BATTLES FOR FREEDOM 1857

Creative enquiry project: Board game

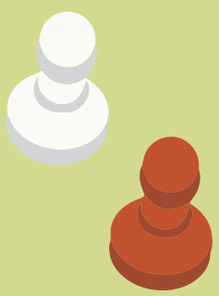
OVERVIEW

Objectives

Through this activity students will learn more about the lesser-known aspects of the First War of Independence in 1857 while also tracing the interconnected events before and after the keystone event.

They will understand the process of writing history, who writes it, about whom, how and why by playing an active role in building a narrative around 1857 in the process of creating a board game.

Students will develop research, synthesis, and analysis skills that enable them to become self-learners.



Outcome

An interactive board game traces the events before, during and after the War.

Participation

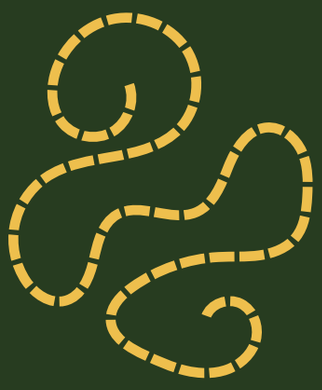
Students can work on this project in groups of 6-8 students per board game.

BOARD GAME ELEMENTS AND MECHANICS

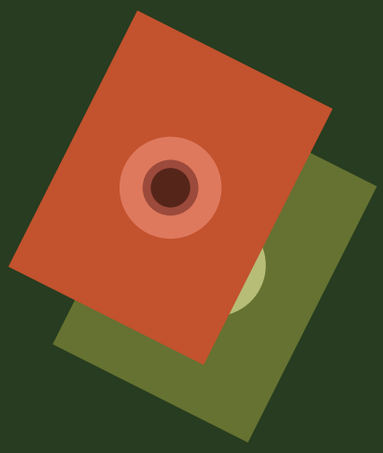
The board game is designed on a square or rectangular cardboard, and can be played by 4 people at a time.

Apart from the board the elements that need to be made include the player pieces which can reflect characters from 1857, a dice, and 50 question cards.

It has 80 to a 100 squares in sequence, with a start and an end point.



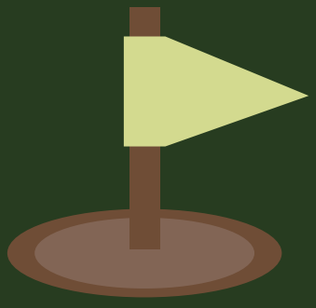
The start will be the first event of the first war of independence as the students see it and the end point will be a major turning point in the aftermath of the resistance that altered the course of India's history.



Usually the story of 1857 starts with Mangal Pandey and ends with the transfer of power from the Company to the Crown.

Students can think about how and why they would like to change this starting and end point.

Players roll the dice and move forward, advancing by the number of squares indicated on the dice.



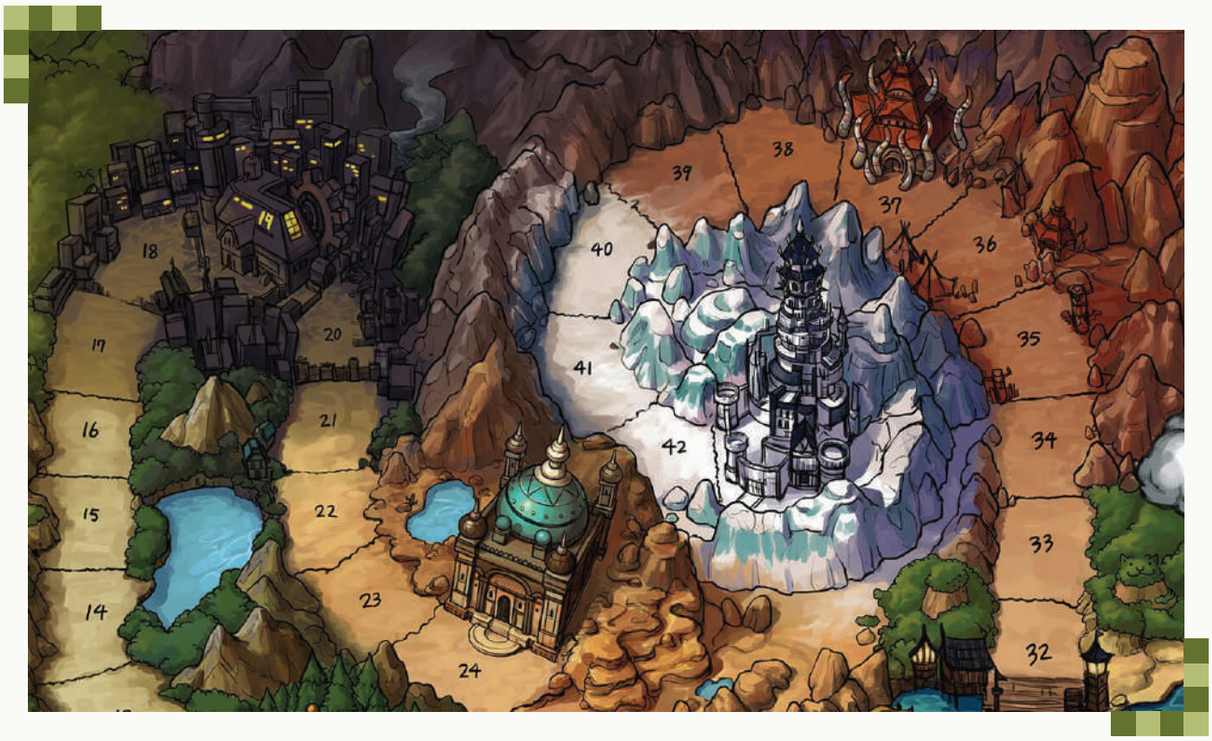
A minimum of 5 squares will be question cues. Players, when landing on the question card box, are asked to pick up a question card from the set. If they answer correctly, they get a significant advancement on the board and if they answer it incorrectly, they either lose their next chance or have a setback on the board.

