

# Project A

## See Things Differently

Marc Balderama

ITGM 705 OL - Interactive Design and Media Application

Professor David E. Meyers



---

# Table of Contents

<b>3</b>	Part 1 - Proposal
<b>5</b>	Part 2 - Visualization & Conceptualization
<b>11</b>	Part 3 - Prototype
<b>19</b>	Part 4 - Final

# **Part 1**

**Proposal**

## Original Proposal - *See Things Differently*

As a student in the Graphic Design and Visual Experience program at SCAD, I've become interested in the ways people interpret visual artifacts differently. In the realm of semiotics, a single sign could have many meanings, a phenomenon known as "polysemy." For example, for some, the color blue signifies sadness while for others, it represents optimism. These meanings, however, can be taken for granted and individuals may assume everyone shares the same associative meanings. This is why I would like to propose a game that exercises people's associations in visual communication.

Inspired by card-based games like Apples to Apples or Cards Against Humanity, I would like to create a visual matching game played by a group of people. One possible implementation would be to have Person A pull up and present a prompt card which includes a visual artifact like a color, symbol, photograph, or typeface. While this happens, the other players have a hand of cards displaying a different descriptor like "happy," "fashionable," or "abrasive" which they will then submit. After that point, Person A will select the descriptor that they believe most closely matches the visual prompt card.

By participating in this game, the players can start to understand what visual associations other individuals have and compare those to their own. In addition, by understanding how different people interpret signs, they can better anticipate decisions made in the game leading to more successful game performance. While I intend this to share the same purpose as many

other games, namely fun, I would like to design a game that can also serve as a simple educational tool

As such, I can see this game being used in different contexts in audiences. The game can be simple enough to play at home with a group of friends. Nevertheless, it could also be used as a research tool by graphic designers, advertisers, and ethnographers. As a result, the game could serve as an approachable and easy way to gather information about how people interpret a wide range of visual artifacts. Participants of the game can participate out of fun, personal enrichment, or to even learn more about how people interpret specific visuals like logos or product designs.

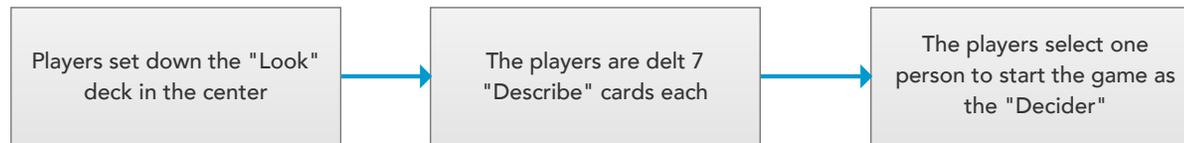
# **Part 2**

## **Visualization & Conceptualization**

## Rule Variant A (Simple)

This version is most like Apples to Apples and Cards Against Humanity with no significant deviations from their base rules and structures.

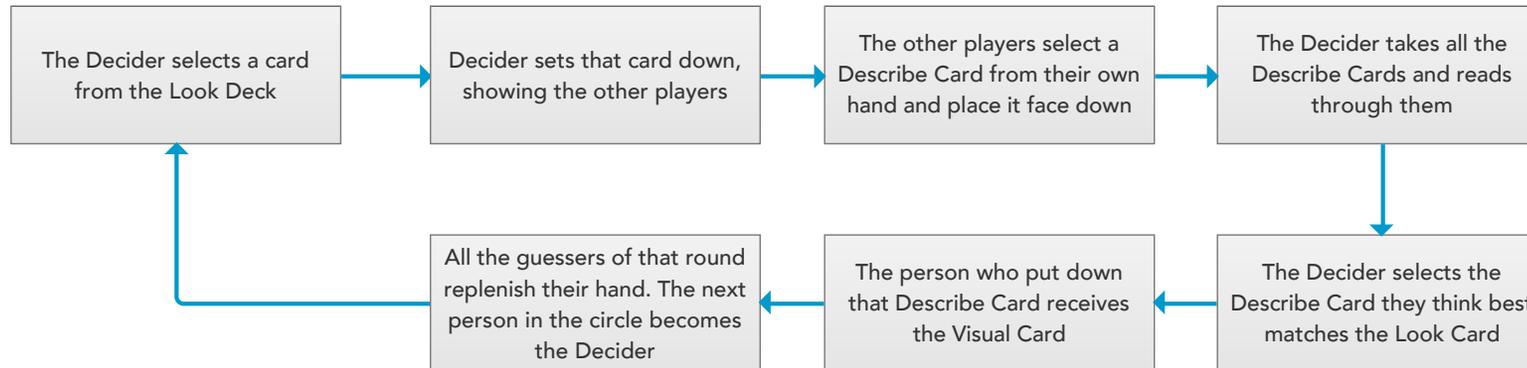
### Setup



### Win Condition

When one player gets chosen 5 times.

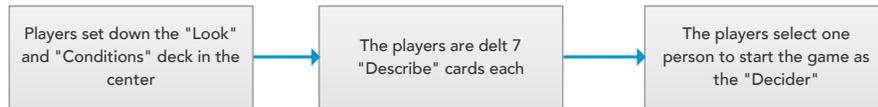
### Round



# Rule Variant B (Conditions)

This version contains an additional deck of "Condition Cards." These cards provide specific rules for each round in order to keep the game from going stale.

## Setup



## Win Condition

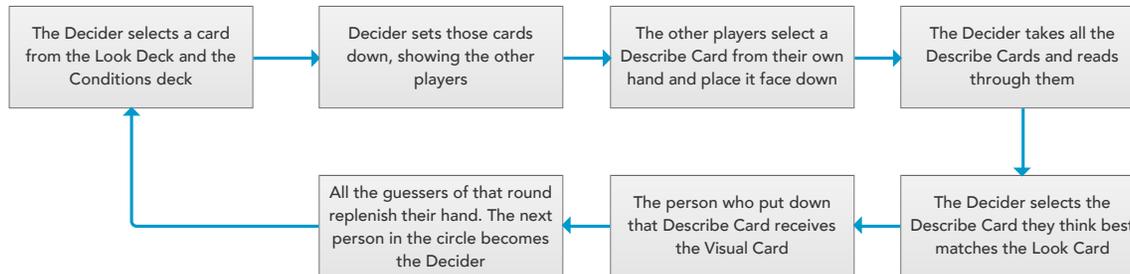
When one player gets chosen 5 times.

