

GO mental

Publisher • HL Games (hlgames.com) | Designers • Graeme Thomson, Catherine Thomson, Andrew Bernard and Catherine Bernard | Type of Game • Connection/analogy | Players • 3-6 | Length of Play • 30-60 minutes | Age Range • 12 and up | Price • \$29.99 | Learning Curve • • • • • | Challenge • • • • •

Cowboys. Indians. Rams. Bears. Which one of these doesn't belong? And what do the other three have in common? If this sort of problem seems like your cup of tea, then you'll enjoy GO mental.

The GO mental board is a track 30 spaces long. The object of the game is to reach the end of the track. For answering "Which one doesn't belong?" for a group of four items, a player can advance his token by one space. If he is then able to answer "What's the connection?" for the other three, he can advance another three spaces. So long as a player keeps getting questions right, it remains that player's turn and he can continue to advance. If he gets either question wrong, his turn ends. Before the next player's turn begins, however, the next player gets a chance to answer the first player's question as a bonus. If the second player is unable to answer

the first player's question, he still gets his turn—*after* the third player gets a shot at the bonus question.

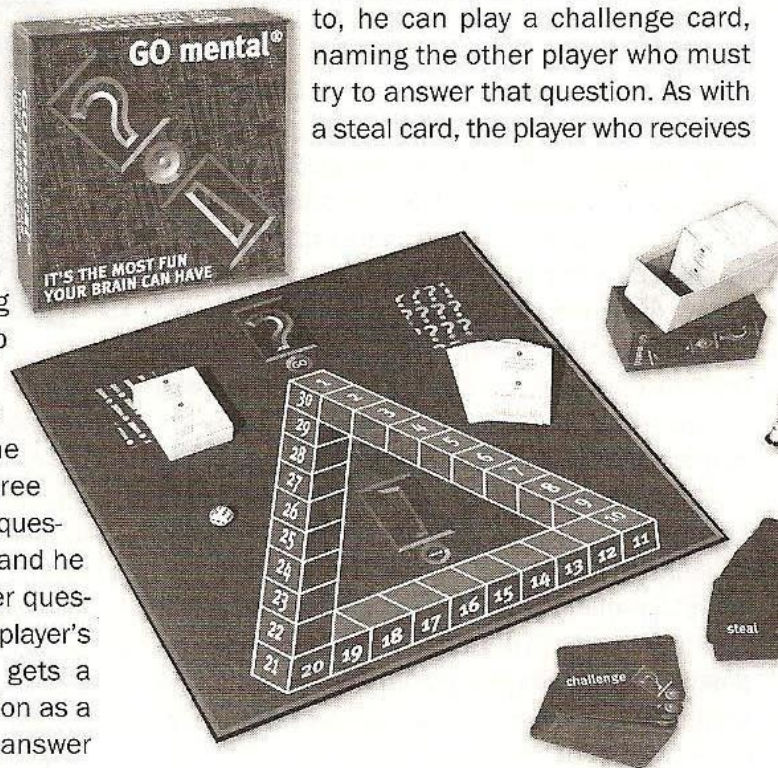
Players also have the option of altering the order of play with steal or challenge cards. If a player thinks he knows the answer to another player's questions, he can play a steal card. If he is able to answer both questions correctly he advances four spaces, but if he misses either question he instead moves back four spaces. If, on the other hand, a player is confronted with a question he doesn't know the answer to, he can play a challenge card, naming the other player who must try to answer that question. As with a steal card, the player who receives

a question as a result of a challenge card moves ahead four spaces if he gets both questions right but moves back four if he gets either question wrong. Each player starts the game with ten steal cards and ten challenge cards, which is enough to keep the game lively but not enough to allow it to degenerate into total chaos.

In a game of this sort, gameplay is only half the equation. A game with sound design can be ruined by bad questions. Fortunately, the designers of GO mental did exceedingly well in designing both parts of the game. GO mental comes with 500 double-sided question cards (i.e., two questions on each card). As a game can theoretically be won in as few as seven questions, these should be sufficient for quite a bit of play; one hopes that by the time the initial set of cards has lost its appeal, HL Games will have released expansion sets with new cards. And while we encountered a number of cards where we found our thoughts heading in completely different directions from the intended answers, we didn't find any in which we were in blatant disagreement with the answers.

If you're looking to give those flabby mental muscles a workout, check out GO mental. Oh, and in case you haven't figured out the example at the beginning of this review, "Indians" is the one that doesn't belong. "Bears," "Cowboys" and "Rams" are all names of football teams.

[Jason K. Burnett]



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