so, such a diverse population will lead to disagreements, and leaders need to make sure they can make as many as happy as possible. Who will the people vote for?

Characteristics

Be prepared to act and think like the character you get!

Note that the **Moderator** will always be neutral.

1 Diet — Herbivore, Carnivore, Omnivore

2 Habitat — Terrestrial, Aerial, Aquatic

3 Size — S, M, L — Small, Medium, Large

4 Party

WhiteWing — Focuses on removing predator/prey dynamic and inter- and intra-species conflict. Their goal is ultimate peace.

Dash — Works for equality for all animals and breaking species norms. Endorses future thinking and scientific progress.

Naturalist — Encourages natural instincts, species differences, and possibly stereotypes. Promotes predator/prey dynamic.

Garden — Advocates for conserving nature. Focuses on pollution, overpopulation, and other environmental effects.

Farmhouse — Follows religious ideology. Endorses conservation of old ways. Often uses morality and sins as a speech tactic.

5 Personality

Belief
Religious OR Non-Religious
Whether or not you are swayed by religious connotations of issues.

Stance
Progressive OR Traditional
Whether or not you prefer the traditional way animals used to be in their primal age.

Money
Stingy OR Giving
How you approach spending by yourself, the politician, and/or the government.

Mentality
Self-Centered OR Sympathetic
How much you care about species that are less similar to you.

Certainty
Confident OR Fearful
Whether or not you are swayed by the unknown or potential threats.

Ballot Box

Card Designs

Card Back (Characters)

Card Back (Issues)

Icons

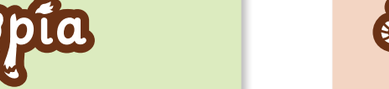
Diet

Herbivore Carnivore Omnivore

Habitat

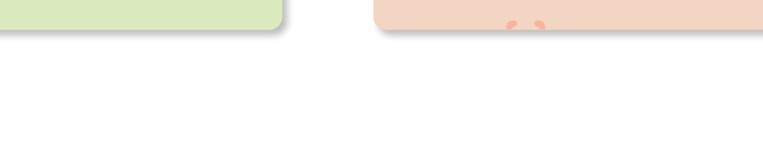
Terrestrial Aquatic Aerial

Size



Small Medium Large

Party



WhiteWing Dash Garden Naturalist Farmhouse

Card Sets

Due to time constraints, these decks meant to be a small sample of what would be a larger deck.

Issues

BIGGER HAMSTER WHEELS

Biggger wheels will let smaller animals keep up to speed with bigger animals, but this creates problems for bigger animals.

Stingy:	Unnecessary cost, smaller animals have made do before
Giving:	This will help smaller animals and reduce accidents.
Small:	More likely to approve
Medium & Large:	More likely to disapprove

OPTIONAL PANTS

Some animals simply can't wear pants, yet some still make a fuss out of it. How much clothing is too much or too little?

Progressive:	We can make special pants, so everyone should wear pants.
Traditional:	We never wore pants before, and we don't need them now.

BLACKSTRIPING

Unpatterned animals painted stripes or spots on their bodies before. Zebra stripes on white horses have been the biggest offender, hence "blackstriping."

Patterned:	More likely to take issue and offense
Un-patterned:	Less likely to take issue and/or offense

DISCRIMINATION OF SMALL ANIMALS IN ARMED FORCES

Armed forces require force, which usually means big strong animals. There is advocacy for smaller animals who can be effective where big animals cannot.

Progressive:	There are different ways an animal can contribute to the work force. Small animals are no exception.
Traditional:	We can't ignore species attributes. They need their appropriate jobs.

ARE UNFERTILIZED EGGS CHICKENS?

The Almighty Farmer states that the souls of the unborn chickens must be buried, but science has shown that there were never going to hatch in the first place.

Religious:	Practices should be upheld, the unborn souls need to be respected
Non-religious:	Based on scientific research, they're not actually chickens

POOPING WHILE FLYING

Some flyers can have difficulty keeping it in while flying. Their poor bowel control can lead to some unsavory accidents.

