

BOARD GAME DESIGN



OVERVIEW

Applying leadership and 21st century skills, participants develop, build, and package a board game that focuses on the subject of their choice. The game should be interesting, exciting, visually appealing, and intellectually challenging. Each team designs the packaging, instructions, pieces, and/or cards associated with creating and piloting a new board game. Semifinalists set up the game, demonstrate how the game is played, explain the game's features, and discuss the design process.

ELIGIBILITY

One (1) team per chapter may participate.

TIME LIMITS

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Up to five (5) minutes to set up the game and five (5) minutes to repackage the game.
- B. Up to twenty (20) minutes for the demonstration/ interview broken down as follows:
 - 1. five (5) minutes for set-up
 - 2. seven (7) minutes for the demonstration
 - 3. three (3) minutes to respond to questions from judges
 - 4. five (5) minutes to repackage the game before leaving.
- C. A time deduction as noted in the rubric will be incurred for not adhering to any time designations/ restrictions.

ATTIRE

TSA competition attire is required for this event.

PROCEDURE

PRE-CONFERENCE

- A. Participants review the TSA Honor Statement for Competitive Events found in the General Rules and listed in the individual competitive event rules.

- B. Participants design and create the game entry, including the physical packaging. All components must be designed, engineered, created, and assembled together solely by the team.
- C. Participants create a documentation portfolio to record the process.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. No more than two (2) team members report at the time and place stated in the conference program to submit the:
 - 1. completed Board Game entry
 - 2. documentation portfolio on a USB flash drive
- B. Entries are evaluated by the judges with neither students nor advisors present based on the following criteria:
 - 1. Judges score the Packaging and Board Game criteria to determine the top twenty-four (24) preliminary contestants, which will not be posted.
 - 2. Judges score the Documentation Portfolio criteria of those top twenty-four contestants to determine the top twelve (12) semifinalist teams.
- C. A list of twelve (12) semifinalist teams (in random order) is posted.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Semifinalist teams report at the time and place stated in the conference program to sign up for an demonstration/interview time.
- B. Semifinalist teams report at the assigned time and place for the demonstration/interview.
- C. Semifinalist teams may be represented by two (2) to three (3) members.
- D. Semifinalist teams will set up the game and give a brief demonstration of the game.
- E. Semifinalist teams answer questions about the documentation, the game's purpose, value, design, rules, and the development process.
- F. Semifinalist teams repackage the game.
- G. Judges independently assess the entries.

- H. The top ten (10) finalists are announced during the awards ceremony.
- I. Semifinalist teams and all preliminary teams pick up their entry from the display area at the time and place stated in the conference program.

REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Students will work to develop their leadership and 21st century skills in the process of preparing for and participating in this TSA competitive event. The development and application of those skills must be evident in their submission, demonstration, and/or communication pertaining to the entry.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Participants design, create and package an entirely original board game including all parts, pieces and/or cards needed to play the game as well as accompanying instructions. If applicable, dice and sand timers may be commercially produced.
- B. No identifying information other than a team identification number is to appear anywhere on the board game or portfolio.
- C. Board Game:
 - 1. The physical board game should be of high quality and designed for the intended age group.
 - 2. The packaged game must be no larger than 12" x 18" x 3".
 - a. The game must be designed, engineered, created, and packaged solely by the team.
 - b. The materials used in packaging and manufacturing the game are to be determined by the team.
 - 3. Game Instructions:
 - a. must be clear, understandable, and age-appropriate
 - b. must be included in both the packaged game and in the documentation portfolio
 - c. must explain the rules in explicit detail
 - d. The team must determine which format best presents the game's instructions.

- 4. The game must be able to be set up within five (5) minutes of opening the package.
- 5. Once evaluation of the game is complete, a player (judge) must be able to repackage it within five (5) minutes.
- 6. The game must include original work of the team. Work that is not created by the team must have proper documentation, showing copyright permissions and/or license for usage in the game segment.
- 7. When creating the game, the game must be free of any weapons or violence as stated in the general rules.

