

## Art: The Game Changer

In life, it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you paint the game!

One might say that contemporary artist Derek Fordjour has his head in the game.

He creates multi-layered, highly textured surfaces of various papers as storyboards for images of people in relation to sports, games, and carnivals. He thinks about what it's like for players to be in a game and part of a team, yet still be an individual. Looking at the notions of winning and losing, fair play, rules and team structures - he sees a parallel between the sports player and everyday human life experiences.

By definition, a board game, video game or amateur sporting event is an amusement and intended for entertainment. Yet competition, chance, and the endurance and skill required can be very stressful for players. Similar life situations take place in homes, schools, and offices every day. Fordjour might lead us to believe that everyone is playing the game of life — but not everyone realizes it.

Art has the power to bring the difficult issues of society into full view and to motivate change. Throughout history, art has created space for expressing

views, raising awareness, protesting, and contributing to social development.

Many people enjoy art in the same way as sports — as entertaining and environmental enhancement. In reality, art **can** be a real game changer.

In this lesson, students select a social issue that affects their school, city, or global community. With a combination of collaboration and individual work, they build a board game that progresses through positive advancements and road blocks to reach the goal of solving or bettering the issue. Each game space functions as if it were a mini poster and poses a graphic design challenge.

As part of the design, students imagine their own role and create a token that puts them right in the game!

**GRADES 3-12** Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.



### Materials (required)

#### Select one option for surface:

#### FABRIANO<sup>®</sup>

**Black Black** and **White White** Pads  
20 sheets, 9" x 12", 300 gsm  
heavyweight (10660-1023) and  
(10661-1005); need one sheet per  
student

**Railroad Board**, 25 sheet  
asst, 22" x 28", 6-ply  
(13105-0629); share one sheet  
among 12 students



#### Game Space Design Options

**Sargent Art Artists' Oil Pastels**,  
asst color sets (20063-),  
share among 3-4 students

**Zig Posterman Paint Markers**,  
chisel tip, asst colors (21322-);  
share between 3-4 students



#### Token Design Options

**Hygloss Wooden People Shapes**,  
40-piece asst (28979-1040);  
share one bag among class

**Hygloss Wooden Blocks**, 48 piece  
asst (60452-1048); share one  
bag across class

**Aleene's Quick Dry Tacky Glue**, 4 oz  
(23884-1104); share one bottle  
between 2-3 students

### Optional Materials:

**Activa Hearty Air Dry Clay**, 2.2 lb,  
assorted colors (30568-1005);  
share among 12-15 students

**Faber Castell Pitt Artist Pens**, Modern  
Lettering Set of 4 pens (20759-  
1099)

**Blick Matte Acrylics** 2 oz, asst colors  
(00727-)

**Simply Art Wood Shapes**, asst shapes  
(60408-)

## Preparation

1. Identify a social issue, problem, or concern in the school, city, or global community. Begin with a brainstorming session or pre-arrange a list for students to choose from. Identify the resolution or betterment of this issue as “the goal” and name the game based on that goal. For the purpose of providing example, the goal of ending hunger could be the “No More Hunger Game.”

## Process

### 1. Create game spaces

Two types of spaces are key to the game: **advancement** and **blocking spaces**. As in sports, there is both offense and defense: those moving toward the goal, and the opposing forces that are encountered on the way.

Divide into teams or work as a class to share ideas for games spaces. After ideas are gathered, students can select which spaces they wish to work on or assignments can be made. This part of the game development allows for individual expression.

Create spaces using a variety of drawing, painting, or collage materials on a heavyweight paper or board. Aim for a minimum of 10–12 of each type of space. A trapezoid template is provided on page 4 for consistency, if needed.

### Advancement Spaces

Brainstorm the content of these spaces by thinking of some of the positive things that can be done to move toward solving or changing the issue. Ask what actions could move individuals, a school or community closer to the goal.

Advancement spaces might also include rewards, such as moving ahead in the game or receiving bonus points.

In the example game mentioned in the preparation process, called “The No More Hunger Game,” an advancement space might look like one of these:



- (A) Stock the shelves of the local food pantry by organizing a community food drive.



- (B) Make a monetary donation to an organization dedicated to providing food to the needy.



- (C) Create a website that would make people aware of the problem and connect them to solutions.

### Blocking Spaces

In sports, the defense is the team that is trying to block the way to the goal. What are some of the things that keep the issue from being resolved? Why does it continue to be a problem?

Defense spaces might prevent a player from moving forward in the game or cause them to lose a turn.

For example, in “The No More Hunger Game,” a defense space might be:



- (A) Negative Thinking, including thinking there is nothing that an individual can do to help or that someone else is taking care of the problem.



- (B) Mistrust. People don't trust organizations to manage resources properly.



- (C) An Increasing Problem. The percentage of the population experiencing hunger is growing at an overwhelming rate.

### 2. Create the end goal space

Design the end goal as a special space. Use a different color and make it larger to generate excitement.

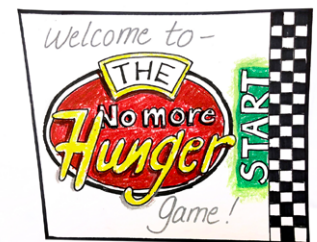
For example, in “The No More Hunger Game,” the goal space might look like:



### 3. Create a start space

Board games usually have a space designed to begin the game, a launching space. Design this space as the furthest from the goal.

For example, in “The No More Hunger Game,” the start space might look like:



### 3. Create the game board

Arrange the spaces on matboard or cardboard sheets, making sure they are in the desired order before gluing in place. As an option, design the environment around the game spaces to illustrate further the goal of the game.

#### 4. Create game tokens.

In many board games, the token is selected at the beginning of the game to represent each player.

After setting the end goal and building to path to reach it, students may have an idea of what their own role might be in the game. On a sports team, there are coaches, trainers, players, equipment handlers, referees, and cheerleaders.

Students reflect upon their own strengths, talents, and interests, then imagine what position they might play in reaching the goal and being part of the solution.

Tokens are designed as small, 3-dimensional pieces that can be created from scrap pieces of cardboard, clay, wooden shapes, recycled materials, etc.

For example, in "The No More Hunger Game," some of the game tokens might be:



(A) Someone who can drive a truck or fly an airplane to take the food where it is most needed.

(B) A person who can use technology and social media to let people know about the issue of hunger and how to help.



(C) A grower who can share their crops and teach others how to have success growing their own.

#### 5. Get ready to play

A standard die could be used, or one could be created from a wooden block with images or designs that match the game. Scoring sheets may be necessary if the advancement or blocking spaces indicate the accumulation or loss of points.

### National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

#### Creating #VA:Cr2.3

Process Component: Investigate

**Anchor Standard:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

**Enduring Understanding:** People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

**Essential Question:** How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities? How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems? How do artists and designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?

#### Connecting #VA: Cn10.1

Process Component: Interpret

**Anchor Standard:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and person experience to make art.

**Enduring Understanding:** Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences.

**Essential Question:** How does engaging in creating art enrich people's lives? How does making art attune people to their surroundings? How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through art-making?





Game Piece Template