

Captain Planet and the Dice Adventure

Game Brainstorming:

What I want:

- Captain Planet Theme. Why? Because I loved this show as a kid, and even now I have fond memories of wishing I had a power ring.
- The mechanic where a player has to roll for each element and if they get all of them, captain planet emerges.

Restrictions:

- Use Dice

Ideas:

- Use cards to represent the Planeteers
- Have the dice faces have elements on them because there are just enough sides for each element and captain planet.
- Roll one dice 5 times
- Roll 5 dice one time
- Possibly use a board
- One player for each element
- One player for each side (polluters vs. environmentalists)
- When is the game over?
 - When the players decide
 - When the cards are run through once
 - You have a set number of each planeteer and once you use them all it's over.
- Number you roll on dice is how much you have of each element
- How can I make heart a valuable resource? Most people I've spoken to think of him as the lame planeteer.

Final Idea:

I like the idea of using pictures on dice. In the show, Ma-ti, heart, had the power to telepathically communicate with the other planeteers. So I think I should use him to combine with other elements which can in turn make something new. I will make the

game end like spades where the players get to choose ahead of time how long they will play. This way the game can be short or long.

Background:

Captain Planet is a cartoon series that came out in 1990. In the story, Gaia, the spirit of Earth sees that the Earth is in trouble and sends out 5 magical rings to special young people from around the globe. Kwame, from Africa has the power of earth, Wheeler from North America has the power of fire, Linka from Eastern Europe has the power of Wind, Gi from Asia has the power of water and Ma-ti from South America has the power of heart. When they combine their powers, they summon Captain Planet who is an environmental super hero who uses the powers within nature in order to fight eco-villains.



Theme Song

Game Story:

The earth needs your help! Enemies are polluting our precious planet. It's up to you to use five elements, Earth, Wind, Water, Fire, and Heart to battle eco-villians like Dr. Blight, Hoggish Greedly, and Duke Nukem. When you combine your powers, Captain Planet will emerge to help you. Captain Planet has enough power to eliminate any foe!

Supplies:

- 5 picture dice
- 1 regular die
- Enemy cards (set of 10)
- Paper

Players: 2

Rules

- Players pick a number of rounds that they want to play until. At the end of this number, the person with the least points is the winner.
- Each round consists of one person playing the enemy and one person playing the planetees (or the heroes). The hero plays first by rolling the picture dice five times.
- After looking at the dice, the enemy can picks three enemy cards at random and then chooses from those 3 which one to lay down.

- Each enemy card has a number of each element that the hero has to satisfy by rolling. If a particular enemy does not have a number, then they don't need that element. If the hero did not roll a particular element that is on the enemy card played then those points are automatically charged to the hero.
- The hero must roll the numbered dice once for every element on the enemy card (wind, water, earth, and fire). If they cannot roll equal or greater than the number listed on the card for an element, then the amount that remains unsatisfied is tallied on the score board.
- If a hero player has rolled 3 planets, then they have evoked captain planet and no points will be tallied against them for their portion of the round.
- If all five elements are rolled, then this also evokes captain planet and no points will be tallied against them for the round.
- If a heart is rolled, it can be combined with another element to make another element:
 - Wind = Earth + Heart
 - Water = Fire + Heart
 - Fire = Water + Heart
 - Earth = Wind + Heart



Figure 1: Earth!

Play Testing Results

Iteration 1

Who tested:

Nicole Epps vs. Nicole Epps

When:

2.5.07 6:00pm

Notes:

This is a very rough game where I am figuring out a lot of rules as I go. I originally have 2 picture dice and 4 regular dice to work with, but I think you should roll for every element, and since the picture dice are more fun, why not have 5 of them instead of rolling one die five times. Half way through this iteration, I made more picture dice. Once I had the dice, I decided that a re-roll is probably necessary of some or all of the dice, because the probability that you get what you need the first throw is very low.

Good:

- I like the way the picture dice look and feel when you throw them.
- I got a decent number of captain planets.