D. Documentation Portfolio:

- 1. Documentation materials (comprising "a portfolio") are required and must be submitted as a multi-page PDF document on a USB flash drive with pages in this order:
 - a. Title page with the name of the board game, the event title, the conference city and state, the year; and the team identification number; one (1) page
 - b. Table of Contents; one (1) page
 - c. Overview of the game; one (1) page
 - d. Intended audience (age range and number of players) and a game description/reasoning behind the choice of audience; one (1) page
 - e. Game Instructions; pages as needed
 - f. Description of the processes used to create the game and components; maximum of two (2) pages
 - g. Engineering drawings of parts/game/packaging; pages as needed
 - h. Cost summary for created game; one (1) page
 - i. Work Log (see Forms Appendix); pages as needed
 - j. Student Copyright Checklist (see Forms Appendix); one (1) page
 - k. References/research sources; one (1) page

2. The USB flash drive and its contents become the property of TSA for communication purposes only. Publishing rights remain with the authors and illustrators.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Two to three (2-3) members of each semifinalist team report to the event area at the time and place stated in the conference program.
- B. Team members have five (5) minutes to set up the game.
- C. The team members will give a brief demonstration of the game and then answer interview questions. The demonstration/interview will last no more than ten (10) minutes.
- D. The team will have five (5) minutes to repackage the game before leaving

EVALUATION

PRELIMINARY ROUND

Tier 1

- A. The packaging
- B. The board game

Tier 2

- C. The documentation portfolio

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. The demonstration
- B. The interview

Refer to the official rating form for more information.

TSA HONOR STATEMENT

All work must be created and completed by individual competitors or teams. Plagiarism, the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) software, copyright violation, cheating, and falsification of information are prohibited. Participants may NOT use any generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini, GitHub Copilot, etc.). Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Competitors at any level of TSA competition understand and agree to abide by the TSA Honor Statement.

If it is determined that a student violated the TSA Honor Statement, a rules violation of twenty percent (20%) will be incurred.

STEM INTEGRATION

This event has connections with the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) educational standards.

LEADERSHIP AND 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

This event provides opportunity for students to build and develop leadership and 21st century skills including but not limited to – Communication, Collaboration/Social Skills, Initiative, Problem Solving/Risk Taking, Critical Thinking, Perseverance/Grit, Creativity, Relationship Building/Teamwork, Dependability/Integrity, and Flexibility/Adaptability

CAREERS RELATED TO THIS EVENT

This competition has connections to one (1) or more of the careers below:

- Product/packaging design
- Board game designer
- Electronic game designer
- Electronic game technician
- Technical writer

BOARD GAME DESIGN

2025 & 2026 OFFICIAL RATING FORM

HIGH SCHOOL

Judges: Using minimal (1-4 points), adequate (5-8 points), or exemplary (9-10 points) performance levels as a guideline in the rating form, record the scores earned for the event criteria in the column spaces to the right. The X1 or X2 notation in the criteria column is a multiplier factor for determining the points earned. (Example: an "adequate" score of 7 for an X1 criterion = 7 points; an "adequate" score of 7 for an X2 criterion = 14 points.) A score of zero (0) is acceptable if the minimal performance for any criterion is not met.

Go/No Go Specifications

- Before judging the entry, ensure that the items below are present; indicate presence with a check mark in the box.
- If an item is missing, leave the box next to the item blank and place a check mark in the box labeled ENTRY NOT EVALUATED.
- If a check mark is placed in the ENTRY NOT EVALUATED box, the entry is not to be judged.

- ☐ TIER 1 – Packaging/Board game is present
- ☐ TIER 2 – Documentation is present only on the USB flash drive
- ☐ ENTRY NOT EVALUATED

TIER 1 – PACKAGING (30 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
Appearance (X1)	Three (3) or more elements of the packaging look unfinished, are not aesthetically appealing, and are not retail ready.	One to two (1-2) elements of the packaging look unfinished, are not aesthetically appealing, and are not retail ready.	Packaging appearance is retail ready and aesthetically pleasing.	
Functionality/Durability (X1)	Packaging is missing three (3) or more necessary components for game play, and/or one to five (1-5) necessary parts are not reusable or sturdy.	Packaging is missing one to two (1-2) necessary components for game play, and/or one to two (1-2) necessary parts are not reusable or sturdy.	Packaging is reusable and meets all needs for the game; construction of the packaging is complete and sturdy.	
Incorporation of Rules (X1)	Rules of the game are not integrated as part of the packaging, and/or the rules are lacking in durability and quality.	Rules of the game are not fully integrated as part of the packaging design; rules are adequate in durability and quality.	Rules are an integrated part of the packaging and are of exceptional durability and quality.	
TIER 1 – PACKAGING SUBTOTAL (30 points)				

TIER 1 – BOARD GAME (30 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
Appearance (X1)	Three (3) or more elements of the game look unfinished; game is not aesthetically appealing or retail ready.	One to two (1-2) elements of the game look unfinished; game is adequately aesthetically appealing and retail ready.	Game looks finished, is aesthetically appealing, and is retail ready.	
Functionality/Durability (X1)	Game is missing three (3) or more necessary components for game play, and/or one to five (1-5) necessary parts are not reusable or sturdy.	Game is missing one to two (1-2) necessary components for game play, and/or one to two (1-2) necessary parts are not reusable or sturdy.	Game has all necessary components for game play, and game pieces are all reusable and sturdy.	