## "Condition Card" Examples

<p>In this round, place two "Describe Cards" down.</p> <p>At the end of the round, take two cards to replenish your hand.</p>	<p>In this round, the Decider places two "Look Cards" down.</p> <p>Players put down one "Describe Card" to describe the combination of the two "Look Cards."</p>
---	--

<p>In this round, the Decider places the "Look Card" face down and describes what they see.</p>	<p>In this round, the players say their own describe word instead of using a card.</p>
---	--

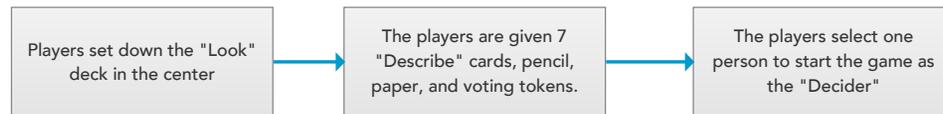
## Round



# Rule Variant C (Voting)

This version introduces voting tokens and point tokens. This version allows the players a chance to get points even if they put down a bad card.

## Setup



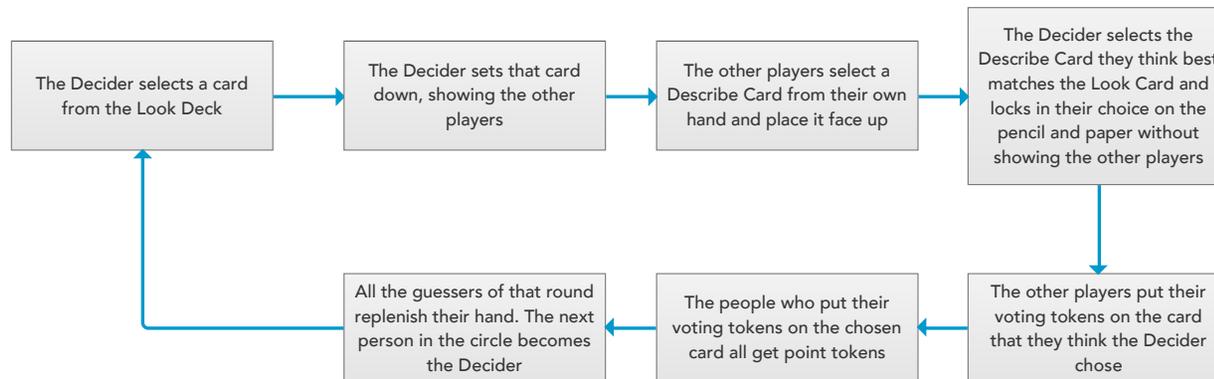
## Win Condition

When one player gets 10 point tokens.

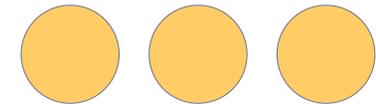
## Voting Tokens



## Round



## Point Tokens



## Rule Variant D (Committee)

This version doesn't have a Decider but it does contain a similar voting mechanic where all players lock-in a vote and the round winners are those who vote similarly.

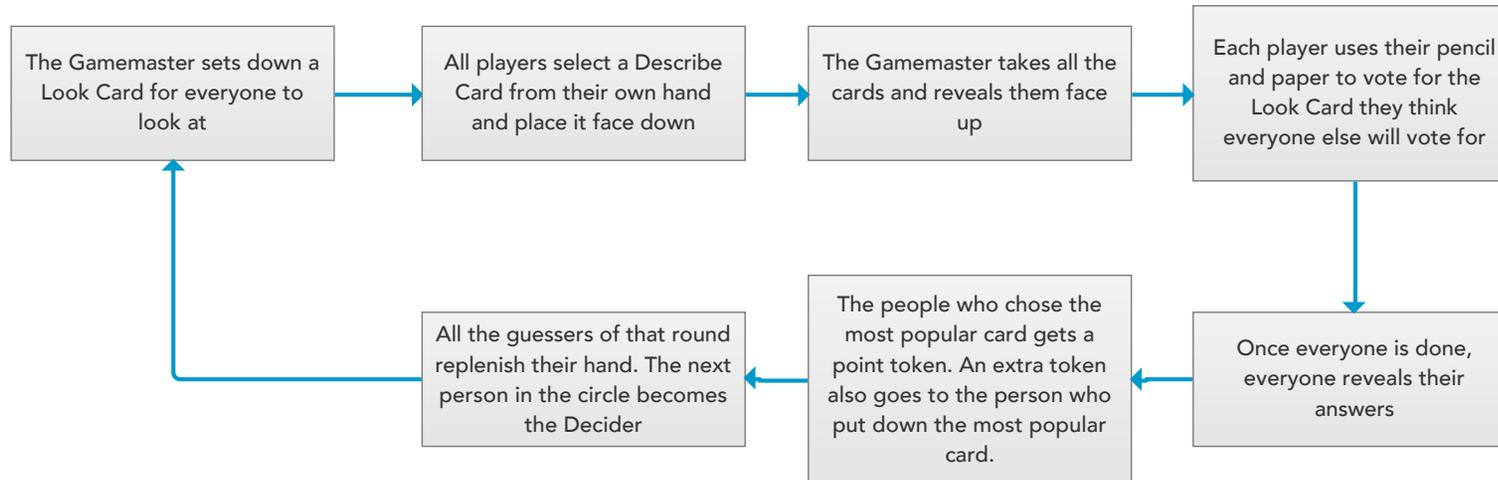
### Setup



### Win Condition

When one player gets 10 point tokens.