Bad:

- Seems a little complex

Iteration 2

Who tested:

Matt Tasker vs. Nicole Epps

When:

2.5.7 8:00pm

Notes:

Take out the pairings of heart with another element to make up for things you don't have. Instead, just use the heart as a wild card. This takes out the memorization element as well as simplifies the rules and makes the game easier because you might not have what element you need to make the match either. Heart cannot be a planet however to limit the number of captain planets.

I must make sure that you make clear, that 3 cards must be pulled at random before the enemy player can look at them and choose one to play. Five dice was too many to play with, because it was very easy to get every cube that you need when heart is wild. When we tried with 4 cubes it was just right. This takes away the possibility of getting all 5 elements to evoke captain planet. We decided the other (enemy) player can roll the extra picture dice (that was taken away). If this roll completes the captain planet, then they get to use it, otherwise, that die roll is not included when rolling for the card.

Good:

- It's a good start.

Bad:

- Make the picture for earth more like rocks, because it's hard to differentiate from the planet. Also, make sure to always refer to the planet icon as planet and not "earth".

Iteration 3

Who tested:

Chris Crone vs. Yun Ling Lee

When:

2.5.7 9:00pm

Changes:

Made it so that whenever you roll higher than the number on the card, you can charge the difference of the two numbers to your opponent.

Notes:

The players were taking too long to pick which card to play. It was suggested that the values on the cards should be closer to each other because one card was almost twice as much as another one. That's part of what makes the decision take longer. Also, I could solve this by making the picking of the card totally random, but this takes away strategy and leaves a lot of the game to luck.

I found that I need to specify that all the dice have to be rolled at once during the re-roll because the decision about which ones to change must be made at the last minute. Perhaps we should take out the ability to re-roll. Instead, let the enemy roll the 5th die which will either complete the captain planet, or the user can use that value to replace one of their dice. I will try this on the next iteration, because it makes it so the other die is always useful.

Good:

- Yun Ling appreciated the story behind the game.

Bad:

- I Need to simplify the rules because they're hard to explain.
- Card values not very consistent across the villains. (Some have high totals, some have low totals)



Figure 2: Fire!

Iteration 4

Who tested:

Paul Capriolo vs. Nicole Epps

When:

2-6-07 10:30

Changes made:

Took out re-rolling and instead you replace a die with the fifth one rolled.

Notes:

Paul thought that the game was fun overall, but he noted that the numbers being separated into categories on the cards doesn't really matter, because in the end, it's all about the total. This leads me to think I should score by column and the winner of the most number of columns could win. Because there's only 4 columns, I could make a row for the captain planet's achieved by each player as well. He thinks I should make it so the player with the most points wins, because that's what most people think naturally, but I think that really depends on the game. I also decided that hearts should be unlimitedly wild. This means that it can be turned into a planet or anything else. There's no need to be stingy with the captain planets, they are still pretty rare even with this implemented.

Good:

- It's fun!

Bad:

- While, he said it was fun, it didn't look like he was having fun.
- Only total matters and that goes against the idea of having separate planetees.

Iteration 5

Who tested:

Peter vs. Marcella (winner: Marcella)

When:

2-7-07 12:30

Changes:

- Added a captain planet column to the tally list.
- Recalculated the numbers on the villain cards so that they were closer to the same values, but still with enough variation that there is a difference between cards.
- Hearts can be earths as well.

Both players said that they liked the game. I thought the idea of winning by column would anger players, because all your hard work gets whittled down into categories, but they were fine with it.

I like the direction the game is going in, but I don't feel satisfied. Once you get a captain planet, you don't need to play the rest of your turn, because nothing can be scored against you, but it was suggested that you do roll and use those points you go over against your teammate because if you don't, then getting a Captain Planet is actually going to put you at a disadvantage. This is because in your opponent's turn, they have the possibility to score against you, but you have no chance to do damage to them.

	Peter	Marcella
Wi	3 + 6 + 4 (13)	2 + 3 + 4 + 1 (10)
Wa	1 + 2 + 1 + 1 (5)	1 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 (13)
Fi	1 + 2 + 1 + 4 (8)	3 + 4 + 4 + 2 (13)
Ea	1 + 3 (4)	1 + 6 + 9 (16)
CP		

Illustration 1: Tally sheet

Good:

- Columns is a solution to the problem that only the sum matters.
- The numbers on the villain cards seem to work pretty well.

