

ADAPT OR DIE

Rules

A game about environment change and adaptation

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Players

The game is designed for 3-5 players.

Goals

The goal is for your bug to have the best fit for a set of 4 NICHEs.

Game end

The game ends after every player has 4 NICHE cards. The game ends at the end of the turn when the last player obtains or receives (from another player) their fourth NICHE card.

Pieces and Parts

- Board: an 8-sided polygon with 4 steps from the center to any side and 4 steps between adjacent sides.
- 6 bugs, each a different color
- 16 HABITAT MATs (4" x 4", or 100mm x 100mm)
- 121 cards
 - 80 NICHE cards (5 copies for each NICHE)
 - 16 CREATURE cards. Each CREATURE card corresponds exactly to one HABITAT MAT (its 'home' HABITAT, to which it is perfectly adapted) except CREATURE #16 ('GENERIC') which has no 'home' HABITAT.
 - 25 ADAPTATION cards

Setup

- Board: place in the center with room for 8 4x4inch (100x100mm) square mats around the outside.
- Shuffle the HABITAT MATs (large squares) and place **face down** in a HABITAT MAT pile. Place the NICHE cards in a pile near them, the NICHE CARD pile.
- Arrange the ADAPTATION cards **face up**.
- Shuffle the CREATURE cards **face down**, and each player takes one.
- Players show their CREATURE card face up so all other players can see them.

Play

- All players continue to play their turn until the last player has 4 NICHEs, when the game ends. Even if a player already has 4 NICHEs, they can continue to play and change their NICHEs until the last player finishes.
- On their turn each player rolls the die and moves their bug anywhere on the board within that roll.
- If a player's bug exits a side (at a marked space):
 - If there is no HABITAT MAT at that location, player draws a HABITAT MAT from the HABITAT MAT pile. If there is a HABITAT MAT, it cannot be changed or moved.
 - If the player does not have the NICHE card for that HABITAT, player takes one of those for that HABITAT (same number) from the NICHE card pile.
 - Player may exchange the NICHE card (whether they already had it or just drew it) for one of the NICHE cards they have.

NOTE: If the player already had the card for that HABITAT, they must either:

- **return a different NICHE card to the NICHE card pile, as if they were exchanging it, or**
- **force the NICHE card on someone else.**

Thus returning to a HABITAT is a way of discarding unwanted NICHE CARDS, the only way other than trading.

Any time a NICHE card is returned to the NICHE pile, one ADAPTATION card (any one the player has) must be returned as well. Every player will always have the same number of NICHE and ADAPTATION cards.

- Player has the option to give the NICHE card to any other player who does not already have 4 NICHE cards. A player may not 'refuse' a given NICHE card unless they already have 4.
- If the player already has 4 NICHE cards, then they must either exchange the NICHE card or give it to another player.
- If a player selected (or was given) a NICHE card, they also select one ADAPTATION card from the ADAPTATION pile.
- Player may trade one NICHE card with any other willing player at the end of their turn.
- Player may also trade one ADAPTATION card with any other willing player at the end of their turn.

Of **Special Note** in selecting HABITATs (obtaining NICHE cards)

- Obtaining a NICHE card is the same as acquiring a HABITAT.
- **A player may not end a turn with more than 4 NICHE cards.**
- A player may not discard a NICHE card (with the exception noted above), and players must select exactly 4 HABITATs (obtain 4 NICHE cards) in the course of the game.
- A player may never have two copies of the same NICHE card.
- A player always has the same number of NICHE cards and ADAPTATION cards.

Scores

When all players have 4 NICHE cards, each player calculates their total unfit score. Higher scores are **BAD**. Lowest score (least distance between the creature and the NICHE) is the winner.

1. For each adaptation card the player has, apply that card in the scorecard in the appropriate place. If there are more than one adaptation card for a feature, player decides the order to apply them. (This is an opportunity for strategy.)
2. Calculate new feature values for the creature.
3. For each selected HABITAT for the player, calculate the difference between feature value and HABITAT selection. The resulting score is the difference, and always a positive number. Thus if the creature has value of 3 for *segments*, and the HABITAT has selection value of 5, then the score is 2. If creature has value of 3 for *segments*, and the HABITAT has selection value of 1, the score is also 2. Max score for any one feature in that HABITAT is 4.
4. Add up all the 'unfit' scores of each feature to give a total 'feature-unfit' score for each feature, then add all the feature-unfit scores to give the total 'unfit' score.

Suggested explicit method for scoring

1. Each person writes the HABITAT numbers on their scorecards for each NICHE they selected. There should be 1 for each of the 4 HABITAT columns.
2. One person reads out the selection pressures for each NICHE. In doing so, the reader needs to:
 - Announce the HABITAT number. For example, 'Biome 12'. (Each person then finds the right column on their scorecard if they selected that HABITAT.)
 - Read each selection pressure in order with the appropriate number. For example: 'eyes, 2'
 - Integrate the randomizer numbers into the appropriate feature. Numbers in order fill the blanks in order.
3. Each player who selected that HABITAT records each of the 5 selection pressure scores under the column 'SP' on their scorecard.
4. When all are done, each player calculates the difference between each creature-adaptation value and the HABITAT selection pressure to determine the HABITAT score for that HABITAT selection pressure.
5. Each player adds all the (4) HABITAT scores for each selection pressure.
6. Each pressure adds all the selection pressure scores to get a total 'unfit' score.

For easier scoring (and to help with strategy), there is an app 'Adapt or Die' in both Apple and Google app stores.

Variations

- For longer, more complex games, set the end at more (3 or 5) HABITATs per player. If you use 5 HABITATs per player, with 3 or more players, you should probably use a double-board — two board mats side-by-side, giving 10 or even 12 places for HABITATs.
- For a very different but interesting game, allow players to choose which creature they want instead of drawing from a face-down pile.
- For a less competitive but interestingly different game, winners can be all of those with the fewest HABITATs in which their creature went extinct. A HABITAT score greater than 8 means extinction. This game plays best when all players must select 4 HABITATs.
- For a more competitive game, all players receive the same HABITATs. This works best with 5 or 6 HABITATs per player. When one player selects a HABITAT, everyone ‘receives’ that HABITAT, and selects an adaptation to go with it (proceeding clockwise from the player that selected the HABITAT). When all 5 or 6 HABITATs are selected, the winner is then the player with the best adaptation (lowest scores) in the most HABITATs. Ties will be common, but this is a slightly more realistic model of adaptation, more direct HABITAT competition. Note that with 6 HABITATs and 5 players, there will be no adaptations left for the last HABITAT.

Sample scorecard.

Feature	start value	Adapt	end value	Habitat 12		Habitat 3		Habitat 7		Habitat 15		Habitat 6		Habitat 2		Total Score
				SP	Score	SP	Score	SP	Score	SP	Score	SP	Score	SP	Score	
LEG LENGTH	3	+3	3	4	1	3	0	5	2	3	0	2	1	1	2	6
SEGMENTS	1	++	3	3	0	4	1	4	1	1	2	5	2	2	1	7
SIZE	4	-	3	5	2	5	2	1	2	4	1	4	1	4	1	9
EYES	5	+	5	1	4	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	5	0	14
ANTENNAE	2		2	2	0	1	1	2	0	5	3	1	1	3	1	6
																42

NOTE: increase from 5 and decrease from 1 result in no change.

The game vs reality

Sample game board. There are 16 NICHEs to select from. A max of 12 are used in any one game. Each NICHE has a fixed top 2 selection pressures, and the other 3 are filled in by the randomizer cards. (Selection pressures not shown in this picture.)