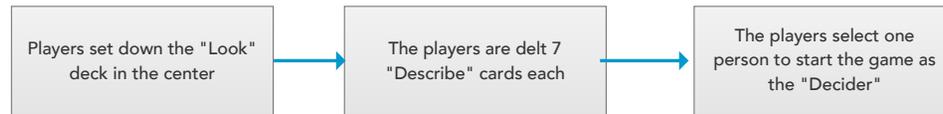
### Round



## Rule Variant E (Justification)

This version turns the game into more of a trial system. Instead of anonymous submissions, each player must justify their choice of card. This can lead to straightforward games or games where people think of crazy justifications for unusual card choices.

### Setup



### Win Condition

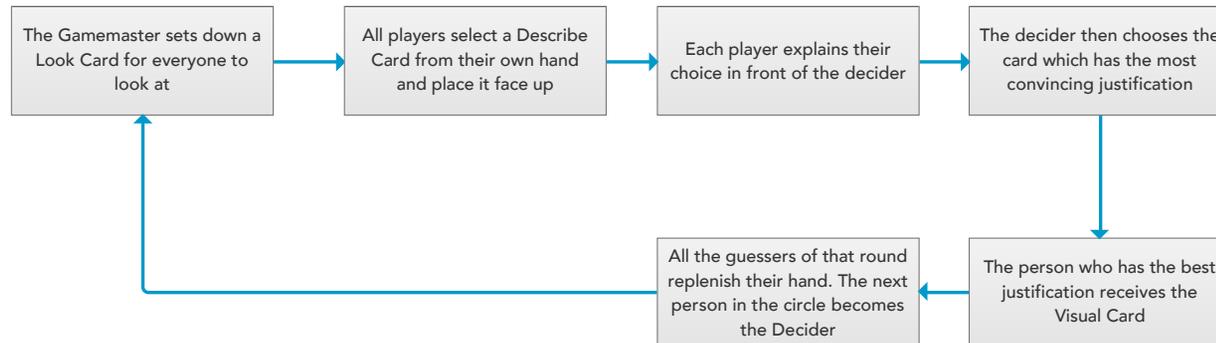
When one player gets chosen 5 times.

### Justification Examples

"I believe that this circular symbol is 'beautiful' because of the lack of hard edges and its simplicity. No matter how you orient it, it's always the same."

"I'm arguing that the photograph of the old man is 'depressing' because he is clearly thinking about all the regrets in his life."

### Round



# Part 3

## Prototype

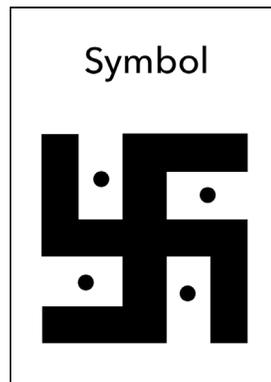
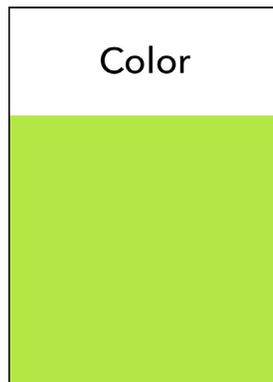
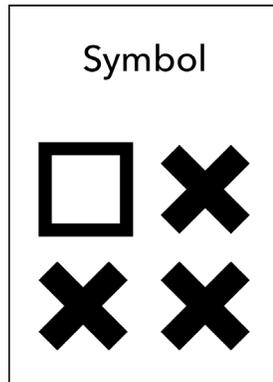
# Prototype Example Designs

## Look Deck

The "Look Deck" contains cards with a different visual artifact on them. The Decider of a round puts down a single Look card which serves as a prompt for the players to describe.

I thought a lot about whether these cards should have labels. They bring clarity to what a player is supposed to describe because it might be ambiguous. Should they focus on a photo as a whole or should they focus on the fashion and hair?

The card should have a range from things that are easier to describe to ones that seem more open and interpretive.

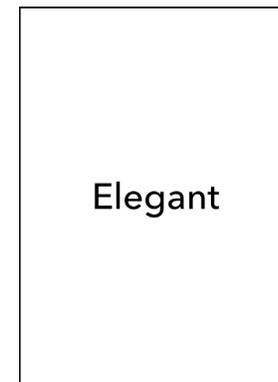
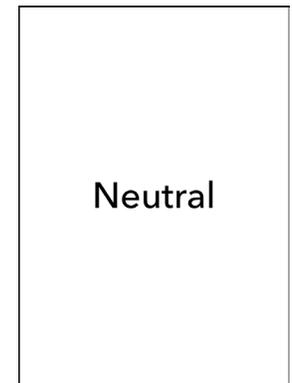
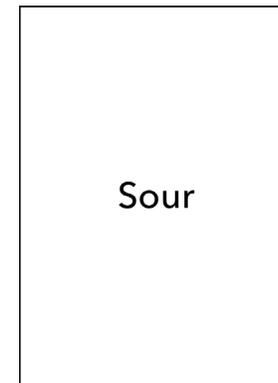
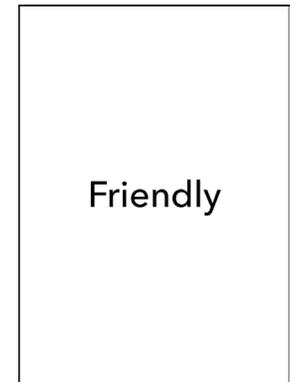
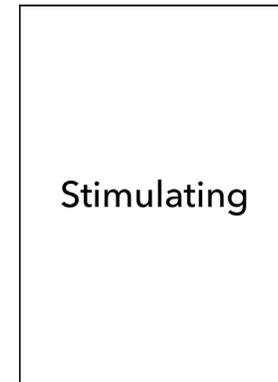


