

THE TATTOO

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Wesley David Fane / The Tattoo

Beware forbidden words

It's all about what you can't say in Taboo

By HEATHER MOHER
The Tattoo

Taboo is a fast-paced game and requires a way with words. In order to play, at least four players must be present. All of the players split into two teams and then take turns giving clues to teammates who have to guess the word on the card. There are two sides to a card, one purple and one green, and at the top of the card is the word that the teammate of the clue-giver must guess.

It's not as easy as it sounds because on the card, the clue-giver has a list of words on the card that they can't say. Those are taboo.

Set up takes about a minute, and it's an easy game to catch onto fast. There's a buzzer provided that the opposing team can sound if the clue-giver utters a taboo word while trying to get the rest of the team to guess the word.

Despite what the instructions say, the buzzer is not necessary, partly because the back of it requires a screwdriver and a player from the other team can just speak up if the clue-giver says anything taboo.

During play, teams try to win points on every round. Points are given to the guessing team only if they correctly identify the word. If the clue-giver says one of the taboo words on the card, or even part of a word on the card, the point goes to the opposing team.

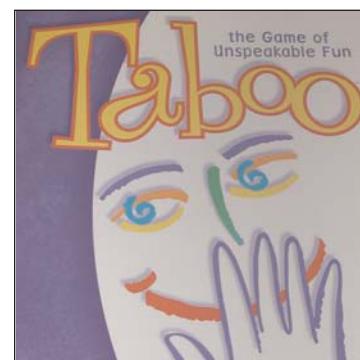
The words, along with the timer, put a large amount of stress on the clue-giver. It's also usually hilarious watching the clue-giver's face as they struggle to come up with synonyms to already unique words, such as "Martha Stewart."

The order of clue-givers and moving seats around can get aggravating.

The way the game is played, clue-givers need to be opposite their teammates, and the opposing team needs to be looking at the card over the clue-giver's shoulder. This can become tedious.

It can also be a bit nerve-racking because the clue-giver is constantly trying to pick the word that will make it easiest for their team to guess correctly.

Although the clue-giver can say just about whatever they want, they only have a short amount of time to explain or describe as many words as they



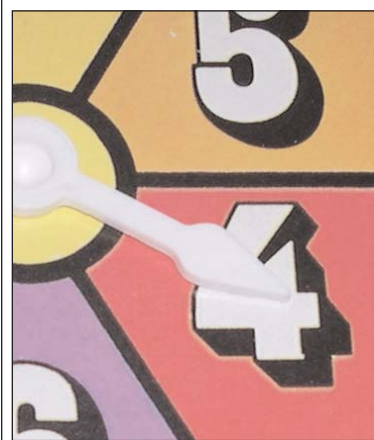
can for their guessing teammates.

These minor problems don't stop the game from being a lot of fun. Taboo is great for most ages, and can be played for any length of time.

The more players, the better. With a lot of players on each team, there's a greater chance of a) getting the word faster, and b) getting bizarre answers.

Taboo is an entertaining and exciting way to expand your vocabulary while getting to know people in a group setting.

We're just playing around



In the interests of fun, fair play and getting some good games going, *The Tattoo* took on the task of evaluating more than a dozen board games and card games. This is the last of our four-part, weekly "Fun and Games" series. Teenage staff members and *Tattoo* alumni played these games and summed up their impressions in this series. We hope you try some of them with your family and friends.

Ticks like a time bomb

By TEAGUE NEAL
The Tattoo

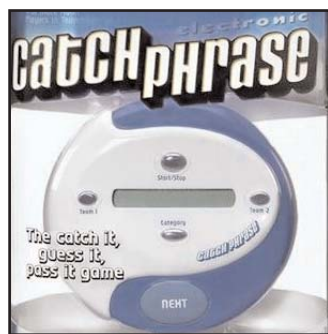
Catch Phrase is a game that delivers a jolt of fun and facts in one punch.

Created by Hasbro Inc., Catch Phrase is a reasonably clear concept to catch.

Players split into two teams and first select a degree of difficulty and a category of word topics to play. Choices include history, entertainment, geography, transportation, sports, and the all-encompassing "everything."

The game bears resemblance to a round of "hot potato."

The ticking timer on the game runs as teams take turns guessing words before the buzzer sounds. The object of Catch Phrase is to not be holding the game unit when the time runs out.



When play begins, the team member with the game unit must begin describing the word that appears on the screen, while not using any part of the word or any word that rhymes it. The other members of the team try to guess the word or phrase before the buzzer sounds. As soon as they do, the player with the game unit hits the advance button and passes it on to a member of the other team.

If the beeping suddenly stops and the buzzer goes off, the team not in procession of the unit gains a point. This continues until a team reaches seven points to claim victory.

The game's primary weakness is in how points are attained. Under the rules, a team could successfully be guessing words quickly, but lose because a member happened to be holding the unit at the wrong time.

The point system could instead award points based on which team gives the correct answer, rather than who's not holding the game unit.

Alternatively, each player could work with their fellow teammates to see how many words they can guess before the timer goes off.

The unit is sometimes a royal pain, malfunctioning or randomly resetting on you, but generally once you get the hang of using it, the game is fun.

