Let's make a
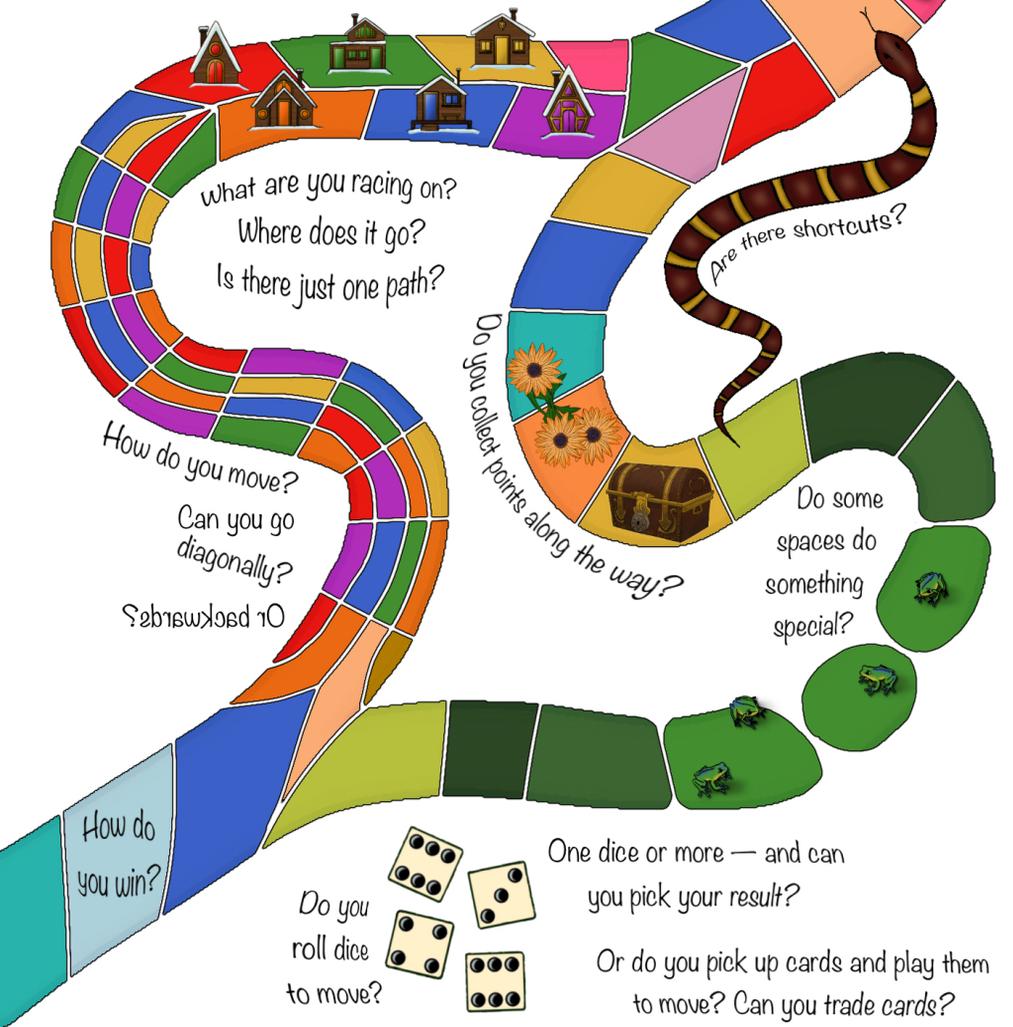# RACE GAME

Easy to understand and easy to play. Two or more players race on a board. But what does the track look like, how do the players move, and how does the game end? That's all down to your design!

What are you racing on?
Where does it go?
Is there just one path?

Are there shortcuts?

Do you collect points along the way?

How do you move?
Can you go diagonally?
Or backwards?

Do some spaces do something special?

How do you win?

Do you roll dice to move?

One dice or more — and can you pick your result?

Or do you pick up cards and play them to move? Can you trade cards?

So, you want to make a game! Great idea! Making a game is a lot of fun, and you end up with something really special.

Why start with a race game?

Race games are some of the most widely played and easily understood games. If the people playing the game are unlikely to be familiar with complex games, then a race game might be the best option. It's generally a very straightforward concept, but here are some different ways in which you could challenge assumptions…

Are you making the game for someone specific?

Maybe you can add in some jokes just for that person – or that family, or that school, or that town! Maybe the path can wind round local landmarks? Or maybe landing on certain spaces means that you have to sing or dance or tell a joke? What's going to work for your friends and family?

Where does the path go, and how do you move on it?

Is there just one track, or does it split into many? Perhaps there are shortcuts – and if so, do you have to take them? Perhaps some spaces are harder to get past. Perhaps it's actually a grid, and you can move in any direction you like!

Does the path have a clear finish, or do players go round and round? Even if there is a finish point, is it the same for all the players?

Is it one piece per player?

How many pieces does each player have? If it's more than one, then how many can you move on each turn? Can they sit on the same space, or do they jump over each other? Can you ever move someone else's piece? Are all your pieces the same, or do some of them have special powers?

Dice or cards?

How you move is particularly important. Many games limit how many spaces you can move each turn – usually by asking each player to roll dice, and then moving that number of spaces. However, even if you use dice, you can still give your players choices! How many dice should the player roll? Do they then get to choose which ones to use, or must they use them all? Or perhaps the spaces on the track and the sides of the dice are both coloured, and you need to match the correct colours to move on to a space?

You could decide to use cards instead of dice. Perhaps you could draw cards with a variety of different values, and then add them together to move? Or perhaps you could use cards to move backwards, or diagonally or to stop part way through your move?

How do you win?

After all that, how do you win? It's important that everyone knows the game ends and how the winner is determined. In many race games there is one end point (the last space on the track) and everyone tries to get there first. But there are other ways to make a game, and you might choose different winning conditions.

Does the game end when someone crosses a finish line, or does it end when someone gets a certain number of points?

You could collect points on some spaces, and then the winner would be the person who has the most points at the end of the game. The points could be little gems or flowers printed on the track, or they could be multipliers – like "score 2 x your dice roll".

If you have a finish line, then do you want all your players to be heading towards the same finish line? Or are there different end spaces for each player?