

# Chain

A Word Connecting Card Game

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# Introduction

This project was done in Design Perspectives (ARTG1001) taught by Northeastern Professor Lee Moreau during the Fall 2023 semester. The goal of this project was to create a game with other students in the class. There were no rules on what our game had to be or how it was played, it just had to be accessible to most skill levels. My job in the group was to develop the rules for the game.

I took on the ruleset because prior to this project, a majority of my design work had been for a digital medium so I wanted to explore a physical medium and challenge myself with a new type of design. My groupmates worked on the visual design of the cards and the instructions, and we all contributed to the list of words we would put on the cards.



# Brainstorming

We started this project by discussing our favorite games (both physical and digital) and what we liked about them. As a group, we gravitated towards more social games with a more open-ended component. Games like Quiplash, Monikers, Codenames, and Fakin' It were notable in our brainstorming process. At the end of the brainstorming session, we decided we wanted a game that was replayable, had a physical interaction, and encouraged open-ended discussion.

2-4 Players

Quick Game, Multiple Rounds but not too repetitive

Replayability

Cards influence social gameplay with a physical element

- Create something with the physical thing

Inspo:

- Taboo, Monikers, Fakin' It, BS [the card game] (game where cards influence social gameplay)
- Love Letter, Splendor, Coup (strategy card-based board games)
- Physical games like mancala, jenga
- Social Deduction (Fakin' it, Among us, Werewolf, Blood on the Clocktower, The Chameleon, Mafia)
- Codenames <3
- Resource management but not like the central point of the game (ex. Exploding kittens you save cards to play at the right time but)

# First Gameplay Iteration

Our first try at creating the rules for the game contained the following ideas:

1. The goal of the game is to create a chain of words from a deck of cards
2. Two teams take turns creating chains, trying to keep their cards on one chain
3. Cards can be added to the chain if the card can relate to the latest card on the chain
4. Card connections can be challenged if they have a weak connection or no connection at all
5. The win condition would either be to have the least amount of chains or the longest chain

While this was a good start, we quickly realized two major issues: There was no way to reliably determine if a connection was valid and the win conditions did not make much sense when tested in a game.

## Chain Cards

- Equal Teams
- Draw pile in the middle
- On a turn, draw cards from the middle, place them in a chain
- To place in a chain, card must be somewhat related to the card before or after it in the chain (group decision if it is valid)
- If a card doesn't fit in a current chain, make it a new one
- Keep going for x amount of time or if make a new change tbd
- Other team goes
- If a team draws a card that matches someone else's chain, they can steal that chain
- Game ends when draw pile is empty
- Win if you have the least amount of chains or longest chain

# Second Gameplay Iteration

For our second try, we took a step back and looked at how games policed play. We determined that when designing the rules for a game, there is a difference between bounding a game by rules and policing play. Essentially, our rules need to create a game that can be played but we ultimately cannot police play. In theory any game can be ruined by a person playing in bad faith so trying to police a bad faith player only restricts the regular players.

Realizing this, we decided to keep the challenge system but made it more open ended. Determining if a connection is valid is up to the players however we suggest that weak connections should be discarded and interesting connections should be encouraged. At this point the game is starting to take shape but the win condition still needs work to be a fun and engaging game.