Progressive:	Flyers aware enough to know that they need to use the bathroom.
Traditional:	Their bodies can't help it they need to poop
Aerial:	Less likely to take issue
Terrestrial & Aquatic:	More likely to take issue

HOSTILE RELATIONS

The country of Animopolis is starting to get more unfriendly. The mentions of attacks and war are starting to cause concern as they begin mobilizing.

Fearful:	We should start mounting defenses and armed forces
Confident:	We'll be fine, we shouldn't be doing things that cause more tension

THE GREAT EXTINCTION

It happened with the dinosaurs, and it's thought to happen again! Yet there is no evidence of any incoming meteors in space that could be a threat.

Fearful:	We should prepare just in case, we never know what will happen
Confident:	There's nothing going on to be afraid of

THE NO-LEGS EXPRESS

This train helps out the aquatic who can't walk on land or those who can't walk well. The No-Legs Express, is here to help those who can't travel on land well get to their destination! But does it get to the point of unfairness?

Traditional:	This gives too much of an advantage, let them go to buildings accomodated to their biology
Progressive:	They should have a chance to be equal and attend the same places as others

Card Sets (cont.)

Due to time constraints, these decks meant to be a small sample of what would be a larger deck.

Politicians

Roark Woobly

WhiteWing Party

Winifred Wingsly

Farmhouse Party

General Wolvington

Naturalist Party

Horace Longstride

Dash Party

Adam Hopperton

Garden Party

Tina Squawkly

WhiteWing Party

Martina Hamin

Farmhouse Party

Jimmy Chipper

Naturalist Party

Frida Snoutez

Dash Party

Tramina Wiggleton

Garden Party

Citizens and Moderator

Daniel Floatsam

Religious, Traditional, Giving, Self-Centered, Fearful

Derek Proudmane

Religious, Progressive, Giving, Sympathetic, Confident

Mike Blublay

Non-Religious, Progressive, Stingy, Self-Centered, Confident

Sebastian Hooti

Non-Religious, Traditional, Giving, Sympathetic, Confident

Wally Leftpaw

Religious, Progressive, Giving, Self-Centered, Confident

Aileen Borker

Non-Religious, Traditional, Giving, Self-Centered, Confident

Jan Ribbet

Religious, Progressive, Giving, Sympathetic, Fearful

Manny T.