Bad:

- I need to remember to take ones of the villain cards. It should either be a 0 or a 2, because you can't help but roll a 1 since there's nothing lower than that on a die.



Figure 3: Wind!

Iteration 6

Who:

Nicole vs. Nicole

When:

2-12-07 9:00 pm

Notes:

I am trying to experiment with new boards in this iteration. I haven't changed any rules, but I'm wondering if you have a board it might be nice if you could choose when you have excess moves for a roll whether to move yourself backwards or to move the opponent forward.

The first board I tried was reminiscent of a bar graph in that it featured vertical lines for each element's path. This board was not visually appealing, so I tried to make each path different in terms of shape, but make sure that they had the same number of spaces. This was also awkward because the paths were still lined up in a row. I considered giving each player their own board, but it's not really necessary and it separates the players rather than bring them together. My final design had the earth in the middle with the four elements emerging from it. There is no representation of heart on the board because it heart is a helper element rather than one of the paths that the players have to travel down. Each corner features a different element and the world is destroyed in the middle with a cloud of pollution around it. I like this board because it draws attention to the center and it's visually well balanced.

Good:

The board I chose doesn't make the paths look like an office progress report.

Bad:

Just by looking at the board you can't tell heart is a planter.

Iteration 7

Who:

Nicole vs. Peter (Peter won)

When:

2-13-07 2:00pm

What changed?

- Added a game board instead of tallying the points against you. You move your piece and the opponent's piece forward.
- You can move yourself backwards after the opponent's piece (for a certain element) is in the center.
- When you get a Captain Planet, you still roll, only no moves are tallied against you if you don't make it. Instead, if you go over, you can assign those points to your opponent.

This iteration solves Paul's concern about the winner being the person with the most points. Now it's just based on position, rather than numbers which is good because it's less adding which younger audiences will like. On the subject of audience, my main audience is people from 18-30, those who remember the series when it originally aired. The game's message to keep the planet healthy, is one that only younger audiences will appreciate, however, the message is grim, because the game never ends without the world being destroyed. This is because having all your pieces in the middle means you failed, but also that the game is over.

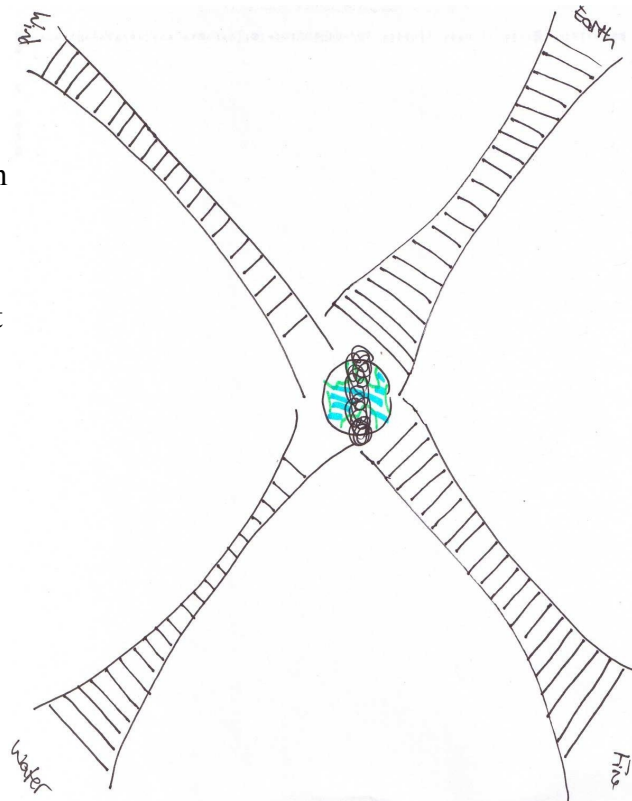
This game was really close and on a move where I thought I was going to beat Peter's final remaining piece, he beat me. It actually made me disappointed which I count as a good thing design wise. Conversely, it made Peter feel like a king.

