Zero Player Games
Solved Games

- Tic tac toe
- The same is true of more complicated games: Connect 4, Checkers
Analysis Paralysis

- AP describes a player that takes too long to decide on a move
- As a designer, you can:
  - Limit number of choices
  - Inject some randomness to make calculations too complicated
  - Enforced time limits, or reward fast play
  - Make it possible to think about your turn during other players turns
- As an annoyed player, you can:
  - hum the Jeopardy theme
Theme

- Anecdotally, can have a large impact on getting people to actual play your game
- Games often have re-themes: 1, 2, 3
- Randomizer
- Abstract games make a point of having no theme
Co-op Games and Quarterbacks

- In theory: we all work together to win
- In practice: the best player plays the game
Traitor Mechanics

- You can’t trust everyone, so you hide information
- You can’t always assume advice is in your best interest
- Flaw: it’s not exactly co-op
Real Time Games

- No time for a leader to micromanage everything
Multiplayer Solitaire

- Your actions have no / little impact on other players
- Everyone does their own thing. Eventually someone says “I win”
- Psychological compulsion to take bigger risks when losing
- Examples: Yahtzee, Trivial Pursuit
Player Elimination

- Certain variants of Mafia begins by killing a player, Risk can eliminate a player but be hours away from ending.
- Games with player elimination should be short.
- Alternative: Allow players to catch up and don’t make it easy for the leader to increase their lead.
Kingmaking

- If a player is kept in the game but can’t win, they can arbitrarily decide the victor
- Kind of like Survivor (the TV show)
When Does It End?

- It’s good to know roughly how long a game is going to take.
- However, knowing exactly how long can sometimes lead to players trying to hyper-optimize the last few moves.
- Can make the end point somewhat random.
Keeping it fresh

- Dynamic boards
- Scenarios
- Player abilities
OPEN WHEN ALL 9 MINOR CITIES HAVE BEEN FOUNDED.

OPEN THE FIRST TIME A FACTION IS ELIMINATED FROM THE GAME.

OPEN WHEN ONE PERSON GETS TO SIGN THE BOARD FOR A SECOND TIME.

OPEN WHEN THE WORLD CAPITAL MARK IS ABOUT TO GO ON THE BOARD.
Thanks For Listening

This always happens to me in family Scrabble games.