The outcomes can vary for each of the question boxes. Whoever reaches the finish line first, wins.

Keep in mind!

Of the 80-100 squares 5 squares should describe positive scenarios. Landing on these will allow the player to move forward a designated number of squares

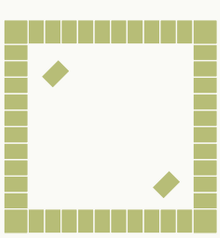
5 other squares will describe negative scenarios and landing on these will force the player to move back a designated number of steps.

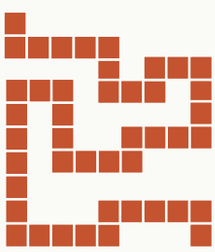


BOARD GAME DESIGN

The board's background should be visually attractive, reflecting the scenarios selected and the theme of the game–the First War of Independence.

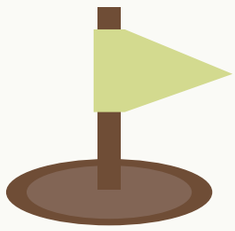
They can have geographical elements, thematic elements that communicate to a viewer that this is a game on the 1857 and the events around it. It can also have 3d elements to enhance the spatial feel of the exhibit.





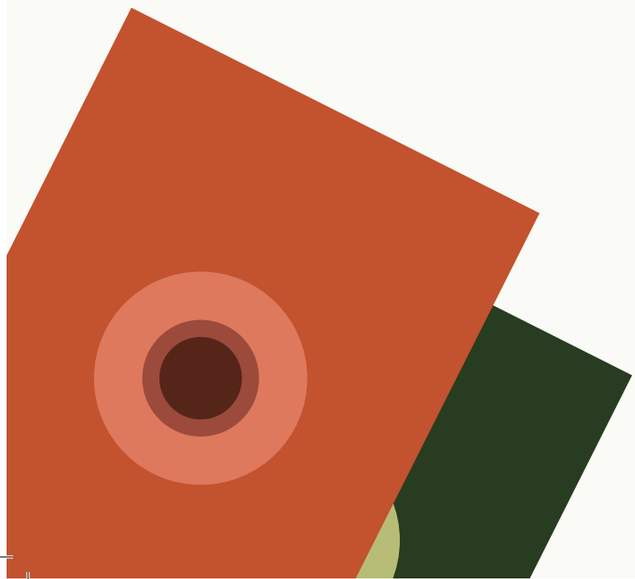
QUESTION CUES

The total number of question cues on the board should not be less than 5.



Since there are multiple players playing the game simultaneously, hence, the number of question cards should be 10 times more than the question card cues.

So for example, if the first question card cue is on box 6, there should be 10 question cards to choose from for that box.



One side of the card is to have information and the other side of the card to have icons/images/colors similar to the dedicated box on the board.

The questions can use diverse formats like MCQ, single answer, fill in the blanks, etc. The answers should either be one word or one sentence.

Creating these question cards will encourage students to do further research on the scenarios depicted.

This is to ensure that when multiple players land on box no. 6, there are different questions for each of them.

Therefore, if the board has 5 question cues, there should be at least 50 question cards. The questions are to be devised from the scenarios already on the board.