I think the board is a really good decision.

There's less tallying to do which means you can focus on game play instead. It also gives you something more interesting to look at. I printed two copies of the deck to play with so there would be more cards to select from. Peter kept drawing doubles of the same villain, although. He suggested just having one set (12 cards) and limiting it to two piles that you draw from. Finally I am satisfied with the game. I think it's fun and noticeably enjoyable.

Good:

- The board



Bad:

- Make sure I can make the earth look evil.
- Drawing doubles of cards
- Knocking over your piece with the dice.



Figure 4: Water!

Iteration 8

Who:

Ken vs. Michelle (Michelle wins)

When:

2.13.07 11:00

What changed?

Made only 12 places on the board. This iteration is using the final board and pieces.

I am only using 12 villain cards in two decks which have clearly marked positions on the board.

Hopefully this will reinforce the need to draw two instead of me having to keep tell people to draw three cards from the top of one deck.

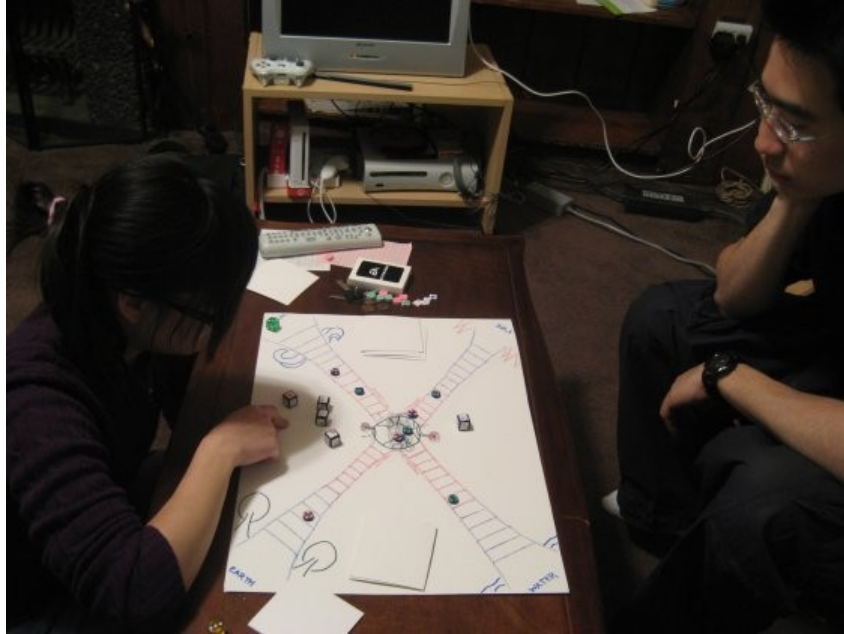


Figure 5: Michelle and Ken

Notes:

In this game, no captain planets were thrown; however, I'm not too disturbed by this because in Peter and I's game, at least 4 were rolled and in Peter and Marcella's game, 2 were rolled. I don't want the frequency of CPs to be too high, because that takes away their value. Michelle noted, "This is fun", and Ken also said that "it's a good game". Ken said that it was a bit long, but they did spend a lot of time fighting over cheating. On that note, I don't think cheating is a big issue in the game. You can cheat in almost any game; I don't think it's any easier in this game.

Michelle and Ken seemed to pick up on the instructions relatively quickly. There was some confusion about moving backwards in a turn. For example, if you move someone onto the earth, but don't use all of the moves you had on the roll, can you use the rest to move yourself back. I hadn't thought about this before. I decided that you must wait for the next roll of that element to move yourself back. Yun Ling who passed by suggested that I put a skull and crossbones on the earth to symbolize that it was bad. I could tell that Ken was using a lot of strategy, but at the same time, it's not absolutely necessary in order to win like in games like chess.

Good:

- Emotional response
- It was fun. Lots of laughing and play fighting.

Bad:

- No captain planets
- Still a little confusion about what constitutes a captain planet



Figure 6: Heart!

