

History of the Book: The Game

Play Test Feedback

February 2, 2016 with Alonso Avila and Lisa Gardinier

Framework

- Lisa as Americas, Alonso as Spain, myself as Germany.
- Played two rounds for 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th century and then one combined 19-20th century.
- Took around two hours.
- Could have won by the 17th century.

Gameplay (Amy's Response to Lisa's Notes)

- ~~The events cards bother me. I think it does need to be correlated to the country; I kept getting confused when I pulled a country that wasn't me even though I designed the dang thing. It makes me think more about how the set up for each player should be designed though. That would control for not including countries that aren't playing. It would mean taking away the 'double if it's you' concept, but then again, I could revise them so that more cards for each country also have an effect on other countries. And I completely forgot my idea that when one country benefits, that country gets the credits/books, not the market. So it's more zero-sum like real war/colonization.~~
- Love the unique handicap idea as the Americas in the 15th century is a problem, that also could be a way to tilt the game through time. It also plays into the change in events cards. (waiting on this)
- ~~The war as a chance event brings it out of the history card framework and into an attack strategy. That'll work better than the educational challenge, which I find nerdy awesome but it is showing itself to be completely unworkable. I think it's fine to have two types of wars, one historical and one attack. (Made attack just serving another with chance)~~
- ~~The end game stuff is important as I hadn't given that enough thought. Gets complicated; I'd thought it would be more straightforward. But then again both times I've played it through it's artificial as the game would have ended sooner. I wonder how this will be effected with different chance/events opportunities.~~
- BUT love the quick play vs. regular play options. You are the bomb. Yes. Yes.
- I talked to Jennifer Masada a few weeks ago about the web based version. I do want to sell it, haha, but unfortunately I don't think I'd be the recipient of the money. But I think it could eventually be digital so that other schools could participate and/or the website for the game would have print card options that schools could fill in with their own content.

Gameplay (Lisa's Notes)

- Pull the event card after you roll dice or before you end your turn, instead of as a separate round. No event card for rolling 6? On one hand, I like the idea of leaving all country cards in at random, to get a fuller context. And keeps set up simpler. On the other hand, maybe take out

- whichever countries are not playing. Is that problematic for +/- cards? I would still shuffle all represented cards to keep things a bit more random, and maintain the chance of the double +/-.
- Each country has a unique handicap/advantage? The Americas doesn't play the 15th but doubles their roll in the 20th? (Ow, two chance cards?!). Spain doubles in the 16th but skips 19th (or just pulls a chance card?). Germany starts with the Gutenberg but must give one book at random to a player [which?] at the end of the 20th? (waiting on this until figure out how new chance cards go)
 - Make war a chance event? Three varieties:
 - War: Victory! Attack an opponent of your choice. Take their cash or three books of your choice.
 - War: Defeat! The opponent to your left has defeated you at war and can take either your cash or three books of their choice.
 - War: Battle! You go to war with the opponent on your right. Roll the dice, the highest number is victorious and plunders half of their opponent's cash and books.
 - Or variation thereof. (already made an attack strategy, so waiting on this)
 - For games played to the end of the 20th, what about players who have gathered multiple canons/specialties (and the MVB?). Market value of books, with +5 for each collection achievement? +10 for MVB? Add eras/centuries as a collection achievement? At the end of game play, starting with the most wealthy country (cash + market value) and moving in the direction of game play, each player has one last chance to buy/exchange on the market or private deals to make their best final collection. (not sure of this yet because it shouldn't be duplicated to have multiple collections if goes through 20th because basically no one ever should have gotten a winning collection...?)
 - Variations:
 - Quick play: Play one round of each century. Win by first collection achievement or most market value at the end of the 20th.
 - Long play: Play two rounds of each century. Win by market value + collection achievement bonuses at the end of the 20th.
 - Long-term idea: If you can develop a web-based version that could open it up to crowd-sourcing expansion packs and collections. Unless you want to sell this to a German tablegame designer.
 - Eventual test audiences: Ask Greg if the Olsons (other students?) can do a test round on the clock or if he'd buy lunch for a group of SLIS or other grad students. (I can suggest a few from Spanish.)

Gameplay (Amy's Initial Notes)

- Delete national libraries
- Can get change from the market (EX: you go in debt by 3, and have a 5 star book, can trade with another or the market and get two points back).
- If you are in debt, you can buy yourself out with another player, not just the market; of course, that means the other player can give you a less than favorable deal!
- Pass book stack from player to player with the dice (otherwise gets too unwieldy); alternative that I did with Muzel, but not Alonso/Lisa, is to have the decks laid out by century and then turn them over as we progress. (decided to keep in circle in middle for now)