Religious, Progressive, Giving, Sympathetic, Confident

Hank Honk

Non-Religious, Traditional, Giving, Self-Centered, Confident

Morgan Spookster

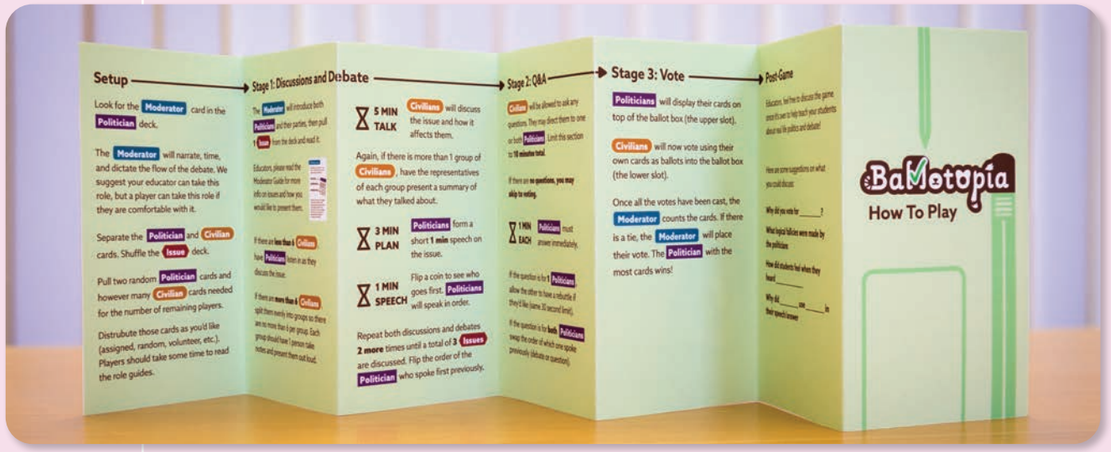
Neutral, Independent

Final Product

BaMotopia
An animal-themed politics game

Civilian Guide
Moderator Guide
Politician Guide
BaMotopia
How To Play

Politicians, Moderator, & Citizens
Issues


Setup
Look for the Moderator card in the Politician deck.
The Moderator will narrate, time, and dictate the flow of the debate. We suggest your educator can take this role, but a player can take this role if they are comfortable with it.
Separate the Politician and Civilian cards. Shuffle the Issue deck.
Pull two random Politician cards and however many Civilian cards needed for the number of remaining players.
Distrubute those cards as you'd like (assigned, random, volunteer, etc.). Players should take some time to read the role guides.
Stage 1: Discussions and Debate
The Moderator will introduce both Politician and their parties, then pull 1 Issue from the deck and read it.
Education, please read the Moderator Guide for more info on issues and how you would like to present them.
If there are less than 6 Civilians have Politician train in as they discuss the issue.
If there are more than 6 Civilians split them evenly into groups so there are no more than 6 per group. Each group should have 1 person take notes and present them out loud.
5 MIN TALK
Civilians will discuss the issue and how it affects them.
Again, if there is more than 1 group of Civilians, have the representatives of each group present a summary of what they talked about.
3 MIN PLAN
Politicians form a short 1 min speech on the issue.
1 MIN SPEECH
Flip a coin to see who goes first. Politicians will speak in order.
Repeat both discussions and debates 2 more times until a total of 3 Issues are discussed. Flip the order of the Politician who spoke first previously.
Stage 2: Q&A
Civilians will be allowed to ask any questions. They may direct them to one or both Politicians. Limit this section to 10 minutes total.
If there are no questions, you may skip to voting.
1 MIN EACH
Politicians must answer immediately.
If the question is for 1 Politician, allow the other to have a rebuttle if they'd like (same 30 second limit).
If the question is for both Politicians swap the order of which one spoke previously (debate or question).
Stage 3: Vote
Politicians will display their cards on top of the ballot box (the upper slot).
Civilians will now vote using their own cards as ballots into the ballot box (the lower slot).
Once all the votes have been cast, the Moderator counts the cards. If there is a tie, the Moderator will place their vote. The Politician with the most cards wins!
Post-Game
Educators, feel free to discuss the game, even if it's not to help teach your students about real life politics and debate!
Here are some suggestions on what you could discuss:
Why did you vote for _____?
What logical fallacies were made by the politician
How did students feel when they heard _____?
Why did _____ over _____ in their speech/answer
BaMetopia
How To Play

dodecapa
THE GREAT EXTINCTION
It happened with the dinosaurs, and it's thought to happen again! Yet there is no evidence of any incoming disasters in space that could be a threat.
Fearful: We should prepare just in case, we never know what will happen
Confident: There's nothing going on to be afraid of