Conclusion

I think I have a good game. If I had more time, however, I would possibly decrease the number of game spots again to 10 instead of 12. Michelle and Ken's game went on for about 20 minutes, however Peter and I's game had more pieces and took about the same time. I think it has to do with how much conversation is going on. Ken and Michelle did a lot of arguing and taunting which I take as a sign of emotional attachment, which is a good thing. 20 minutes is not really too long, it just depends on your time expectations when you sit down. If I had more artistic ability and more markers, I would improve the game board, but for a prototype, it does the job. I would elaborate on each corner's theme and have a way to represent heart on the board as well. I think I may have failed in making the earth on the board seem like a bad place to go. The problem is that most board games, getting to the finish line is good, but mine is the opposite. I tried to make it read leading up to the destroyed earth, and put textual as well as graphic indicators that it was a bad place to be, however, improved artwork would make this much better. Also, with a full color board, I would make the colors more vibrant around the edges and dull and tragic nearing the earth.

Another change I would make would be a reversal of the winning/losing state. I'd have a healthy earth in the middle and you only move forward when you're in excess. It's unfortunate that I'm thinking about this after the board is made and my play testing is over. I like that the game involves strategy that changes as you play, because as certain pieces go out of play, your focus against the other player will change. Because heart is wild, I have given more value to it than any of the other pieces. This is a goal that I wanted to achieve so I'm glad that it turned out well. I think it's fun because you begin to get emotionally invested and because you really start to look at your opponent as a villain. Also, everyone loved Captain Planet the series, so older audiences can really relate to it. My core audience, as mentioned before is 18-30 year olds who remember watching, however younger and older players are welcomed.

Final Game

Items List:

1 game board
12 villain cards
5 black dice with pictures
1 regular dice
8 game pieces

Setup:

Shuffle cards and place 6 on each side of the board in the spot outlined for them. Each player has 4 pieces, one set in the each corner of the board.

Final Rules:

- Each player has 4 pieces on each element of the board. The center represents the earth being destroyed. This first player with all of their pieces to the center **loses**.
- Each round consists of one person playing the enemy and one person playing the planetees (or the heroes). The hero plays first by rolling 4 of the picture dice. The villain rolls the additional picture dice. The hero can choose to switch one of their pieces out with the villain's rolled die if they choose. If the player gets a captain planet, they do not have to advance during their turn. Hearts are wild, meaning that they can be changed into what the hero player wants it to be. A Captain Planet is:
 - 3 planet dice
the five elements (wind, water, earth, fire, and heart)
 - 3 heart dice or a mix of hearts and planets adding up to 3 (because you can turn hearts into planets)
 - or a set of unique element dice each mixed with hearts--because you can change hearts into the missing elements
- After looking at the dice, the enemy picks a card from each stack and chooses from the two which they think will be hardest for their opponent to complete.
- Each enemy card has a number of each element that the hero has to satisfy by rolling. If the hero did not roll a particular element that is on the enemy card played then they automatically move forward that many squares in the corresponding category.
- The hero must roll the numbered dice once for every element on the enemy card (wind, water, earth, and fire). If they cannot roll equal or greater than the number listed on the card for an element, then the amount that remains unsatisfied is the number of moves they must take towards the annihilated earth. If they roll more than the number on the card, they can move their opponent forward the difference.
- Once a player's piece enters into the earth region, it cannot be moved backwards. If a player's opponent is on the earth for a particular element, and they roll in excess of the card, instead of moving their opponent, which would do nothing at this stage, they can opt to move themselves backwards. This cannot be done on the same roll that placed the opponent in the center.

- Note: planet dice mean nothing if there aren't 3 of them.

Retail:

I would sale a game like this for 20 dollars. I think there would be demand for it because of the nostalgia that players feel towards Captain Planet. The average range for board games seems to be between 15 and 30 dollars, so I think this is a good medium. The customized dice and board make it so it would be hard to play without purchasing it, which is possible with some games like tic tac toe. It might even be profitable to sale sets of villain cards separately so that players could collect new cards to add to their decks and maybe even trade cards.