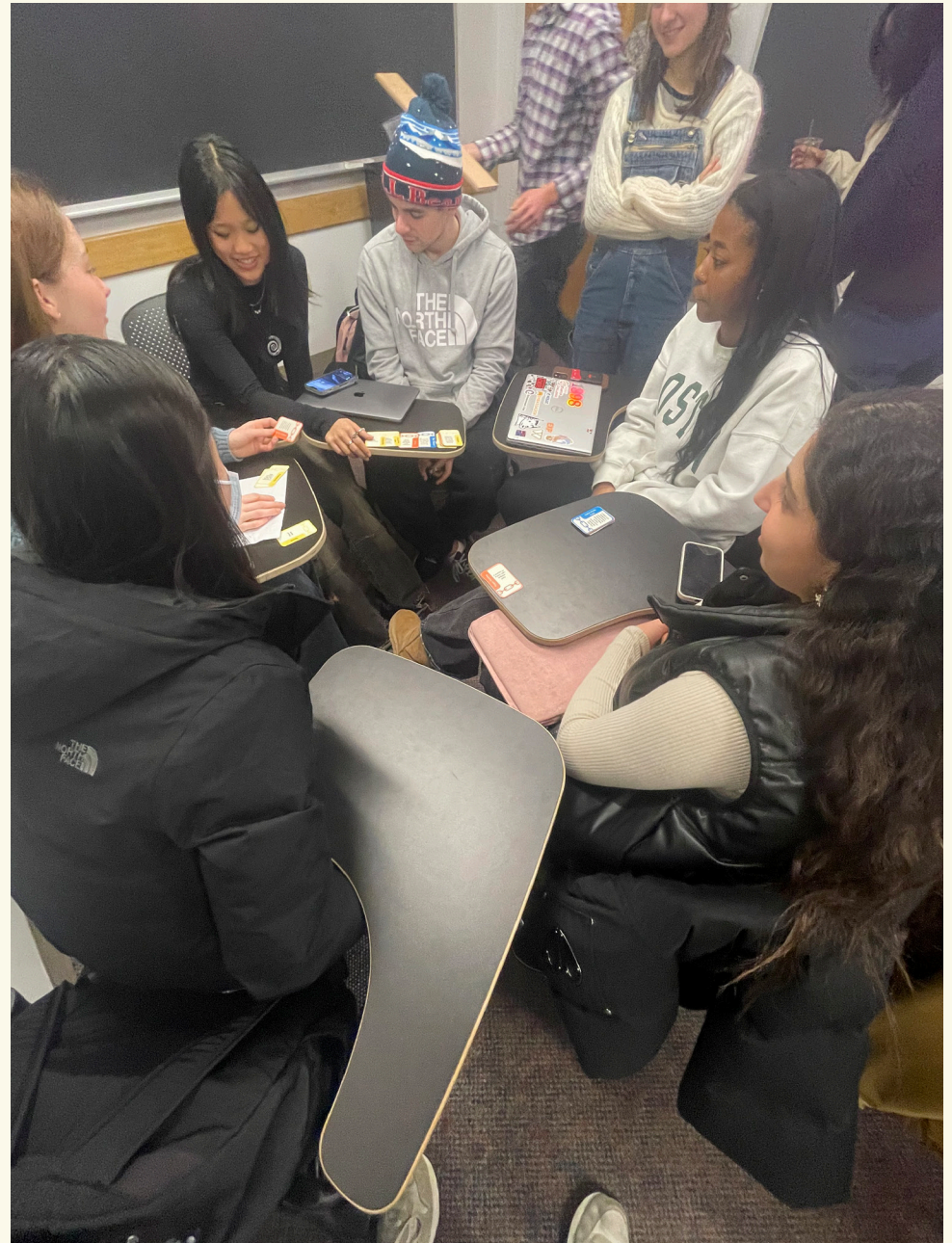
**Zach Marino** 10:54 PM

Update: just discussed with a friend and the short of it is it isnt really our job to police what counts as a valid input or even police how people play the game. For example if you play a game like apples to apples or even some jackbox party games in bad faith you can ruin the experience for everyone so it is assumed that people play in good faith and I think we need to keep that in mind. I think we should keep the challenge system but leave it open-ended to where its basically just "if you think their reasoning is a cop-out or boring you can challenge it" (edited)

# Third Gameplay Iteration

To figure out the win condition we needed to re-think how the game was played. Trying to create the longest chain would mean people would be encouraged to make weak links just to make their chain longer. Having the least amount of chains would do the same (if a card could not be added to a chain it would have to start a new chain, increasing the total amount of chains). We ultimately landed on the following: The game ends when the deck of cards runs out and whoever has the most points wins. Points come from the difficulty of the cards and means a team can still win with less but more interesting chains.

With the rules completed and the card design done, we did some user testing with our friends and classmates which were both successes. Chain was the most popular game in our section and drew a large crowd by the end of the demo period.



# Chain

Welcome to Chain

The word-connecting card game

The goal of the game is to create the best chain possible.

This game aims for 2-4 players.

## Preperation

1. Split players into two teams. If there is an odd number, have the extra person join a team and the other team will get to go first.
2. Shuffle the deck of cards and place them face down in the middle of the playing area.
3. Deal one card per team. These are the start points of the chains.
4. Put one card between both teams. This is the endpoint of **both team'** s chains.

## The Play

Teams switch off drawing cards to the deck and adding to their chain.