S
Martina Hamin
M
Jimmy Chipper

Babletopia
Borker
Religious, Traditional,
Centered, Confident
Dash Party

In the beginning, the almighty Farmer, creator of animal kind, blessed the earth with his power. With this new world, he created the laws of the land, sky and sea. Large and small, hunter and hunted. A natural order of all things.
Or so the story goes. The Farmer and their people are gone, and now all of animal kind live with each other. Technology can help those with short legs to make those same long strides as larger
General Wolvington
Naturalist Party
Characteristics
Be prepared to act and think like the character you get!
Note that the Moderator will always be neutral!
1 Diet
Hydrovic Carnivore Omnivore
2 Habitat
Terrestrial Aerial Aquatic
3 Size
S M L
Small Medium Large
Daniel Floatsam
Religious, Traditional
Giving, Self-Centered, Fearful
5 Personality
Belief
Religious OR Non-Religious
Whether or not you are swayed by religious considerations of issues.
Civilian Guide
As a voter, it can be difficult to sort out your views and listen indifferent views at the same to determine your vote.
Here are some suggestions on what you can do to sort out your thoughts!
Write that down: Quickly jot some notes about how you feel before the politicians' speeches
Listen carefully: Write what you hear exactly, not your conclusions
Hone in on key points: Try to think and understand why people think a certain way (doesn't meat you need to agree on it)
Does the argument makes sense: Some arguments might be based on faulty logic or emotion
Politician Guide
Moderator Guide

The End

The biggest Struggles

Determining the mindset of high schoolers

Since this an interaction design project that needs to be physically built and played, getting feedback is really crucial. It has to cater to my target audience, but even that audience has a large variety of people with different backgrounds and learning levels. I would have like to test this with a couple of high school classes, but in the time frame it wasn't possible. Although I'm not familiar with the mentality of high schoolers anymore, my third advisor helped me gauge proper timing and rule complexity.

The feedback I got for the game was still very valuable, but it was difficult to know which feedback and suggestions from players was right for the game's improvement. Having the correct change for the desired outcome can be hard to obtain, but I think the additional rounds of playtesting helped with that.

What did I learn?

Experience is beyond just the rules

The biggest thing that I realized while I was making the game was that the experience of the game was not only limited to the game rules. I was originally going to make just a card game, but as the project progress, more pieces of the game popped up. These were important parts of the game that would help it feel more like real-life voting in addition to creating a pleasant gaming experience. The design of other parts and elements other than the rules while playing such as instructions, ballot box, and the game package is still important to try.

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Graphic Design Professor
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Political Science Teacher
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And my fellow BFA classmates, family, and friends!

Annotated Bibliography

1. **Badger, Emily. 2018. "What If Everyone Voted?" The New York Times, October 29, 2018. Accessed January 2, 2023. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/29/upshot/what-if-everyone-voted.html.**

   Youths constantly fall behind in voting turnout rates in comparison to other age groups. This article mentions how if there was a hypothetical situation where everyone voted, results would be vastly different. Not only that, but politicians would cater better towards youths. We would have far more democratic politicians and laws that would better current situations for youths, who will feel the effects of these decisions the most compared to those in older age groups. This emphasizes the fact that our government and laws are not representational of the masses. Education is often said to be a key part of better turn out rates as well, which could eventually lead to the situation stated in the article.

2. **CIRCLE. "2022 Election: Young Voters Have High Midterm Turnout, Influence Critical Races" Accessed January 2, 2023. https://circle.tufts.edu/2022-election-center#youth-prefer-democrats-by-28-point-margin.**

   It's shown that when young voters feel like their under threat, they are more likely to vote. Especially in battleground states where they feel they have more of a difference to swing the vote one way or the other. That feeling of connection towards political topics, whether good or bad, reveals that youths will turnout more due to this effect. That connection can be taught in school, and learning engagement early will foster the will to connect more often. When they know they can make a difference, they will turnout more.

3. **Dinas, Elias. "Why Does the Apple Fall Far from the Tree? How Early Political Socialization Prompts Parent-Child Dissimilarity." British Journal of Political Science 44, no. 4 (March 12, 2013): 827–52. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123413000033.**

   Early politicization of youths, regardless of party, will let them more easily connect and engage with politics later in life. Youths may follow the political leanings and opinions of their parents and family, but once they move out and start thinking independently, particularly in college, research has shown that they may switch their political leanings. This shows the ability to critically think for themselves once alone, and college may help with having young adults encounter and deliberate on differing opinions. As such, teaching politics as early as possible may be crucial.