## Describe Deck

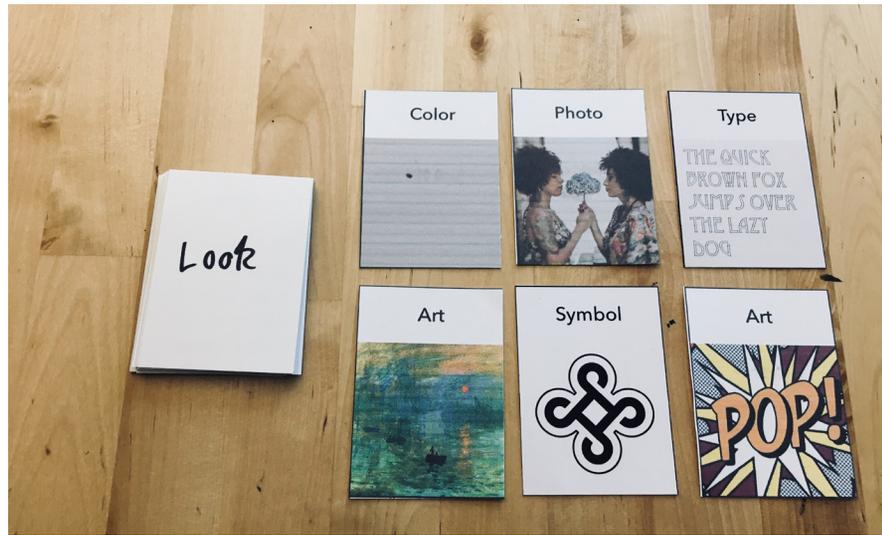
The "Describe Deck" are the cards that the players place down after a Look card has been placed by the Decider. Each Describe card includes an adjective. A typical hand consists of 5 cards. Once a player uses a card, they obtain a new card from the Describe Deck.

The cards are very plain and undecorated. The focus should merely be on the words themselves.

Like the Look Deck, the Describe cards should allow for different meanings. For example, "Clean" could relate to visually clean or wholesomely clean.



# Prototype Photos



# User Testing Feedback

## Session 1

For the first session, I tested with Rea who has a side business doing arts and crafts. She is in her late 20s and is currently working as a lab technician.

After some initial demonstrations, she suggested that the win condition could be altered so that a person has to win a card from every single player playing. In this way, a player is motivated to learn how everyone interprets visual signs. She pointed out that best friends and couples might have an upper hand in this game.

She was thought it might be useful to cut down the number of cards a player has per hand. The reason being that people have to be more creative in their explanations when they have a limited deck.

Rea wanted to try out a variation where the players don't verbally justify their choice, but rather put a combination of three cards down. The decider then tries to make sense of each grouping of cards. She saw that the combinations were interesting and could describe the Look card better in absence of a verbal explanation.

She thought it was pretty clear what each card category means. Rea thought maybe rename the "Type" cards as "Font" cards since people might not be familiar with the term "Type." Some other visual categories that she suggested were fashion, jobs, and quotes. She also thought about music but didn't know immediately how to convey it in the game.

Rea had ideas for limiting people's explanations about their card choice. Some of her ideas included time limits or word limits. Overall, she thought it was helpful for everyone to explain the cards since she had a hard time understanding my card choices at face value.

She also talked about different ideas relating to voting systems. For example, people can vote for the card they think the decider will choose. Another idea was to have a democratic vote where the players could override the Decider's choice.

## Session 2

I conducted a session with Robbin who studying design, passionate about gaming, and has worked as a facilitator in focus groups. She is in her late 20s and is currently working for an educational tech company.

In an initial demonstration of the game mechanics, Robbin felt like she made her card decisions based both on her own perspective and how she thinks the decider will choose.

She likes that the hand of cards provide a prompt or jumping off point to start describing things. She stated how it was difficult for her and other people in the past to critique designs since people didn't know what to say. Giving them a limited "menu" of options as opposed to their entire mental word database makes the decision making easier.

Robbin expressed concerns about people explaining their card choice. She mentioned that the last person might have an upper-hand after everyone else has made their case. She also wondered if this game rewards people who are simply better at arguments.

I showed Robbin a rule variant where instead of choosing one card and justifying it, a player puts down three groups of cards with no explanation. She commented that this variant opens the possibility to have one really strong card even if the other two aren't so great.

When speaking about times she facilitated a group discussion, she mentioned that one of her strategies is saying "How does this make you feel?" or "What does this remind you of?" She mentions that this game would be extremely helpful for her to introduce in a group discussion as a way to break the ice, getting people more comfortable with how they see things.

Robbin didn't really see this game as a very competitive game and doesn't see winning as the ultimate point. She saw this more as an exercise. I introduced a voting rule variant and Robbin mentioned that it reminded her of the games like *Dixit* and *Mysterium*.

# User Testing Feedback

## Session 3

This session was with two people, Justine and Donna. Justine is in her late 20s and is a creative education teacher for a museum. Donna is also in her late 20s and is a freelance graphic designer.

I ran through one round where each player had to give a justification for their card choice before the Decider chose a card. Donna felt like the game allowed her to be more outspoken about her perspective but also felt self-conscious about what to say. She says she always has concerns about looking stupid around groups of people. However, she did say that she grew more confident with more rounds.

Justine felt like it was easy to select a card because she knows herself well and can readily identify what card resonates with her more. She also felt like since the players get a new card with each round, the game doesn't become stale. She thought this game is probably best to play with people who understand oneself.

Donna can see this as a team-building exercise. She also commented that she would feel more comfortable if there wasn't a decider in that she would feel more open with her opinion.

I tried one rule variant where player choices remained anonymous but instead submitted three cards. Donna thought there was less pressure to pick the perfect card. Justine believes that one good card can help an otherwise mediocre group of cards.

I also tried a rule variant that was most similar to Apples to Apples where player choices remain anonymous and only submit one card. Donna felt like the simple rules were better for social gatherings as opposed the other rule variants which were better for educational settings.