Catch Phrase is a game that boggles the brain and keeps a fast pace going with a generous dose of creative flair.



Justin Skaradosky / The Tattoo

So random, it's fun

By MOLLY HORAN
The Tattoo

An amoeba isn't soft! Have you ever felt an amoeba? Well, no.

Then how do you know it's not soft?

Scattergories is the board game that will have

you arguing over the squishiness of a tiger to whether you really would eat couscous for breakfast.

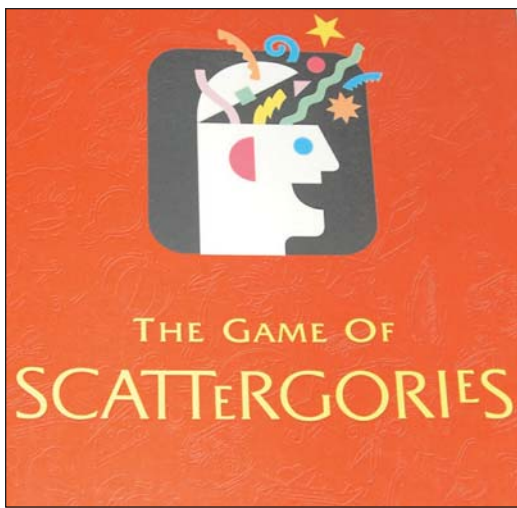
To play Scattergories, you have to roll the letter die to find what letter your words will begin with. Then each player takes a list with 12 word descriptions, such as things found in a desk or names used in the Bible.

Each word you think of must begin with the letter you rolled. Players receive points for each word they come up with, as long as it's not used by a different player. So to increase your chances of not using a word a fellow player used, be creative.

For a breakfast food that begins with B try Boo Berry cereal instead of blueberry pancakes.

A timer that will tick like a time bomb when

you have one minute left controls the amount of time that you have to think of your words. If I could change one thing about this game it would be the timer, as it's difficult to think of things found in a vending machine that begin with Q when you subconsciously think you should be deciding whether to cut the blue wire or the red one.



While this game could easily be considered a timed vocabulary test, it does become fun when you're sharing answers to see if everyone has come up with different words.

Expect the validity of your choices to be challenged by your opponents. Tree sap could be a kind of drink, if you were really thirsty, and maybe I enjoy a plum sandwich every now and then!

So, if some rainy day you find yourself wanting to discuss whether Homer Simpson can really be considered a hero, or just want to play around with some words, take Scattergories for a spin.

Write your own wacky headlines

By MINHA LEE
The Tattoo

As if being a journalist isn't enough, playing games like Man Bites Dog makes you realize that the job is starting to take over your life, if it already hasn't.

If you haven't already noticed by the title, Man Bites Dog is not a conventional card game. It is neither as cut throat as Egyptian Rat Screw nor is it as deceptive as poker.

It has its own set of special cards and each card has a word that will be a part of the headline. The whole point of the game is to make an interesting headline, to say the least.

Each player gets five cards and tries to come up with the best newspaper headline imaginable. Words such as "lawyer" and "tourist" get zero points while "beauty," "thug," and "judge" get 25 points each.

For unusual words like "urologist" and "naked," you get

50 big points.

If the word selections really don't give you much to work with, you can try your luck and trade in up to three cards for new ones. You can increase your chance of dominating the round if you're lucky enough to get an "Exclusive" card, which doubles the points that you get for that headline.



Headline ingenuities will tickle your funny bone as you play. This game is especially fun for news junkies, but anyone who can string words together can have a good time pretending to be a tabloid editor by playing Man Bites Dog.

Man Bites Dog is recommended for people who are eight and above. It's part of the Travel Game Collection of University Games.

Furious, fast and wordy fun

By STEFAN KOSKI
The Tattoo

From the creative mind of Reiner Knizia and Out of the Box Publishing, Inc. comes the fast-paced game of letter manipulation that puts English skills to the test.

My Word! takes a much simpler approach to game play than most other games. The only implement involved is a deck of sixty cards, each of which have one or two letters printed on them. These cards are dealt out one at a time by the dealer face-up onto the table.

Players must use at least three letter cards to form a word.

The first person to shout out the word takes all the cards used to make the word from the table. After the entire deck has been dealt, players total the number of cards they have. The player with the most cards wins.

Unlike other word games such as Scrabble, My Word! doesn't require the players to be English majors in order to win.

A great deal of points can be garnered and the game won with basic, three-letter words. The simplicity of the game mechanics means that only a slight learning curve is required.

The game can be underway within five minutes of being opened. It's also a lot of fun and highly competitive. Players will find themselves playing multiple rounds and losing track of time in the process, as the entire deck is usually dealt in about 15 minutes. In addition to the letter cards, there are several wild cards with single or double question marks that can be used for any letter which keep the game interesting.

The complaints about this game are few and minor. Letter cards are printed in both orientations so that they can be viewed either right-side up or upside-down, but the color scheme of one side makes it difficult to see. There also isn't any kind of reward system for using more difficult letters (such as "x," which is largely useless) or larger words.

Aside from these petty quibbles, My Word! makes for quick and quality entertainment for two to six players ages 12 to adult. Just be sure to keep a dictionary handy for any vocabulary disputes.