4. **Ferlazzo, Larry. "Politics Belongs in the Classroom." Education Week, October 12, 2020. Accessed January 2, 2023. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-politics-belongs-in-the-classroom/2020/10.**

   This article includes multiple opinions of teachers, which all support keeping politics in school. Parents may complain that by doing this, they may make students lean one way or the other party-wise or tell them what they should be thinking, but these teachers aren't trying to do that. They are teaching students how to think, which is very different. By keeping politics out of the classroom, they do not prepare students for civic life and will not be "conductive to a productive democratic society."

5. **Kahne, Joseph, David Crow, and Nam-Jin Lee. "Different Pedagogy, Different Politics: High School Learning Opportunities and Youth Political Engagement." Political Psychology 34, no. 3 (December 7, 2012): 419–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2012.00936.x.**

   The nature of civic engagement is not only just voting, but also engaging in your local community. This study mentions the idea of injustice, agency, and concern which creates a collective action frame. This induces motivation from an individual to participate. They particularly mention the hesitation of youths to get involved in politics due to the fear of conflict, and that the normalization of conflict in the classroom is critical. Open discussion in the classroom along with controversial topics will allow students to better understand and socialize with civics.

6. **Laine, Teemu H., and Lindberg, Renny S. N. "Designing Engaging Games for Education: A Systematic Literature Review on Game Motivators and Design Principles." IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies 13, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 804–21. https://doi.org/10.1109/tlt.2020.3018503.**

   Games can be very difficult to make successful, even moreso with the aims of being educational and fun at the same time. The medium is a great way to teach mundane topics or practices while keeping students engaged. In this study, the authors go through a thorough study of game mechanics and which ones most likely interest students. A couple of these important mechanics include social play, goals/rewards, challenge, and creativity.

7. **Lo, Jane C., and Gavin Tierney. "Maintaining Interest in Politics: 'Engagement First' in a U.S. High School Government Course." Journal of Social Science Education 16, no. 3 (September 14, 2017): 62–73. https://doi.org/10.2390/jsse-v16-i3-1572.**

   The biggest issue with teaching politics is how to keep students engaged beyond the classroom. The authors of this article mention that an "Engagement First" tactic is important to trigger interest in politics and civics. Once interest has been sparked, it can be maintained with meaningful activities. They mention four phases of interest development: triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, emerging individual interest, and well-developed individual interest. "Engagement First" will introduce students using projects and role-play, allowing them to ask questions and gather important information. This can allow students to ease into more difficult or mundane readings and lectures.

8. **Mullins, Ricky D. "A Review of The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education." The Journal of Social Studies Research 40, no. 2 (April 2016): 165–67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2015.06.011.**

   While this is a review on a book on politics in the classroom, it still gave some useful insight. The review mentions the importance of having disagreements between students, but treating everyone as political equals. The book includes a study on different schools of different political cultures which represent 3 different concepts: inclusive participation, political friendship, and bounded autonomy. The most left leaning school emphasized political friendship, the most conservative showed bounded autonomy, and the mixed school showed inclusive participation. The mixed school showed the most promise with the emphasis on inclusive practices and the attention to "we." The left leaning school had more risk of political polarization due to the income and racial disparities within the school, but the political friendship philosophy attempted to reverse polarization. The most conservative school had a large amount of like-minded students and with teachers who limited discussions if they went too far, creating the most risk for political extremism.

9. **Penn State. "Talking about Government and Politics with Children." Thrive, September 29, 2020. Accessed January 2, 2023. https://thrive.psu.edu/blog/talking-about-government-and-politics-with-children/.**

   As affirmed by source #3, the earlier you can teach politics to youths, the more likely they will be politically involved earlier in life. This articles shows how to teach kids and teenagers about politics based on their development level. They provide tactics and reasonings for what they teach. Younger kids can start understanding the basic principles of democracy, such as voting, and as they continue to grow older, you can start introducing them to political parties, advertisements, and news all while making sure they are able to understand how to engage with such topics.

Colophon

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