

BONE'S GIFT – A STORYTELLING CARD GAME

INSTRUCTIONS

Bone Phillips loves stories! This is a cooperative storytelling game where each player contributes to creating a story. For this game, a story includes cards with characters, places, actions, plot twists, and endings. But *you* have to tell the story. Make a good one!

Goal of the Game:

The object of the game is to work together to tell the best story before the cards run out. In a really satisfying tale, a character usually solves some problem—like solving a mystery or rescuing someone. But the hero doesn't do it too easily. That wouldn't be fun. Someone or some *thing* is trying to prevent her from getting to that happy ending. The villain might be another character, like a giant or evil stepmother. Or it might be big storm trying to keep your hero from getting home! Be creative, but everyone has to agree it's a complete story.

To Play: (For 2-4 players)¹

1. Deal 5 cards to each player.
2. Place the rest of the cards face down in the middle. This is the draw pile.
3. At the beginning of each turn, the player plays one card from his/her hand—and tells part of a story.
4. He or she then picks a card off the top of the draw pile. (Players always have 5 cards in their hands.)
5. The next player plays a card to continue the story and then draws another card.
6. If you don't have a card you'd like to play, you can pass or trade in cards for new ones. Your turn ends after you swap out your cards.
7. If you get a blank card, you can make up your own character, place, etc.
8. Continue playing until you have a complete story! You have to have at least one character, place, action, and plot twist (You can have more than one of each, of course.)
9. To play an ending card, everyone has to agree that the story is complete and the ending fits.
10. Everyone wins if you complete the story before the cards run out in the draw pile!

Sample round of play:

¹ You can add more wild cards and/or your own cards to let more people play.

Three people are playing: Will, Emma, and Sydney. Sydney deals 5 cards to everyone and places the rest of the cards face down.

Emma plays Jack, a character card. She starts off the story by saying: "There was this boy named Jack and all he wanted to do was to get rich." Then Emma draws a card.

Will plays a place card, the Forest. He continues the story: "Jack set off though the woods to seek his fortune. It was a magic forest and the only way to get to big city. " Will draws a card.

Sydney plays another character card, the Talking Tree. She says, "In the forest lived a tribe of talking trees. Their leader was called Willow, and she didn't like people walking through her forest." Sydney draws a card.

Ways to lose the game:

On his/her turn, each player must (1) play a card and tell a part of the story (or pass) and (2) draw a card. If no cards are left in the draw pile before the story is completed, then play ends and everyone loses!²

Everyone also loses if the players cannot agree on the story ending!

Alternate Rules:

Want a shorter version? Try playing against the clock! Set a timer for 20 minutes, for instance. Players then race the clock to finish telling the story.

Extension (s):

- Have students write a story based on the one they told in the game. How might they improve it?
- Use the cards as story prompts in writing exercises. For instance, students could select several cards randomly and then write a story based on those cards.

Additional Instructions for Teachers

² You can add additional wild cards and/or make your own cards to make the game longer.

- To assemble the deck, print out the cards on thick paper, cardstock, or construction paper. You should be able to print them duplex with the book cover on the back of the cards. (If not, no worries!)
- For best results, use a paper cutter to cut out the cards.
- Have the students design their own wildcards! (These are the blank character and action cards in the deck.) You can print off as many of these as you like!
- To adapt the game to younger (or older) readers, you can adjust the number of elements needed for a good story. For instance, younger players might focus on telling a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Older players might focus on telling a story with satisfying twists and turns.

Common Core Standards

This activity should meet the following standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3 (Grades 1-12)

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.