Each team' s turn will last **90 seconds**.

If a card has a relationship with the previous card on the chain, it can be linked to the chain.

If the card cannot be linked to the chain it should be put in the discard pile face-up.

At any point, a team can pull a card from the top of the discard pile. The game ends when the deck runs out.

### Challenges

When a team challenges the link the other team just made, the defending team must justify their placement.

If the justification is weak, then the card is a weak link and must be removed from the chain. The link is stronger if the justification is detailed and interesting

Ex. "Lil Nas X and Jared Leto both attended the Met Gala" is a stronger link than "Lil Nas X and Jared Leto are both famous" .

Have fun with it! Weak links lead to weak games.

## Ending The Game

The game ends when the deck runs out.

Before counting up points, teams can challenge any links and if a link is not valid it is omitted from the final point count.

If a team can connect their chain to the end card, they will get a point bonus of the card value doubled.

Both teams will count up their points and whichever team with more points wins.





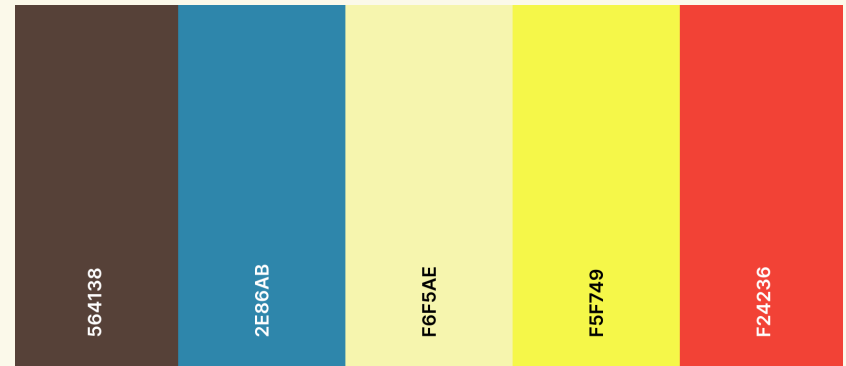
# Card Design

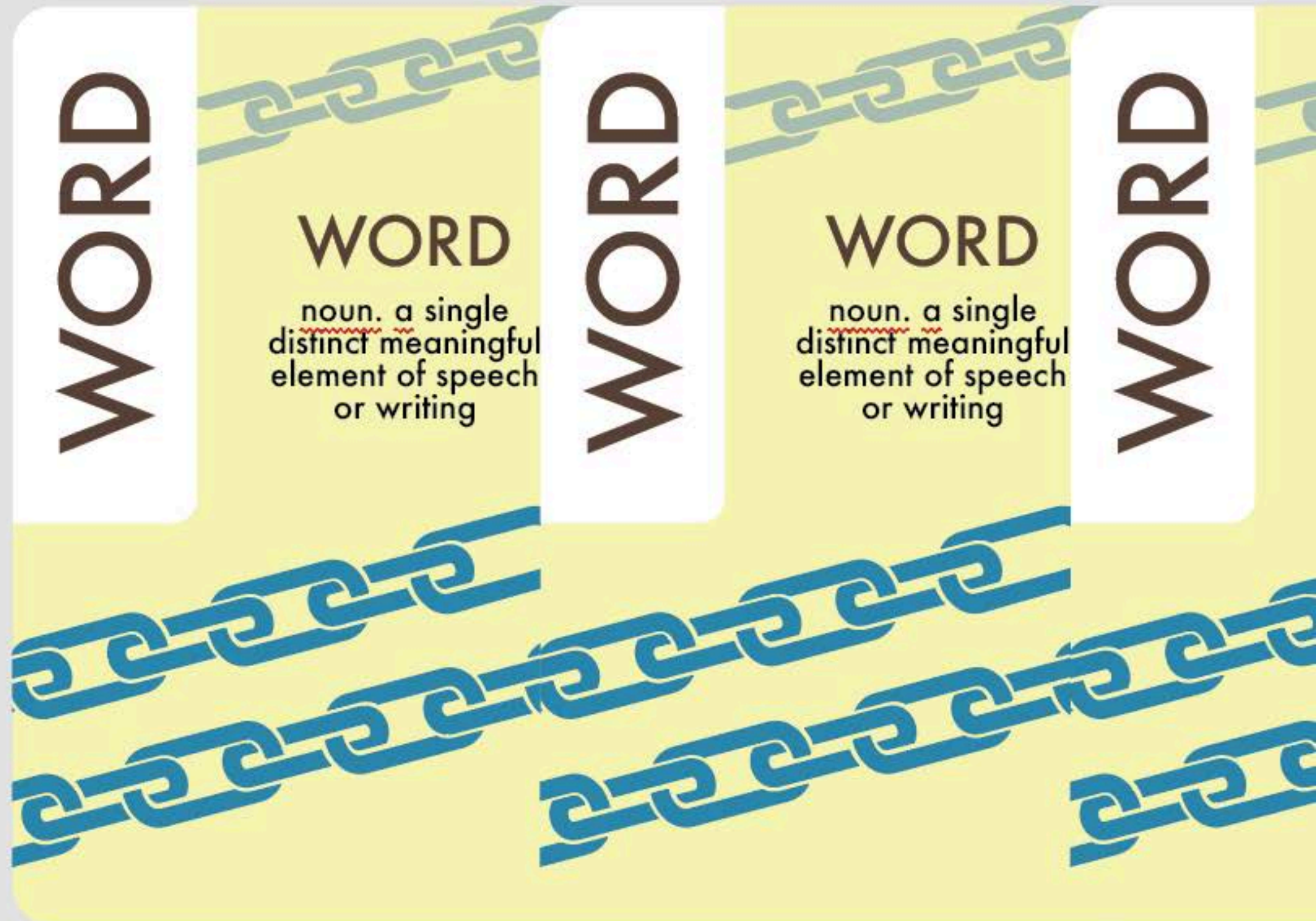
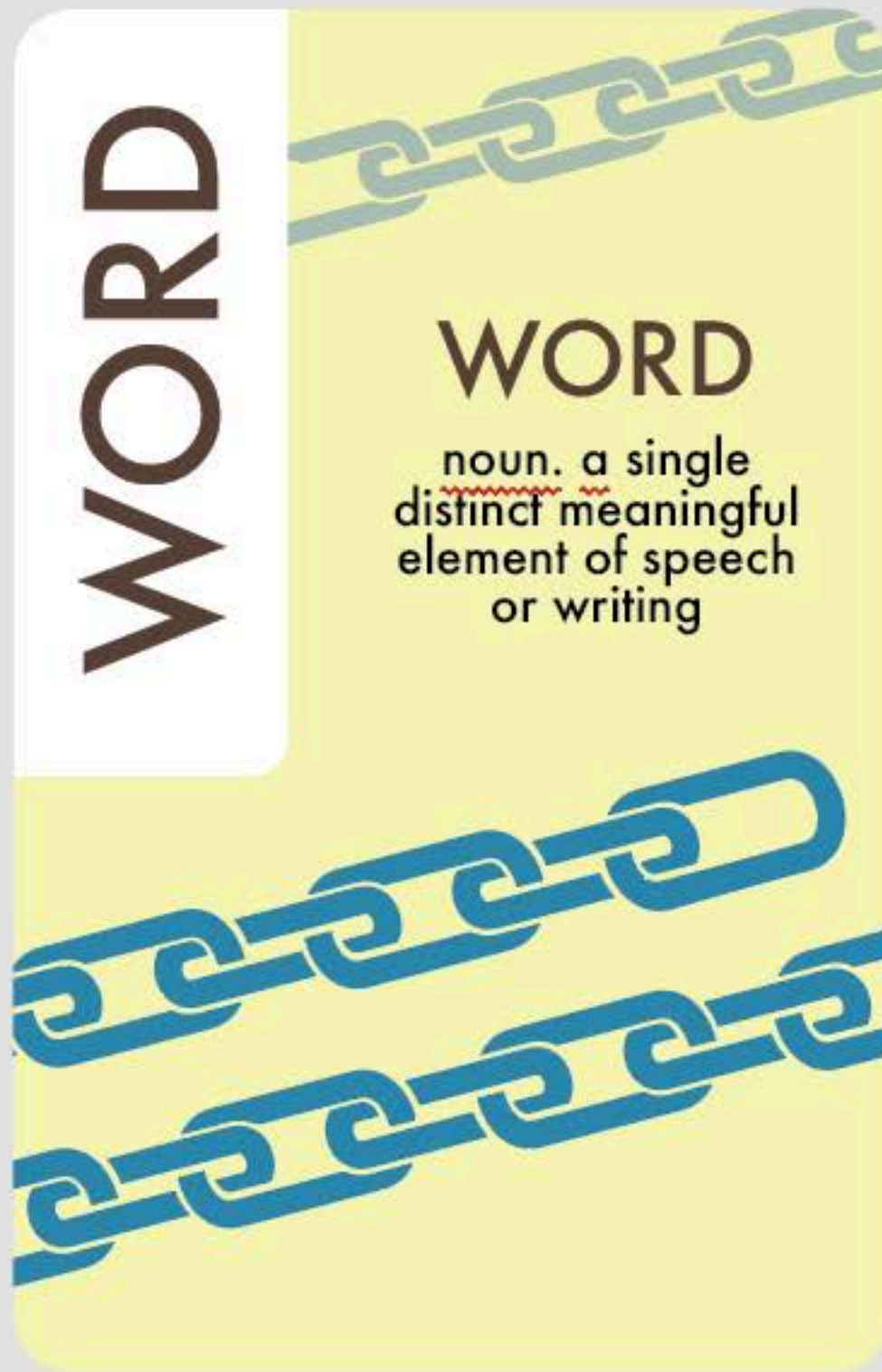
For the card design, we ultimately decided on something simple/minimal but also aesthetic. Our game handles words from different concepts, pop culture references, and people so it would be weird if our game had a really specific theme that did not fit with our cards. We ended up with two designs (which can be seen on the next two pages) and we went with the second design respectively. We chose the second design because while the first design looked really good, it did not feel simple/ubiquitous enough for the mood we were aiming for.