TIER 1 – BOARD GAME (30 points) – continued					
Board Game Quality (X1)	The overall quality of the board game appears to be completed with minimal effort; the game and materials lack quality.	The game shows great effort in quality, craftsmanship, and displays high skills of teamwork that has created a high quality game.	The game displays highest quality materials and craftsmanship; the game is excellent in quality and shows that the team focused on the appearance of the final product.		
TIER 1 – BOARD GAME SUBTOTAL (30 points)					
Rules violations (a deduction of 20% of the total possible points for the above sections) must be initialed by the judge, coordinator, and manager of the event. Record the deduction in the space to the right. Indicate the rule violated: _____					

TIER 1 – SUBTOTAL (60 points)	
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TIER 2 – DOCUMENTATION PORTFOLIO (70 points)					Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance		
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points		
Portfolio Components (X1)	Portfolio is unorganized and/or is missing three (3) or more components.	Portfolio has most components and is generally organized per the order of the event guide listing; it has sufficient content.	All components are included in the portfolio; content and organization per the order of the event guide listing are excellent.		
Overview of the Game (X1)	The overview and purpose of the game are unclear.	The overview and purpose of the game are generally clear.	The overview clearly explains the purpose of the game and how the game is played.		
Intended Audience (X1)	The intended audience and reasoning behind the game are not clear and/or are poorly supported.	The intended audience and reasoning behind the game are clear and generally supported.	The intended audience is clearly expressed and reasoning behind game play is well supported.		
Game Instructions (X1)	The instructions for the game are not clear for the intended age range.	The instructions for the game are generally clear for the intended age range.	The instructions for the game are clearly understandable for the age range intended.		
Description of Processes (X1)	The processes used to create the game are not clearly described and/or are missing four (4) or more aspects of the creation of the game.	The description for the creation of the game and the aspects of the game creation are generally clear.	The processes used to create the game are clearly described and explain all aspects of the game creation.		
Engineering Drawings (X1)	Four (4) or more engineered drawings for all parts, game boards, and packaging are missing and/or are of poor quality.	One to three (1-3) engineered drawings for all parts, game boards, and packaging are missing or are of adequate quality.	Engineered drawings for all parts, game boards, and packaging are present and are of excellent quality.		
Cost Summary (X1)	Cost breakdown for the game is missing or two (2) or more of the following categories are incomplete: quantity of materials used, cost of materials, and/or total cost of the project.	Cost breakdown for the game is present and generally clear with minor information missing for the following categories: quantity of materials used, cost of materials, and/or total cost of the project.	Complete cost breakdown for the game, including the quantity of the materials used, cost of the materials, and total cost of the project are present, complete, and clearly identified.		
TIER 2 – DOCUMENTATION PORTFOLIO SUBTOTAL (70 points)					

Rules violations (a deduction of 20% of the total possible points for the above sections) must be initialed by the judge, coordinator, and manager of the event. Record the deduction in the space to the right.

Indicate the rule violated: _____

PRELIMINARY SUBTOTAL (130 points)

SEMIFINAL DEMONSTRATION/INTERVIEW (50 points)

CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	Record scores in the column spaces below.
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
Theme of Game and Age of the Audience (X1)	The theme of the game is not addressed and/or was unclear; the intended age range of the game is not addressed and the description of the audience was not appropriate.	The theme of the game is adequately addressed; the intended age range of the game is addressed but one to three (1-3) elements of the description did not match the game.	The theme of the game is clearly expressed and easily interpreted; the age range of the intended audience is clearly addressed and the description of the audience matched the game.	
Presentation of Rules and Demonstration of Game Play (X1)	Rules are confusing and difficult for the audience to understand; more than five (5) questions clarifying the rules are asked in order to start the game play; game play is confusing and unorganized; how players win or lose is not addressed.	Rules are somewhat clear for the audience to understand; game play requires less than four (4) questions to clarify the rules; game play is somewhat confusing but organized; how players win or lose is somewhat addressed.	Rules are clearly explained and game play is easily started after presentation of rules, with no clarifying questions needed; various scenarios of the game are addressed and explained; how players win or lose is clearly explained.	
Engagement and Participation (X2)	The team must be prompted to provide answers and information; a clear team leader dominates the interview, while other team members are unresponsive.	Team members generally answer questions with responses of acceptable length and depth; most team members participate adequately in the interview and engage the judges when answering questions.	All team members contribute in the interview; while there may be a clear team leader, all members provide appropriate substantive material to the conversation; the team engages the judges in the interview, which becomes less of a question and answer session and more of a conversation about the topic and solution.	
Articulation (X1)	Communication of the design process is unclear, unorganized, and or illogical; leadership and/or 21 st century skills are not evident.	Communication of the design process is somewhat logical and clear; leadership and/or 21 st century skills are somewhat evident.	Communication of the design process is clear, concise, and logical; leadership and/or 21 st century skills are clearly evident.	
SEMIFINAL DEMONSTRATION/INTERVIEW SUBTOTAL (50 points)				

Rules violations (a deduction of 20% of the total possible points in the semifinalist sections above) must be initialed by the evaluator, coordinator, and manager of the event. Record the deduction in the space to the right.