Lastly, I tried out a rule variant where players vote for the card that they believe the Decider will choose, regardless of whether they submitted that particular card. Justine found it a bit confusing. She also said that she chose the submission card for herself but her voting choice

was based on how she thought the Decider would pick. Donna said that Deciders might be pressured to pick the most popular card.

Both thought the variant where players explain their choices to be the best one to learn about other people's perspectives. Justine thought it was a good platform for each person to share their opinion and have their own dedicated time. Donna had the idea where the steps could be changed. She thought it might be good for people to explain their choices after the Decider made their decision. That way, the stakes are off when people have to "present" their ideas.

Donna said that she sees this game fitting best in an educational or therapy setting for kids. She thought this type of activity would be good to introduce at an early age. Justine mentioned that she is taking a class on early childhood education. She sees this game as a good way to learn about students and their thinking process which can be difficult to get a sense of.

Donna thought it might be helpful that after a round was over, the Look Cards could have a description of what is pictured. For example, the meaning or the origin of a painting. She also had the idea that there could be different card packs for different people. For example, she thought having a card pack for children would be good since there was a Swastika symbol on one of the cards.



# Feedback Summary Report

## Win condition and meta

The win condition and skills needed might need some more consideration. For example, a person might be able to win just by knowing another player very well. Furthermore, this game's goal is to improve people's knowledge of how other people interpret visual signs. However, this might be ignored by someone who is simply good at arguing and making explanations up.

Some things to consider are removing explanations from the gameplay, allowing for anonymous submission of the Describe Cards. Another potential solution might be to introduce a rule where a player must win a card from each person. Lastly, explanations could be saved for after the Decider has decided so that players don't have to feel like expert debaters.

## Look deck categories

The feedback indicated that there could be a greater range of visual categories that could be included in the Look Deck. The people who gave feedback believed the categories were clear and made sense, but some categories can be subdivided.

A direct solution might be just to add more categories to the deck. For example, there could be cards representing fashion and product design. Art, especially, can be broken down into different categories including sculpture, sketches, and patterns.

## Usefulness as a facilitation tool

One place where this game appears to succeed is as a tool for discussion facilitation. The game provides an accessible and less intimidating way for people to start talking about their own perspective. The cards give a jumping off point, turning the difficult process of deciding on an opinion into a simpler one. It gets the conversation started.

## Number of cards in hand

There were mixed opinions about the number of cards in a single hand. Some thought it was better to have fewer cards while others thought it was better to have more. Those who thought it should be fewer believed that it forces a player to be more creative with their explanations and to take on a perspective that they wouldn't normally see through. Those who thought it was better to have more cards believed that being forced to choose a bad card led to disingenuous answers and "making things up" in one's explanation of the card choice.

I might need to consider how the number of cards aligns with the goal of the game, keeping in mind that there will always be trade-offs with a particular decision.

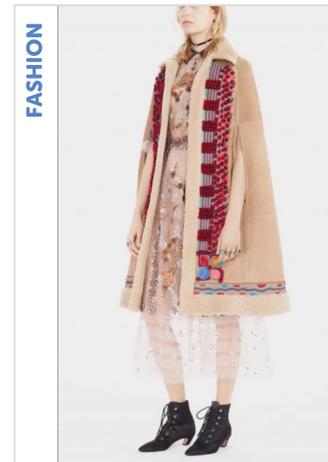
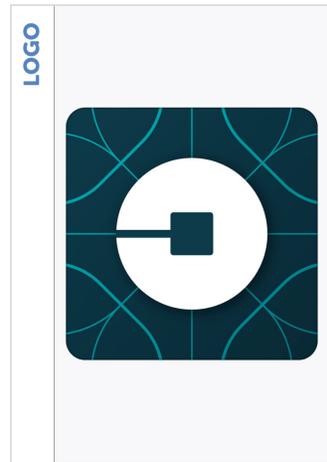
## Better as a tool or a game?

If *See Things Differently* should be a game, then the structure of the artifact should have a quantifiable goal. A person has to be able to win the game in a way that's fair and fun. In doing so, the rules and structure might have to be altered in such a way that is antithetical or at least irrelevant to the purpose of an educational tool.

There might be a middle ground where one could treat this artifact with flexibility. One set of rules could be used to emphasize the educational aspects while another could be used for the purposes of gameplay. In testing this game, I could see how this can be shaped into an exercise between one facilitator and one respondent.

Again, it might be worth considering to downplay the competitive aspects if the ultimate goal is more about understanding and learning.

# Revised Visual Design

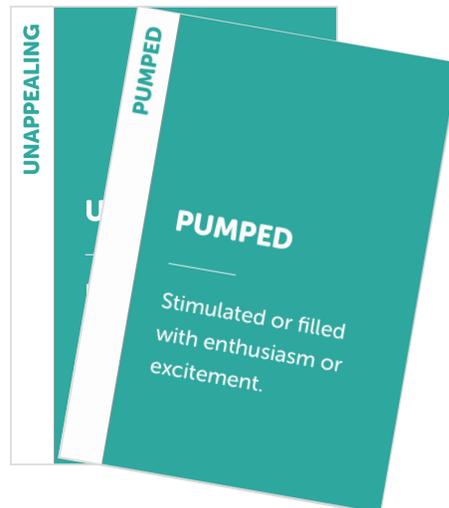


After the user testing, I started thinking more about the visual design of the cards. One aspect that I considered was usability. For the Describe Cards, I thought it was important for a player to be able to know what word they have without having to spread out their hand very wide. This is why the word also appears on the top left of the card, so a player can still have a tightly spaced hand. Additionally, I made sure to put a definition of the word since the user testing showed that not every single word was clear. However, I do wonder if the words should also be as interpretative as the visuals in the Look cards.