For the color scheme, we generated a palette that we felt fit the aesthetic of a card game. We used Futura because it aligned with our minimal aesthetic and was fairly legible at smaller sizes.

## Design:

- Simplistic
- Medieval Chains
- Sci-fi, cyberpunk aesthetic?
- **Minimal/ubiquitous**

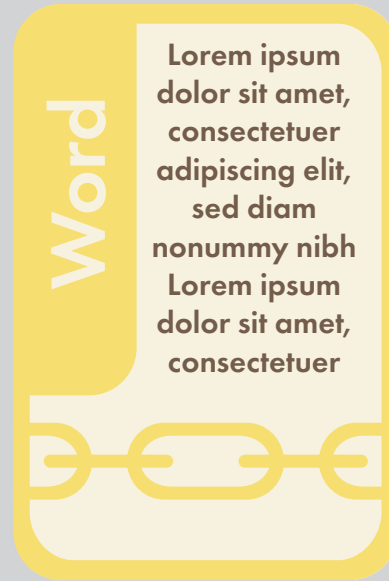




# Chain

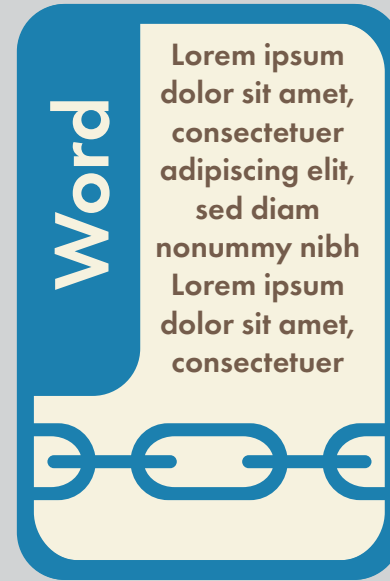
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Word

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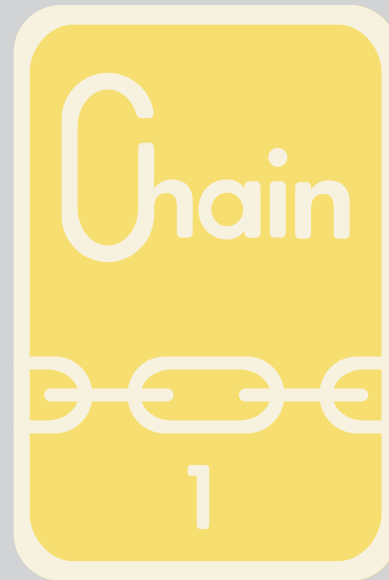


