@stake

game materials
&
directions

Materials

One @Stake role deck
The sheets of cards are designed to be printed double-sided. Heavyweight cardstock is recommended. You'll need scissors or a paper cutter to cut up the cards in the deck.

One writing utensil per player

One piece of scratch paper per player

One printed copy of "rules handout"

About 50 beans
Beans are the game tokens that may be substituted by poker chips, coins, or other similar materials.

Why @Stake**?**

Deliberation is core to the democratic process. But the ideal deliberative process, wherin a plurality of equal stakeholding players exchange ideas in an equitable, meaningful, and rational way, is far from reality. Even with the best of intentions, open, constructive, and empathetic didalogue aimed toward the sharing of ideas and experiecing mutual understanding and agreement is difficult to acheive. With these aspirations and challenges in mind, @Stake was developed to enhance deliberation in real-wrold processes. @Stake relies on rapid-fire ideation, discussions facilitated through role-playing, experimentation with ideas, and collaboration among a diversity of stakeholders. In small groups of 4-5, players compete to convince their fellow players of the efficacy of solutions as told from the perspective of assigned characters. Not only do players try to get their solutions chosen by the round's decider, they also need to balance personal agendas with those of the other players' roles within the game. @Stake allows players to experiment with strategies of deliberation, practice at consideration of others' views in a playful context before entering into real-world processes. Visit the @Stake website to learn more and watch a tutorial video.

Objective

In @Stake, players take on the role of stakeholders with a private agenda on a public issue up for debate. Players take turns proposing solutions to issues, and arguing their points of view to the table's Decider. Putting forward an overall persuasive argument for a common good solution is key, but successfully including elements from your hidden agenda is worth bonus points. The player with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Before the game

All participants spend some time collectively brainstorming at least 10 issues that matter to their community. These issues should be stated as a question that needs an answer.

Issues can be anything from infrastructure, inter-agency collaboration, socio-economic challenges, or policy to more informal issues such as civic pride, youth engagement, PR campaigns, or social events -- anything, really. The most important thing is to frame the issue in terms of question that drives actionable solutions. For example:

"How can we give inner-city youth better acces to job training?"

"How can we improve high-speed Internet service in underserved neighborhoods?"

"What can be done about the state's growing drug abuse problem?"

All of the Issues should be collected and written down on cards or Post-It notes and saved for use in the game.

Game Setup

Give each player scratch paper, a pencil or pen, and 3 score tokens (such as beans (plus 2 bonus tokens to the first Decider). One player must volunteer to be the first "Decider." If no player volunteers, elect one. Everyone else is dealt a Role card at random.

The front of the card (Role Title) is public. The back of the card, which has the player's hidden agenda and bio, is private – only the player that holds the role card can read it.

card front

card back
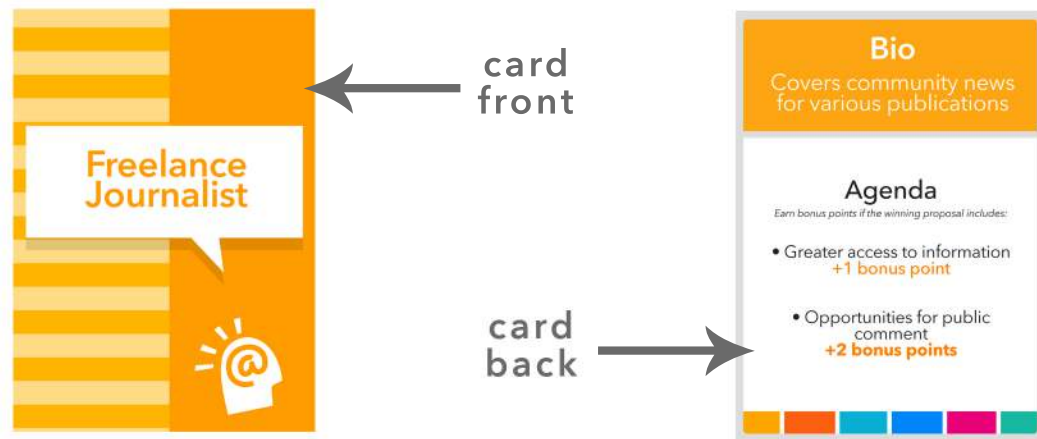
Place three tokens in the center of the table as the first "pot." Players will be arguing to win the pot.

The Decider takes charge of the timer and selects the first issue for round one.

