

The Publish or Perish Game™

A Humorous Party Game About Academic Publishing

Max Hui Bai Ph.D.

University of Perish More Than Publish

GAME INFO



ABSTRACT

Welcome to the chaotic life of academic publishing. In this game, you are a clueless researcher trying to do the one and only thing that matters in your academic life: churning out publications, fast. You will publish useless nonsense, sabotage your colleagues' research, and provide unhelpful comments, Reviewer 2 style. Your goal is to gain as many citations as possible when the game ends, ideally with your sanity and self-respect intact.

Introduction

To set up the game, distribute a Game Rule Summary to each player to review. Arrange the cards as shown in Figure 1: create draw piles for Action Cards (a) and Trivia Cards (b). Ensure that the awards are visible to all players (c). Form a Manuscript draw pile (d) and place a random seven of them face-up next to it (e). Always replenish to seven when one is taken.

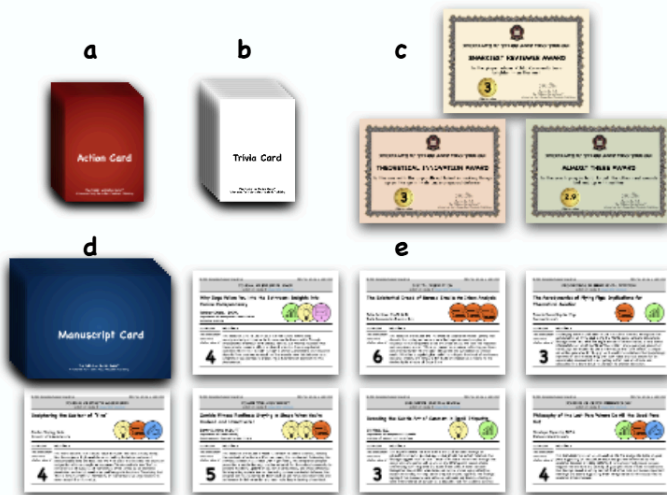


Figure 1. Game Setup. For a quicker game, consider setting up eight (instead of seven) face-up Manuscript Cards.

Method

Start the game by dealing each player three Action Cards (a), to be held in secret. The first turn goes to the most cynical player. Or just let the most academically hopeless one go first. On your turn, you may play as many Action Cards as you wish. These cards can help you publish, sabotage, or advance in other ways, with effects described on the cards and in Appendix A. Play them by putting them face-up in a spread-out discard pile. Some Action Cards involve asking trivia questions. Select one from a randomly drawn Trivia Card (b) to use for them.

How to Gain Citations Through Publishing:

1. Play all of the required Action Cards as shown by icons on a Manuscript Card you intend to publish (e) into the discard pile. See an example in the Game Rule Summary.
2. Announce, "I am publishing [insert the TITLE of the Manuscript Card]." Then, everyone else must say, "Congratulations on your publication!" while clapping. If anyone has to remind a player who forgets to do so, the forgetful player must give them a random Action Card

as a penalty for this unforgivable academic faux pas. There is no need to read out loud anything other than the titles in Manuscript Cards in this game.

3. Place the Manuscript Card next to you, face up, to officially indicate that you have published it. You may publish multiple times in your turn.

Public Comments. Creative comments can also help you gain citations. Every time someone publishes, you can give them backhanded compliments or unconstructive criticism disguised in a Q&A. You can also make up academic trash-talk whenever sabotaging someone. Or say anything amusing anytime. Anything goes. You may receive awards with citation bonuses for these comments when the game ends.

Public Comments can be made at any time, not just on your turn. You can draw inspiration from texts on the cards. Like Reviewer 2, you do not have to read the whole manuscript before criticizing it.

Ending Your Turn. End your turn by drawing two (draw three if playing with more than five players) from the Action Card draw pile at once OR by selecting any one Action Card from the discard pile to keep. There is no limit to hand size, and hand size is public knowledge. If the Action Card draw pile is depleted, randomly take half of the discard pile to form a new draw pile.

Results

When a player publishes their fifth Manuscript, all others will have one more turn before the defense.

Defense. Each player will defend their research program with a one-minute speech. You may make things up about the coherence, significance, or anything remarkable about your publications, or the lack thereof. If you really do not know what to say about your research, consider using this time to criticize others' work instead, or just try harder.

Awards. After everyone's three-minute-long one-minute speech, vote for the awards. Start with the Snarkiest Reviewer Award: everyone considers who has been the snarkiest throughout the game. When ready, everyone points to the person they vote for on a count of three. Repeat for the Theoretical Innovation and Almost There Awards. Voting for yourself is allowed if you truly deserve it or if you have no humility left. In the event of a tie, all tied players receive the bonus citation.

Conclusion

Whoever has the most citations wins.

Appendix A

This section provides additional information and clarifications on how the cards work. It is NOT necessary to read this section before playing.

Trivia Cards

- These cards contain trivia questions used when playing specific cards. Each question offers three choices, giving even a random guess a one-third chance of being correct.

Action Cards

There are three main types of Action Cards: Research Cards, Mishap Cards, and Life Event Cards.

- **Research Cards:** Ideas, References, Data, Theories, and Writing are the five types of Research Cards used for publishing (see Figure 2). These cards have solid edges.



Figure 2. Research Cards

- **Mishap Cards:** They represent academic setbacks you can throw at others to your advantage (see Figure 3). Play one by placing it next to someone face up while, for better effect, delivering a sarcastic Public Comment.
 - A player with a Mishap Card played against them cannot publish until they remove the card.
 - If a Mishap Card remains unremoved by the end of the game, it decreases the player's final citation count by two.
 - A player can remove a Mishap Card at any time by discarding one specific Action Card indicated by the Mishap Card OR any three Action Cards of their choice.
 - Players can face multiple Mishap Cards simultaneously, just like in real life.



Figure 3. Mishap Cards

- **Life Event Cards:** These cards represent significant events in a researcher's academic life. Play them strategically to influence the game (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Life Event Cards

- **Budget Cut:** You may randomly select half of the Action Cards from a player you choose to discard. Round up if the number is odd.
- **Collaboration:** Present three cards from the discard pile to a player of your choice. They can select one to keep, and you keep the remaining two. This card cannot be retrieved from the discard pile once played.
- **Going Viral:** Play this card by placing it on one of your published Manuscript Cards to gain an additional citation.
- **IRB Audit:** Choose a player to show their hand. You may select two Action Cards from them to keep.
- **Mentorship:** Give another player a Research Card of your choice. Then, put this card on a published Manuscript Card of yours. It gains two more citations.
- **Paradigm Shift:** Replace all face-up Manuscript Cards with others drawn randomly.
- **Perseverance:** Play this card immediately to cancel the effect of any Action Cards played against you. You cannot cancel the effect of a Perseverance card by playing another Perseverance card.
- **Plagiarize:** Choose one trivia question to ask all players. They will answer simultaneously using the gestures 🖐️ = A, 🖐️ = B, 🖐️ = C. Anyone who answers incorrectly must give you an Action Card of their choice.
- **Traveling:** Play this card by placing it next to yourself. You become immune to any negative consequences of opponents' Action Cards for one round, as defined by you.
- **Workshop Attendance:** Draw two additional cards.

Manuscript Cards

Obtaining Manuscript Cards is the main way to gain citations. They each require a player to play a specific combination of Research Cards, indicated by the icons on the card.