

## Historical games – when everyone wins ...

This form of presentation has the advantage of imparting historical knowledge in a “playful” way – at best, with a lot of fun. Before developing a game, you must have researched your theme and found a variety of material that can be used in a game.

Generally, games can follow different strategies – consider what the players should experience in your game. One possibility is that participants should learn something new: for example, about a place, a particular time, an historical person or group of people. It’s different with a quiz in which people are asked questions about knowledge that is already available (or should be available). So be careful: if there’s no chance of answering the questions correctly, the players will be bored and frustrated. Maybe you also want to impart specific experiences with your game – for this purpose, you could give the players tasks to perform themselves. The key to making your choice should be your theme and the results of your research.

### Tips on developing an historical board game:

- Consider how old the players of your game should be.
- Determine the kind of game. What should be the start and the goal of the game? What stations are there, and what happens? Determine the individual factions: Should all players be, for example, farmers who during the game have to survive a year of rural daily life in early modern times? Or should different groups compete against each other in the game – for example, farmers, bailiffs, landowners, farm labourers, etc.? Should two groups play against each other (e.g., occupiers vs. occupied) or can players also work together? There are many decisions to be made: Let your research results inspire you.
- Establish the game rules – the level of difficulty must suit the age of the players. Consider which game elements you want to use, letting yourselves be inspired by games that you know. Many elements can be borrowed for an historical game – for example, event fields or cards, jokers, collection points (or collection letters, collection puzzle pieces, etc.), stations with tasks (e.g., drawing or pantomiming objects/people/places) and more. Your fantasy should have no limits!
- Design your game board and game tokens. While doing so, try as much as possible to include lots of your uncovered knowledge about the past – for example, build everyday objects like clothing, dwellings, money, tools, etc. into your game.
- Write up game instructions, in which you describe its the rules, clues and historical background.
- Play a game with test players and check that everything functions correctly and all parts are available.

Designing  
the game