Players   Pot   Decider
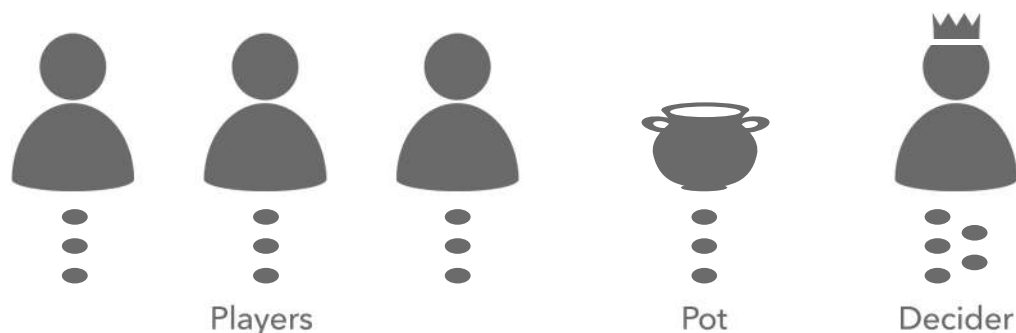
Playing the Game

Step 1: Introduction
The round begins by each player introducing themselves in character, sharing the name of the role and the character bio (NOT their agenda) on the back of the card.

Step 2: Brainstorm
Next, the Decider announces the issue for the first round. The Decider then sets a timer for one minute. The other players must use that time to consider a proposal to help solve the issue. Players may make use of their note sheets to organize their thoughts.

60 seconds

Step 3: Pitch
After the minute is over, the Decider should ask players for their proposals. Starting with the player to the Decider's left, and moving clockwise around the table, each player has one minute to identify themselves and their stakeholder role (bio) to the group and pitch their proposal to the Decider. It's the Decider's responsibility to monitor the time. If a player wants more time to make their proposal, he or she may pay one token to the pot for an extra 30 seconds.

60 seconds

Step 4: Deliberate
After each player has had the opportunity to pitch their proposal, the Decider leads a follow-up discussion with the group. Players (including the Decider) may ask one another for details about each proposal, offer counter arguments, or ask for changes to the proposals. The timer is set for 90 seconds, by the end of which the Decider must arrive at a winning proposal. It is the Decider's responsibility to monitor the time using a stopwatch, egg timer, or cell phone timer. Again, players may pay an extra token to the pot to gain an extra 30 seconds to answer questions, ask questions of their opponents, or rebut opposition. It may be strategically advantageous for players to suggest improvements to one another's plans, or ask clarifying questions based on their agendas (see Scoring Agenda Bonus Points below).

90 seconds

5

Step 5: The Decision

At the end of time for deliberation, the Decider announces a winning proposal. The Decider may take 10-15 seconds (roughly, untimed) if needed to come to a conclusion and share his or her reasoning. The player whose proposal is selected wins all the tokens in the pot, plus a number of bonus tokens based on his agenda (see Scoring Agenda Bonus Points below). All other players score points for their agendas items, if and only if the winning proposal explicitly satisfied elements of their agenda (see Scoring Agenda Bonus Points below).

Scoring Agenda Points

The player who wins the round earns the pot, but all players may score bonus points based on their personal agendas. Starting with the winning player, players reveal their agendas to the table. For each item on the agenda that the Decider agrees was satisfied by the winning proposal, that player earns the bonus points listed on the card.

Bio
Covers community news for various publications

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Greater access to information
  +1 bonus point

- Opportunities for public comment
  +2 bonus points

bonus points awarded

Scoring Example

Vladimir's proposal for the government to provide vouchers for students to commute to university is selected as the winner for the round. Vladimir wins the pot, and then reveals his agenda.

> **Vladimir's Agenda:**
>
> Increases access to education / training +1 Point
> Creates job opportunities for youth outside the city +1 Point
> Make it easier to commute from country to city +2 Points

The Decider might say that his proposal satisfied the first and the third point, but not the second, and award Vladimir 3 bonus points.

> **Next, Catherine reveals her agenda.**
>
> Includes infrastructure development +1 Point
> Includes new construction +1 Point
> Must be funded by the government +2 Points

The Decider rules that since Vladimir's proposal is government funded, she receives 2 bonus points, but the other two agenda items are not relevant.

Note that if Catherine had spent one of her tokens during the Q&A period to ask Vladimir to include infrastructure development in his proposal (such as public transit improvements to go along with the vouchers), she may have scored all of her agenda points.

Ending The Game

After each round, the player who won the pot becomes the new Decider (or passes the buck) and the steps above are repeated. (Please note, only the Decider in the first round receives bonus tokens at the start of the game.) After four rounds, the player with the most tokens wins.

Optional Rule: Passing the Buck

The player whose proposal won the pot now becomes the new Decider for the next round. If for any reason that player does not wish to be the new Decider, he or she may "pass the buck" to avoid the duty. To do this, he or she passes one chip to the player on their left. That player then becomes the Decider.