- For the stealing chance card, you have to turn your cards face down, fan them out, and have another player choose at random which cards to “steal” that go off the market. (Although this does mean that the cards might need to have neutral backsides) Otherwise, people choose their least valuable books to discard.
- ~~Still unsure about history cards: working with the +/- applying double to you if it is your country and normal value if you are not that country, but it feels weird to pull unrelated country's cards. Perhaps consider only having history cards related to your country (and given to you at the start of the game) that way it correlates to relative national power over time.~~
- ~~Still unsure about whether a relative power chart/board should be made for the game. (not doing for now)~~
- Realign national power ratios so that some countries share a century (Italy/Spain for example) and perhaps some centuries have no leader?
- ~~FORGOT: IF IN A WAR, HAVE TO GIVE CARDS/CREDITS TO THE PLAYER REPRESENTING THAT COUNTRY NOT TO THE MARKET.~~
- ~~What if wars meant that the person to the left got to choose three books of yours (chosen at random) or all your credits? (not doing for now)~~
- ~~What do you do with your final credits at the end of the game? Do you keep it and it weighs the same as a book? Do you buy out the market of any remaining books you want? If so, then do players take turns (most wealthy country first)?~~
- ~~One round per century, this goes too slowly for most classes (although depends on how much thinking the players do).~~
- ~~Need more chance cards, more positive especially. Recruit ideas?~~

Mistakes

- Fix the history card for the Spanish Armada: should be Spain, not France, as –
- Make disaster last three cards (too harsh)

January 24, 2016 with Muzel Chen

Framework

- Both Muzel and I played as two people each.
- Hard to remember what country you are, need a token?
- If that token was on the board, maybe it can move up and down the power chart.

Gameplay

- ~~Need more ability to attack as it's too easy to accrue collections/credits.~~
- ~~If lose educational challenge, you have to pay the cost of the book in credits or in books (can go in debt).~~
- ~~Can choose not to do anything in a round (save credits).~~
- ~~Minimum 3, maximum 6 players.~~
- ~~Number of rounds in the same century is number of players in the game divided in half (and rounded down if need be).~~

- Present to faculty as: play generic game to get the concept, a project to design game boosters, then play again to test knowledge gained during the research and development of boosters.
- Add new rules, then print. Make into a little brochure.
- What about illustrations to help portray concepts?
- ~~Order: the same order as the emphasis of each century (power ratio).~~

History Cards

- ~~Need to add new cards to the timeline.~~
- ~~Then print the cards to put in the slips.~~
- ~~If you pull the country you represent, the repercussions are times two (doubly better or worse).~~
- ~~Events cards should stay weighed one +/-, but wars should be 2+ for the victor and 2- for the loser if both countries represented in the game (loser gives credits to the winner; if not enough credits, must give them in subsequent rounds until clear of debt). If internal fighting, can be minus 2 from the same country!~~
- Not going through enough of these cards: think about as a way to fix.

Book Cards

- Can buy more than one book per turn.
- Fix ? mark costs (perhaps just ascribe them one * or find a new option).
- Check number books in each genre, put this in the catalog.
- OK to have non-winning genres.
- OK to collect countries that are not your own.
- Organize catalog according to same order as events cards. (Lower priority: not yet)
- Create section of catalog dedicated to outlining the winning strategies.
- Problem: duplicate book in 15th/16th century Spain: Reglas de ortografia and gramatica de la lengua castellana (choose new book).
- Have to read book title out loud when you purchase it so that others know what you have.
- Mock up card design to show: country, genre, MVB status, and century. (Commission student)
- Delete value of book, place that on the spreadsheet.
- Should books be able to have more than genre? Perhaps, occasional ones can be wild cards. (No)
- Literature genre needs to be more granular depending on how many they are when I count: split into poetry, prose, plays.
- Win by getting a national canon that is one book for each century? But then what if the game ends early. Think about this.
- Only four facts should be on the card.
- Reprint book cards.
- **Print off catalog as a little brochure.**
- Shorten importance. Muzel wondered if importance too hard/relative.
- No 1400s America; 3 1800s England??

Chance Cards

- ~~Revise chance cards and then format for slips.~~

- ~~Like God cards.~~
- ~~Rename? Think about this.~~
- ~~Sell to private buyer.~~
- ~~Way to get books permanently out of the game.~~
- ~~Can have a player attack you by buying you a chance card (they spend 6 credits or an equivalent amount of books) but can backfire as some chances are good.~~
- ~~They can also buy themselves a chance card.~~
- ~~Print off chance as a little brochure.~~

Board

- Place the timeline on the board with relative weights of each country per century.
- This could be a power chart that also lets players move from century to century together.
- Then would need a piece (like chess piece) representing each player.
- Illustrations from seminal moments in history (reformation, printing press, colonization, American pop culture, war).
- I make the mock up of the board. Then have classes compete with proposals to create the design. Get funding to reward winning designer (grant?) to commission them with the project.

Boxes

- ~~Make dividers for each century.~~

Curricula

- ~~Write out what would be required to make a booster pack, including projected amount of in class/out of class time.~~
- ~~Create discussion guide based on relative decisions (for example, +/- on history cards)~~
- ~~Update curricula for full length class (mine) and show as example.~~

Outreach

- Once these changes are made, schedule meeting with: Jennifer, Greg, Carmelita, Paul.