I wanted a visual design that was simple to not interfere too much with the visuals of the Look cards. However, I also didn't want design choices that felt too distant and empty. This is why I included a healthy amount of color and chose a typeface that was a little rounded to appear more approachable. The choices of blue and green are a nod to the concept that many cultures don't have a separate color concept of blue and green, seeing them as the same color. But while there is this phenomenon, the shades are distinct enough to quickly sort the cards.

The backsides of the cards have the title of the game tilted to emphasize "seeing things differently," allowing the user to tilt their head slightly to read it. So they have to look at it differently than their normal reading posture.

Finally, I tested out the design with new Look Deck categories including logos, fashion, and patterns.



# Part 4

**Final**

# Refinements

Throughout the user testing, I found that it was much more important to emphasize the educational aspects of this game rather than the competitive one. While I ran through and considered rules to bring a fun, competitive nature to the game, I found that it distracted from my core motivation in creating this project.

Therefore, I found it appropriate to strip down the rules of the game and focus on an open exchange between the participants. The game should not be about “beating” someone else, but rather providing a space for everyone to share their perspectives.

So within the game, I decided not to have any official points or win condition. Within one round, the Decider picks anonymously submitted cards while explaining their rationale. Once the Decider has selected a card, every player reveals their choice and explains why they selected it.

By explaining their rationale after the fact, it eliminates potentially argumentative explanations. Also once the stakes have been alleviated, the players can feel free to honestly state their opinion without the pressure of being judged.

So while the game could be played in a social setting like a party, I think it would be more appropriate for an educational setting. Ideally, the partic-

ipants should not optimize their behavior based on how they can win, but rather develop skills to explain their visual connections to other people and to open themselves to the perspectives of others.

So in conclusion, I’ve decided to omit any of my previous ideas about how many cards to collect, voting mechanisms, or situations that foster disagreement.

Additionally, for the visual design, I decided to omit definitions on the Describe Cards. It became very apparent that many cards had flexibility on how it can be interpreted. Since I would like to honor various interpretations on both the Describe and Look cards, I thought it was best to only have the describing word on the card. Anything more than this might limit the thought process of the player.

# Final Proposal

As a student in the Graphic Design and Visual Experience program at SCAD, I've become interested in the ways people interpret visual artifacts differently. In the realm of semiotics, a single sign could have many meanings, a phenomenon known as "polysemy." For example, for some, the color blue signifies sadness while for others, it represents optimism. These meanings, however, can be taken for granted and individuals may assume everyone shares the same associative meanings. This is why I would like to propose a game that exercises and brings forth people's associations in visual communication.

While volunteering at the Children's Creativity Museum in San Francisco, I observed children partaking in an activity named the "Mystery Box Challenge." In this challenge, the children received a box of randomly selected craft items and a challenge like "Invent a faster way to get to school." With a limited set of materials, the children both had to craft a prototype invention and also explain their design choices. Often the children had a hard time articulating their choices. This is why I became inspired to create *See Things Differently*, a card game designed to facilitate people's explanations of their thought process.

Inspired by card-based games like *Apples to Apples*, *See Things Differently* uses similar game mechanics for an educational and team-building purposes. By participating in this game, the players can start to understand what

visual associations other individuals have and be able to better articulate their own. This can be a useful skill for those in the realm of visual arts, user experience, and therapy. Nonetheless, this should also be useful for children of a wide age range.

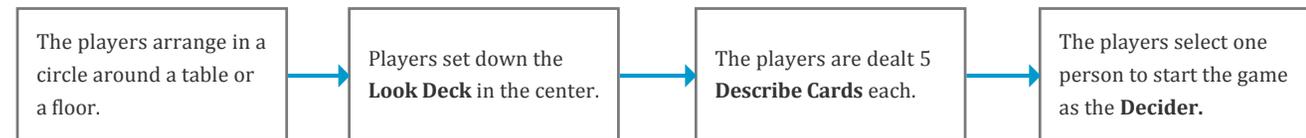
As such, I can see this game being used in a few different contexts and audiences. The game can be simple enough to play at home with a group of friends. Nevertheless, it could also be used as a tool by designers, teachers, and ethnographers. Thusly, the game could serve as an approachable and easy way to gather information about how people interpret a wide range of visual artifacts.