Word

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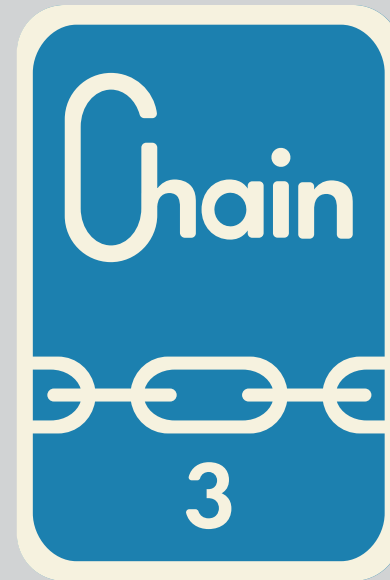


Chain



1

Chain



3

Chain



5



# Words

For the words, we created a spreadsheet and wrote down a bunch of pop culture references, random concepts, and stuff we found funny in general. The great thing about Chain is that due to the open-ended nature of the game, words were easy to add. A word would only be a bad addition if it was too ubiquitous or niche. After writing a bunch down, we added witty descriptions and point values based on how niche the concepts were.

We split up our list of cards and added the words and descriptions so we can print them out. They can be found on the following pages.

55	Coachella	3	A bunch of rich people go to the desert to get dehydrated and do drugs
56	Dinner and a movie	3	Arguable the most classic date of all time.
57	Finger Painting	3	A must for an 8-year-old's birthday party.
58	Garbage Fire	3	My life right now
59	Gossip Girl	3	Go piss girl
60	Grey's Anatomy	3	20 seasons of incredible, gory drama.
61	Heteronormativity	3	We hate this!
62	Hozier	3	Noah Kahan before Noah Kahan
63	In-House Arrest	3	Like jail but instead you have all your belongings and a home and various modes of entertainment.
64	Jensen Ackles	3	Soldier Boy in The Boys but in real life. Also one half of the hit ship Destiel
65	Katy Perry	3	American pop singer known for dancing with the backpack kid and left shark
66	Mark Twain	3	Writer of famous books that everyone was forced to read in High School
67	Nirvana	3	Something in the way... hmm-mmm...
68	Paint Drying	3	It's not as boring as the idiom makes it seem. Still pretty boring though
69	Pearl Harbor	3	The Americans never saw it coming
70	Pete Davidson & Kim Kardashian	3	The straw that broke Kanye's back
71	Quiche	3	It's like pie for breakfast.
72	Rollercoasters	3	Drop Towers are better
73	Salmon	3	Somehow tastes great but smells like garbage at the same time
74	Security footage	3	It's kinda grainy, but it's pretty useful when you need to catch a thief
75	Strawberry Shortcake	3	A cake, an ice cream bar, or the children's cartoon. All 10/10
76	Subway Surfer	3	Mobile app famous for being played in the background of videos to hold rapidly decreasing attention span
77	Thanksgiving dinner	3	The one day of the year where you are forced to sit through your grandparent's conservative rants

**American Idol**

You're going to Hollywood!

**Apple Tree**

One tree attacking Issac Newton changed the course of science forever.

**Aquarium**

Fish out of water, now back in water!

**ARTG1001**

The greatest class on campus!!!

**Batman**

Da da da da da da da da da da da da da da da Batman!

**Bees**

BEES???

**Berlin**

Germany's capital known for its rich history and beautiful landmarks.

**Boomers**

OK Boomer.

**Broadway**

The only place where theatre nerds are in a majority.

**Chains**

Hey, its the game you're playing!

**Cherry Blossom**

Iconic tree of Washington D.C. and Japan.

**Cinderella**

If the shoe fits.

**Cleopatra**

Fun Fact: She crushed pearls in her wine to make it bubbly.

**Crying**

Just like me for real.

**Dracula**

I vant to suck your blood.

**Eagle**

The best franchise in the NFL.

**Earthquake**

WoAooooo-haH! The ground is shaAaking!!

**Elderly Homes**

What a lovely place to send your nana.

**Elvis Presley**

Famous for having hips and creating a style of music that already existed.

**Flip Flops**

flip. flop. flip. flop. flip. flop. flip. flop. flip. flop. flip. flop.

**Friction**

The force resisting the relative motion of two objects sliding against each other.

**Geese**

The Fear of the Fens. The nightmares of the necklace. The bane of Boston.