The new Decider also has the option to pass the buck, but to do so, he or she must pass two tokens to the player on their left. That player must pass three tokens the left to pass the buck, then the next player must pass four, and so on until a player elects to become the Decider and claim all tokens passed in this way.

With **Larger Groups**

If you are playing @Stake with a larger group, such as in a workshop, use the following variant:

1) Create multiple tables of 4 players (5 if necessary).
2) Each table needs a full set of game components.
3) Games take place across the multiple tables simultaneously.
4) Select one moderator for the entire room to run the game for everybody. The moderator will take charge of the timer and announce the question for each round.
5) Play otherwise continues as described above, with the game ending once all tables have played four rounds.

Gameplay Advice

Remind players that they **pay a chip into the pot for an extra 30 seconds** to pitch or during the discussion portion, if they want extended time to make their case.

Remind players that they can **ask each other questions** during the discussion round, and that they should use that time to make their personal agenda points more strongly.

Urge Deciders to **make decisions quickly** once time is up.

Stress that all players **will win bonus points** if the winning proposal includes their agenda points, even if their proposal does not win.

Stress that the winner from the previous round **becomes the new Decider** for the next round.

Although some tables may finish earlier than others, make sure that **all tables start the new round(s) at the same time.**

Card 1

Bio
30-something with two young children

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Accommodations for parents with children so they can attend public meetings
  +1 bonus point

- Free or low-cost after-school activities
  +2 bonus points

Card 2

Bio
Runs a community art studio with affordable classes

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Fun and interactive community engagement
  +1 bonus point

- Opportunities for artists to display their work
  +2 bonus points

Card 3

Bio
Environmental advocate who uses tech-based learning

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Service-learning opportunities for teens
  +1 bonus point

- Partnerships between NGOs and the school district
  +2 bonus points

Card 4

Bio
Covers community news for various publications

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Greater access to information
  +1 bonus point

- Opportunities for public comment
  +2 bonus points

Card 5

Bio
Building a reputation after recent election to city-wide office

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- A plan that is budget-conscious
  +1 bonus point

- A prominent role for the elected official (you)
  +2 bonus points

Card 6

Bio
Advocate for racial equality and affordable housing for over 50 years

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Engagement of minority populations
  +1 bonus point

- Public transportation improvements
  +2 bonus points

Card 7

Bio
History professor at a state school, produces local history podcast

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Resources for local libraries
  +1 bonus point

- Encouragement of college students to participate locally
  +2 bonus points

Card 8

Bio
Has lived in the city most of their life, plays in local band

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- New technology
  +1 bonus point

- The participation of teenagers in the design of the project
  +2 bonus points

Card 9

Bio
Committed to creating a welcoming, diverse community

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Frequent neighborhood meetings
  +1 bonus point

- A focus on neighborhood economic development
  +2 bonus points

Minister

Law Enforcement Officer

Real Estate Developer

Doctor

Young Professional

Recent Immigrant

Unemployed Worker

Tech Entrepreneur

Local Farmer

Bio
Senior planner at commercial real estate development agency

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- A budget for city development
  +1 bonus point

- An obvious path to profitability
  +2 bonus points

Bio
Recent graduate of police academy

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Increasing public safety
  +1 bonus point

- Stronger connections between law enforcement and community
  +2 bonus points

Bio
Trusted leader, deeply committed to social justice

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Bringing together communities of different faiths
  +1 bonus point

- Connecting volunteers to local organizations
  +2 bonus points

Bio
Highly educated, non-native English speaker

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Providing multilingual support at public meetings
  +1 bonus point

- Engagement of people who work at night
  +2 bonus points

Bio
20-something lawyer who is new to the city

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Informal networking gatherings
  +1 bonus point

- Community engagement through social media
  +2 bonus points

Bio
OB/GYN specialist in a community health clinic

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Promotion of healthy habits
  +1 bonus point

- Access to healthcare services
  +2 bonus points

Bio
Provides organic produce for farmer's markets and restaurants

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Increased access to healthy food
  +1 bonus point

- Promotion of environmental conservation
  +2 bonus points

Bio
Programmer in a small start-up focused on online learning

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Tech-based approaches
  +1 bonus point

- Specific appeals to young adults
  +2 bonus points

Bio
Skilled laborer with 20 years of experience in manufacturing

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Ideas to boost employment locally
  +1 bonus point

- Opportunities for paid work for skilled laborers and artisans
  +2 bonus points

Immigrant Youth

Youth Program Manager

Bio
Runs an after-school program for at-risk youth

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Mentorship opportunities for youth
  +1 bonus point

- Jobs for teens
  +2 bonus points

Bio
An undocumented youth who works multiple jobs

Agenda
Earn bonus points if the winning proposal includes:

- Multilingual approaches
  +1 bonus point

- Opportunities for informal employment
  +2 bonus points