# Game Rules

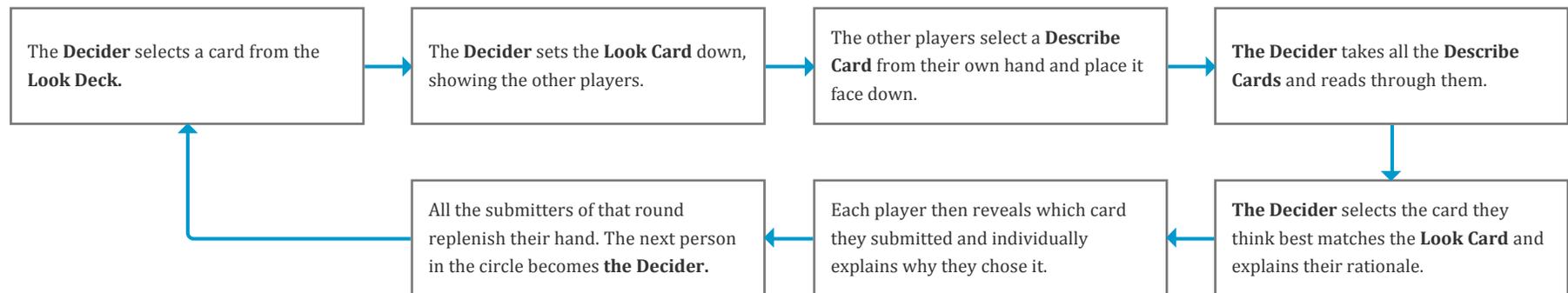
## Game Pieces

1. Look Deck
2. Describe Deck

## Setup



## Round



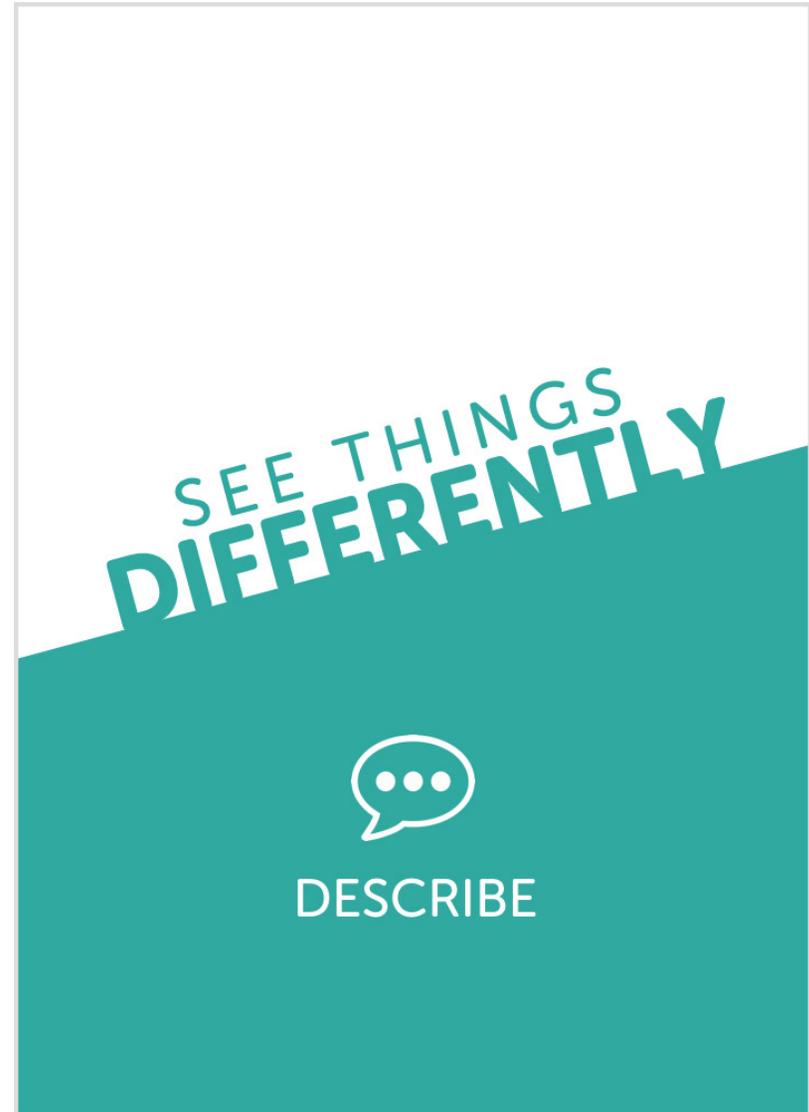
## Ending Condition

There is no official way of ending the game. Ideally, the game should be played so that at least everyone has had one chance to be the **Decider**. Nonetheless, players of this game should play as long as they deem fit and set out their own goals, building on the base rule set.

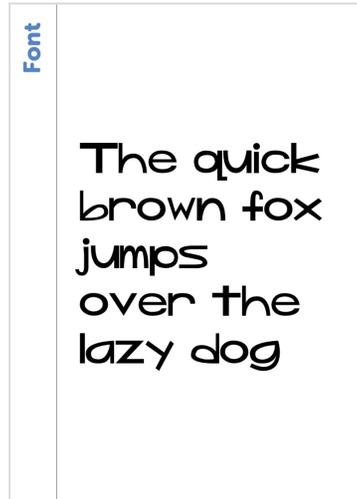
## Misc.

- Even if a player submitted a **Describe Card** that they are not very confident in, they should still try their best in explaining how it might work with the **Look Card**.
- Some of the words on the **Describe Cards** can be interpreted multiple ways. It is up to the player to determine and explain their own interpretation of the word on the Describe Card.
- If the game has an explicit facilitator or educator, they should ensure that everyone has the time to explain their decisions and should ask follow-up questions to clarify vague explanations.

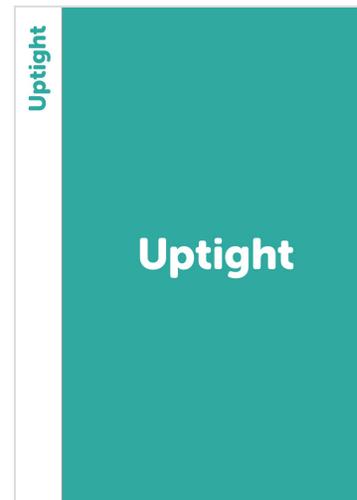
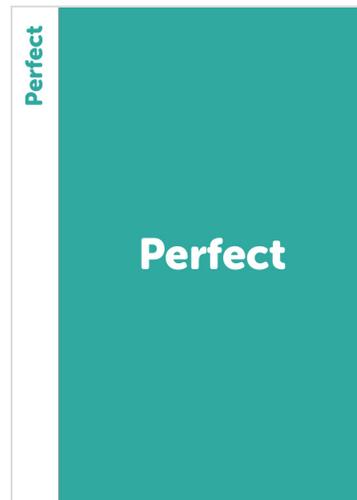
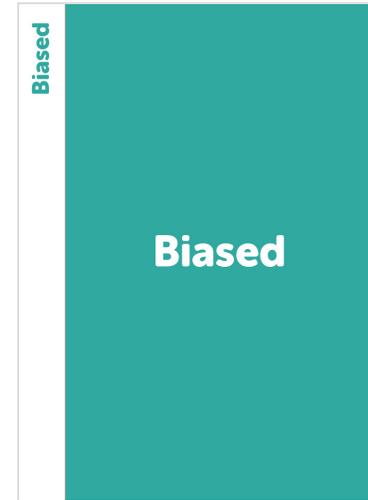
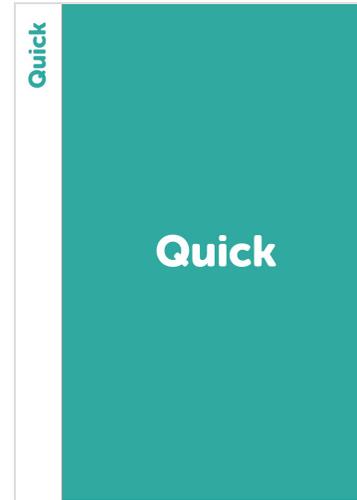
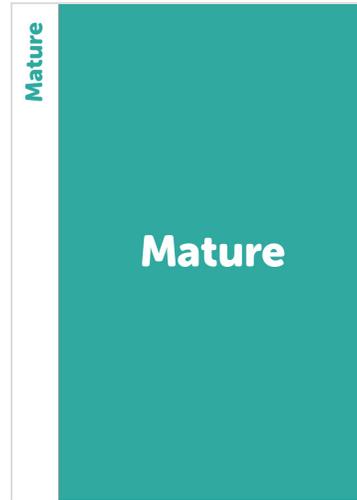
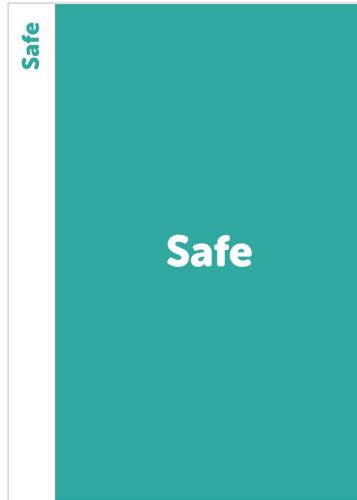
## Final Card Designs - Back Side



