

PROTOTYPE BRIEF

BLANK TEMPLATE

Fill this in before you build anything. Twenty minutes starts after this sheet

YOUR NAME

GAME

TABLE

ROUND STARTS

01 THE ONE QUESTION I WANT ANSWERED TONIGHT

One question only, and it must be answerable by watching. Not "is it fun" — "will they do X when Y".

02 WHAT I AM CUTTING FOR TONIGHT

Everything not needed to answer the question above.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

03 WIN CONDITION / LOSE CONDITION

WIN

LOSE

04 SYSTEMS IN MY GAME → OBJECTS ON THE TABLE

Health and resources → counters · randomness → dice or a face-down deck · hidden information → face-down cards · cooldowns → a card turned over · maps → grid paper.

SYSTEM

OBJECT ON THE TABLE

_____	>	_____
_____	>	_____
_____	>	_____

05 THE RULES, SHORT ENOUGH TO READ ALOUD IN SIXTY SECONDS

You must be able to read these aloud in sixty seconds. If you cannot, the game is too big for tonight.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

06 WHERE I AM THE COMPUTER — RULINGS I WILL HAVE TO MAKE LIVE

Write down every ruling you make live. Each one marks a rule that is not clear yet.

- _____
- _____

PROTOTYPE BRIEF

WORKED EXAMPLE

Fill this in before you build anything. Twenty minutes starts after this sheet

YOUR NAME

Ada

GAME

Demo game

TABLE

4

ROUND STARTS

18.30

01 THE ONE QUESTION I WANT ANSWERED TONIGHT

Will a player risk moving forward when they cannot tell where the threat is — or will they sit still until the lantern runs out?

02 WHAT I AM CUTTING FOR TONIGHT

- Story and setting — none of it tonight
- Multiple levels; one 6x6 board only
- Real audio — the sound becomes a face-down card
- Lantern upgrades, items, anything collectable

03 WIN CONDITION / LOSE CONDITION

WIN

Reach the opposite corner of the board.

LOSE

The threat enters your tile, or the last lantern counter is spent.

04 SYSTEMS IN MY GAME → OBJECTS ON THE TABLE

SYSTEM

OBJECT

Lantern fuel	>	8 counters in a pile in front of the player
Directional hearing	>	A deck of 12 face-down sound cards
Threat behaviour (AI)	>	One die, rolled by me behind my hand
What the player cannot see	>	I move the threat token; they never see it

05 THE RULES, SHORT ENOUGH TO READ ALOUD IN SIXTY SECONDS

- 1 Each turn choose one: move one tile, or hold still and listen.
- 2 If you listen, draw a sound card — it names the direction the threat is in.
- 3 Every turn costs one lantern counter, whichever you chose.
- 4 I move the threat secretly: 1-4 one tile toward you, 5-6 at random.
- 5 Reach the far corner and you are out.

06 WHERE I AM THE COMPUTER — RULINGS I WILL HAVE TO MAKE LIVE

- Moving the threat and keeping its position hidden
- Deciding what counts as hearing round a corner
- Judging what happens if we both enter a tile at once

PLAYTEST OBSERVATION

BLANK TEMPLATE

One sheet per tester. Record behaviour, never opinions

TESTER

ROUND

MINUTES PLAYED

DID THEY FINISH?

PLAYERS REPORT PROBLEMS ACCURATELY. THEY PROPOSE SOLUTIONS BADLY. Record the symptom. Diagnose it yourself.

01

WHERE THEY GOT CONFUSED

Any question asked, or any rule broken.

02

WHERE THEY PAUSED A LONG TIME

Good pause ends in a smile; bad pause ends in a sigh.

03

WHERE THEY SMILED OR LAUGHED

This already works. Do not delete it later.

04

WHERE THEY DISENGAGED

Where the loop broke.

05 RULINGS I HAD TO MAKE LIVE

Every ruling marks a rule that is not clear enough yet.

- _____
- _____

06 "WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?"

- _____
- _____

PLAYTEST OBSERVATION

WORKED EXAMPLE

One sheet per tester. Record behaviour, never opinions

TESTER

Bank

ROUND

2 of 2

MINUTES PLAYED

9

DID THEY FINISH?

No — ran out of fuel

PLAYERS REPORT PROBLEMS ACCURATELY. THEY PROPOSE SOLUTIONS BADLY. Record the symptom. Diagnose it yourself.

01

WHERE THEY GOT CONFUSED

Any question asked, or any rule broken.

- Asked twice whether listening also costs a counter
- Read the sound card as distance, not direction
- Assumed the board wrapped at the edges

02

WHERE THEY PAUSED A LONG TIME

Good pause ends in a smile; bad pause ends in a sigh.

- Turn 3, about 40 seconds — weighing move against listen. Looked engaged.
- Turn 9, long pause then a sigh. No information left to act on.

03

WHERE THEY SMILED OR LAUGHED

This already works. Do not delete it later.

- Laughed when a sound card put the threat directly behind them
- Smiled when the counter pile dropped to two

04

WHERE THEY DISENGAGED

Where the loop broke.

- Turns 12-14, glanced at phone. Nothing had changed for three turns.
- Stopped narrating after the second identical sound card

05 RULINGS I HAD TO MAKE LIVE

- Allowed listening diagonally — not in the written rules
- Ruled that spending the last counter loses immediately, not at end of turn

06 "WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?"

I would listen less at the start and save the fuel for the end.

CHANGE ONE THING

BLANK TEMPLATE

After the playtest — one change, one prediction, one update

GAME

AFTER ROUND

DATE

01 THE REPEATED FAILURE — WHAT MORE THAN ONE TESTER HIT

Only what more than one tester hit. A problem seen once may just be that one person.

02 THE RULE AS IT STANDS

One rule. Change three at once and you will never know which one worked.

03 THE ONE RULE I AM CHANGING IT TO

04 WHAT I EXPECT TO HAPPEN NEXT ROUND

Write this *BEFORE* you test again. A prediction you can be wrong about is what makes this an experiment.

05 WHAT THIS CHANGES IN MY ONE-PAGE GDD

Which box on your one-pager moves from undecided to known?

06 THE QUESTION FOR THE NEXT ROUND

The question for the next round of the loop.

CHANGE ONE THING

After the playtest — one change, one prediction, one update

WORKED EXAMPLE

GAME

Demo game

AFTER ROUND

2

DATE

8 Aug

01 THE REPEATED FAILURE — WHAT MORE THAN ONE TESTER HIT

Both testers listened so often in the first half that they had no fuel left to move in the second. Waiting is currently free, so waiting is always correct.

02 THE RULE AS IT STANDS

Listening costs one lantern counter — the same as moving.

03 THE ONE RULE I AM CHANGING IT TO

Listening costs one counter AND lets the threat move two tiles instead of one.

04 WHAT I EXPECT TO HAPPEN NEXT ROUND

Players will listen roughly half as often, and the second half of the game will still have fuel in it. If they keep stalling anyway, the problem is missing information, not price.

05 WHAT THIS CHANGES IN MY ONE-PAGE GDD

Box 03, core loop — the decision now costs something on both sides. Box 05, key features — "a lantern that loses fuel every turn" moves from untested to tested.

06 THE QUESTION FOR THE NEXT ROUND

Now that waiting is expensive, does the player have enough information to move with confidence, or are they just guessing?