**Goldfish**

The snack that smiles back (or the actual animal, your choice).

**Halloween**

Spooky Scary Skeletons are off to go Trick-or-Treating.

**Hawaii**

Island state 2,000 miles from the US. State fish is the Reef triggerfish.



Oxygen

What we need to breathe but not actually because there's nitrogen and other stuff

Pablo Picasso

He was still alive when Stairway to Heaven came out

PHD

Why stop going to school when you could get another piece of paper!

Plato

The bane of every philosophy major

Pumpkin Pie

A Thanksgiving Classic, tastes like a starbucks drink

Recycling

Sure, this really does save the environment

Romeo and Juliet

Two households, both alike in dignity (In fair Verona, where we lay our scene)

Sports

Y'know? Sports!

TikTok

Y'all remember Musical.ly?

Twitter

Deadname of the social media platform X

Vikings

They've got silly helmets and fun beards

Vincent Van Gogh

Have y'all watched that one Doctor Who episode? I cried

Waltzing

One Two Three, One Two Three, One Two Three

Zodiac Signs

What month were you born? I need to know if we're compatible

Zombies

Just speed walk and you can probably avoid them

American Pie

That feeling when you take your Chevy to the levy but the levy is dry

Andrew Garfield

He may not be the best spiderman, but he is the hottest spiderman

Atomic Bomb

Based on the hit Christopher Nolan film, "Oppenheimer"

Barack Obama

44th President known for his gaming sessions with Donald Trump and Joe Biden

Barbenheimer

The film release weekend of the century.

Barney

I love you. You love me. The purple and green dinosaur haunts my dreams

Boeing 737

Commercial Airplane, 100% safe

Child Beauty Pageants

Toddlers in Tiaras was fun to watch but a horrible time for those kids


Coachella

A bunch of rich people go to the desert to get dehydrated and do drugs

Dinner and a Movie


Arguable the most classic date of all time

Chain Chain Chain Chain Chain




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Chain Chain Chain Chain Chain




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1 1 1 1 1

Chain Chain Chain Chain Chain



3 3 3 3 3

Chain Chain Chain Chain Chain



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Noah Kahan before Noah Kahan

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Thanksgiving dinner

The one day of the year where you are forced to sit through your grandparent's conservative rants

The Force

Midichlorians? What even are those George Lucas

The Nuclear family

Mommy, Daddy, and their kids.

Thom Yorke

Lead singer of radiohead, makes money singing about being sad

Tinder dates

The closest a mortal can get to the pits of hell

Troye Sivan

Youtube's greatest pop star success story. Creator of the hit song "Silly"

True Crime Podcasts

Morally questionable to take part in these things.

US Constitution

Passed in 1788 and America was never the same.

WW1

The Great War, surely there will only be one of those

WW2

Damn it.



Freddy Fazbear

Everyone's favorite mode of information organization.

Gahndi's Salt March

Civil disobediance against the British monopoly on salt.

Grimaec

Milkshakes but in purple.

Jeggings

Jean's or leg-gings? Why not both!.

JFK's Assassination

November 22, 1963.

Land Mines

Watch your step!

Mesopotamia

Birthplace of agriculture. Go crops!

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Did you know that there are three of these movies now? Crazy.

Nepo Babies

We hate them- but secretly we wish we were them.

Orion's Belt

Talk about shooting star, am I right? (This is a joke, he is an archer)

Play Doh

Fun to play with, not to eat!

Quiplash

Jackbox party pack that has so many inside jokes for my friends.

Red Wine

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, Pinot Noir, etc, etc.

Robin Williams

An American actor, comedian, and icon.

Ryan Gosling

I'm literally him.

S'mores

Graham Crackers + Chocolate + Marshmel-lows + fire

Smaug

Voiced by actor Benad-ryl Cucum-berpatch.

Spotify Wrapped

For when you need to brag you are in the top .005% of Taylor Swift listeners.

Temple Run

The original Subway Surfer

The Louvre

Home to the Mona Lisa

The North Pole

Both an important geographical feature and the ire of a magical toy workshop.

The Pope

Daddy Catholicism.

The shot heard around the world

The opening shot of the battles of Lexington and Concord, starting the American Revolutionary War.

The Smithsonian

Night and the Museum 2 was a great film.

The Titanic

The James Cameron epic about DiCaprio loving someone his own age

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