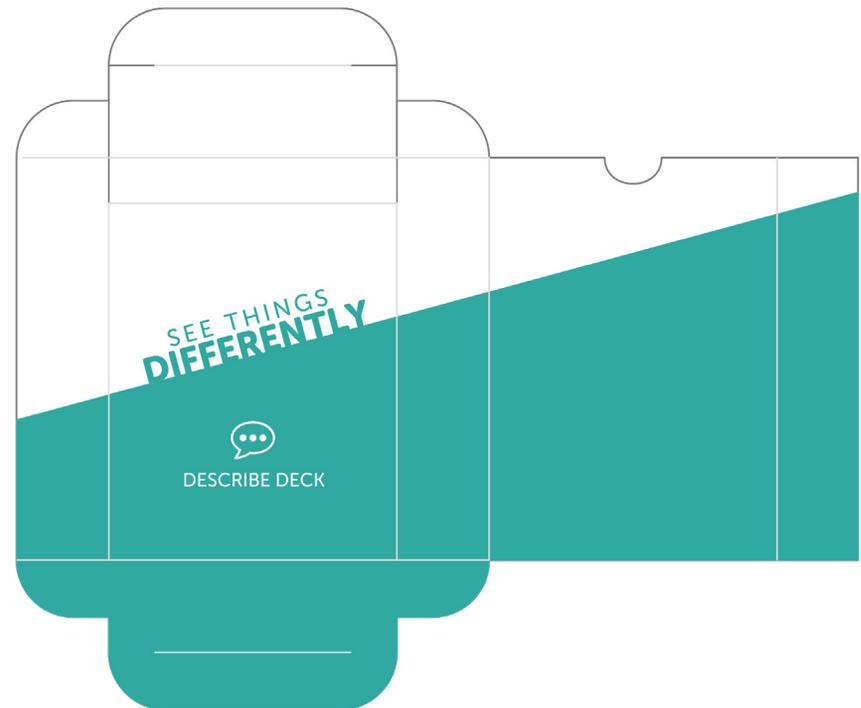
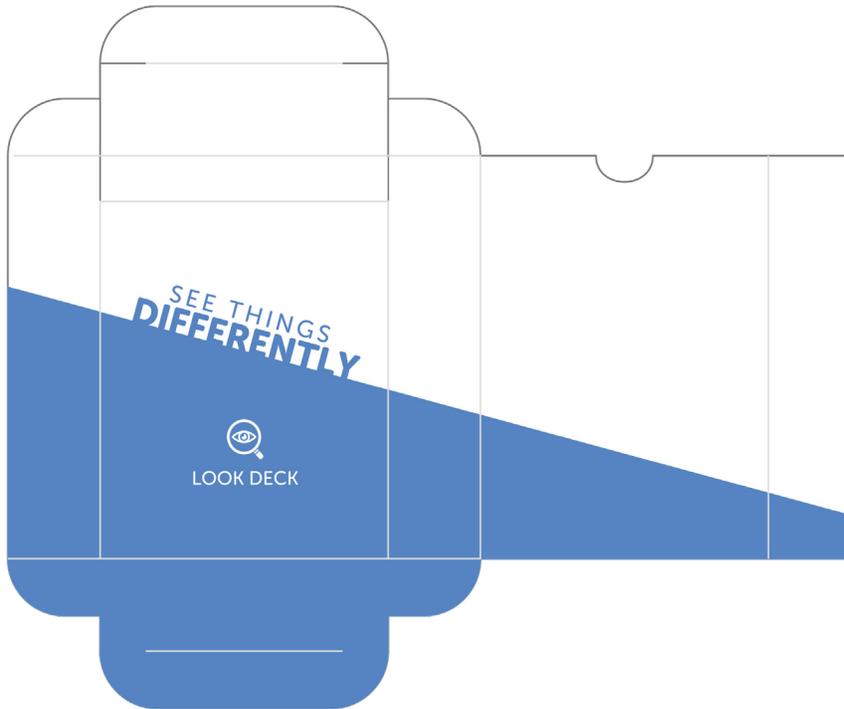
# Final Card Designs - Look Card Examples



# Final Card Designs - Describe Card Examples



# Final Card Designs - Card Boxes



# Final Photos