Indicate the rule violated: _____

TIME DEDUCTIONS			
One (1) point per ten-second (10) interval is to be deducted for game setup over the five (5) minutes allotted for the game setup. The same one (1) point per ten-second (10) interval penalty applies to more than five (5) minutes allotted to put the game away. Setup begins when the box opens and ends when all pieces/game board are in position. Repackaging starts when the first piece is picked up and ends when the lid is closed.			
Total time for presentation		Presentation deduction	
Total time for set-up		Set-up deduction	
			TOTAL TIME DEDUCTION

SEMIFINAL SUBTOTAL (50 points)

To arrive at the TOTAL score, add the PRELIMINARY SUBTOTAL and the SEMIFINAL SUBTOTAL.	TOTAL (180 points)
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Comments:

I certify these results to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

JUDGE

Printed name: _____ Signature: _____

BOARD GAME DESIGN

EVENT COORDINATOR INSTRUCTIONS

PERSONNEL

- A. Event coordinator
- B. Judges:
 - 1. Preliminary round, two (2) or more
 - 2. Semifinal Round, two (2) or more
- C. Assistants for check-in, one (1)

MATERIALS

- A. Coordinator's packet, containing:
 - 1. Event guidelines, one (1) copy for the coordinator and for each judge
 - 2. TSA Event Coordinator Report
 - 3. Stick-on labels for identifying entries
- B. Measuring tape
- C. Stopwatch
- D. Display tables for entries (minimum depth 18")
- E. Tables and chairs for event coordinator, semifinalist judges, and participants
- F. Laptop with a USB drive and ability to open and view PDF's

RESPONSIBILITIES

AT THE CONFERENCE

- A. Attend the mandatory coordinator's meeting at the designated time and location.
- B. Report to the CRC room and check the contents of the coordinator's packet.
- C. Review the event guidelines and check to see that enough personnel have been scheduled.
- D. Inspect the area(s) in which the event is to be held for appropriate set-up, including room size, tables, chairs, etc. Notify the event manager of any potential problems.
- E. At least one (1) hour before the event is to begin, meet with judges and assistants to review time limits, procedures, regulations, evaluation, and all other details related to the event. If questions arise that cannot be answered, speak to the event manager before the event begins.

- F. Ensure the judges have access to the online judging system.

EVENT CHECK-IN

- A. Check in the entries at the time stated in the conference program.
- B. If check-in is on the first day of the conference, requirements for attire do NOT apply during check-in.
- C. Late entries are considered on a case-by-case basis and only when the lateness is caused by events beyond the participant's control.
- D. In order to compete, participants must be on the entry list or must have CRC approval.
- E. Each entry must include the team's identification number in the upper right-hand corner of the entry.
- F. Instruct participants to position the entries for viewing.
- G. Secure the entries in the designated area.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Judges independently assess the entries using the following procedure:
 - 1. Judges score the Packaging and Board Game criteria to determine the top twenty-four (24) preliminary contestants, which will not be posted.
 - 2. Judges score the Documentation Portfolio criteria of those top twenty-four contestants to determine the top twelve (12) semifinalist teams.
- B. Decisions about rules violations must be discussed and verified with the judges, event coordinator, and CRC manager to determine either:
 - 1. To deduct twenty percent (20%) of the total possible points in this round or
 - 2. To disqualify the entry

The event coordinator, judges, and CRC manager must initial either of these actions on the rating form.
- C. Create semifinalist sign-up sheet for the demonstration/interview.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Semifinalists report at the time and place stated in the conference program to sign-up for a demonstration/interview.
- B. The sign-up list is fifteen (15) minute intervals to allow a team to setup at the same time that a team is repackaging.
- C. Semifinalists report at the assigned time and place stated in the conference program for the demonstration/interview.
- D. Manage semifinalist presentations/interviews.
- E. Judges should be sure to ask questions.
- F. Discuss rule violations (e.g. 20% deduction, disqualification) and have all relevant parties initial the rating form.
- G. If necessary, manage security and the removal of materials from the event area.