SCENARIO SQUARES

The 10 scenarios should be spread in such a way that there is sufficient gap in between for players to move forward or backwards, keeping the numbers of a playing dice in consideration. Each scenario box can have a different forward/ backward movement.

10 scenarios should have a mix of scenarios that led to a setback in the wars of 1857, scenarios which furthered the cause of the freedom movement, ‘did you know?’ information nuggets.

Scenarios are to be depicted using appropriate visual symbols and references indicating that scenario. Encourage groups to take inspiration from artworks, photographs and print culture of 1857 and draw out their own in a style they feel is appropriate.

FACILITATION

When developing the board game students can be guided to sharpen their enquiry in the following ways:

Digging deeper in 1857 – The diverse events of 1857 are summarised briefly in the textbook. Creating this game allows learners to zoom in and research the complex stories of the myriad people and places that shaped this historic moment.
Apart from the board the elements that need to be made include the player pieces which can reflect characters from 1857, a dice, and 50 question cards.

It has 80 to a 100 squares in sequence, with a start and an end point.

Expanding the narrative

Students can also go beyond the textbook to study the larger and older history of tribal movements like the Santal Hul of 1855 and military movements like the Khurda uprising. This process allows them to think about history as a longer arc of interconnected events, instead of isolated incidents. Choosing the starting and end points also pushes them to decide how they would frame the narrative of the first war of Independence and why, allowing them to think critically about the role of historians.

Using visual culture of 1857, when designing the board game students can be asked to reference prints, photographs and news papers from the time such as the etchings of battles by British artists from the DAG collection or the photographs of Felice Beaton who depicted the aftermath of the war from the Sarmaya digital collection. Referencing these images are an opportunity to dig deeper into questions about how images of the war were circulated and how it was received.

“It (the War of 1857) was the culmination of growing discontent amongst regional princes, the feudal nobility, rural landlords, company sepoys, Adivasi groups, peasant communities, and religious factions.”

Prof. Maroona Murmu, March to Freedom, DAG

STEPS

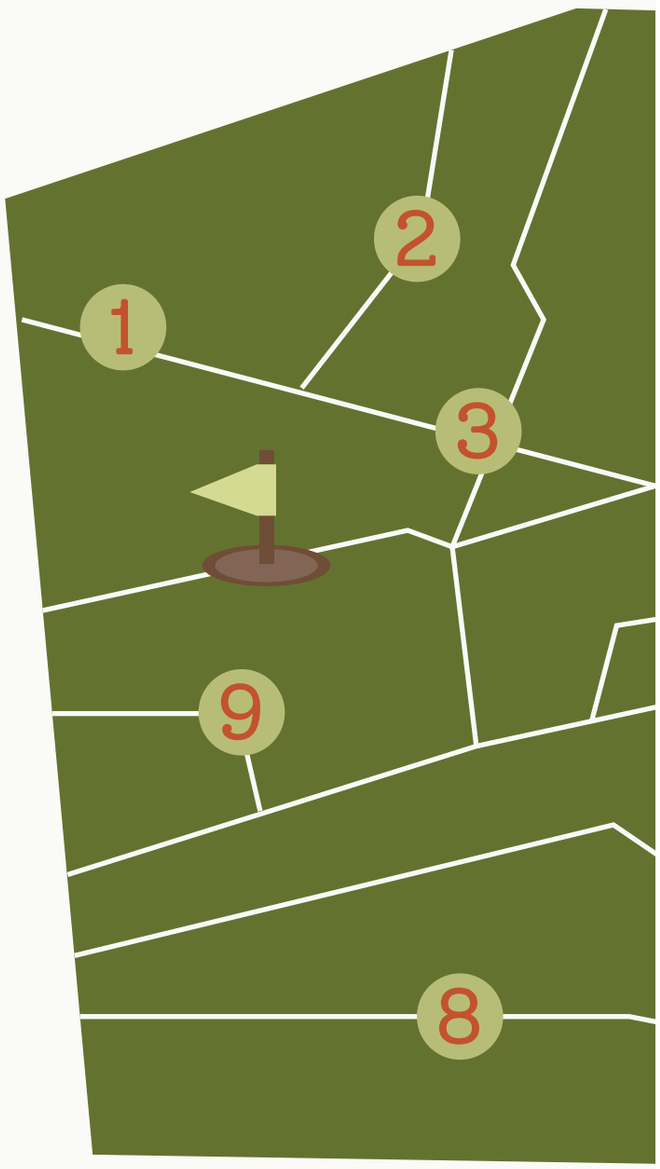
A suggested process for developing the game :

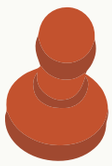
1. After introducing students to the chapter on 1857 the board game can be introduced as a group project.

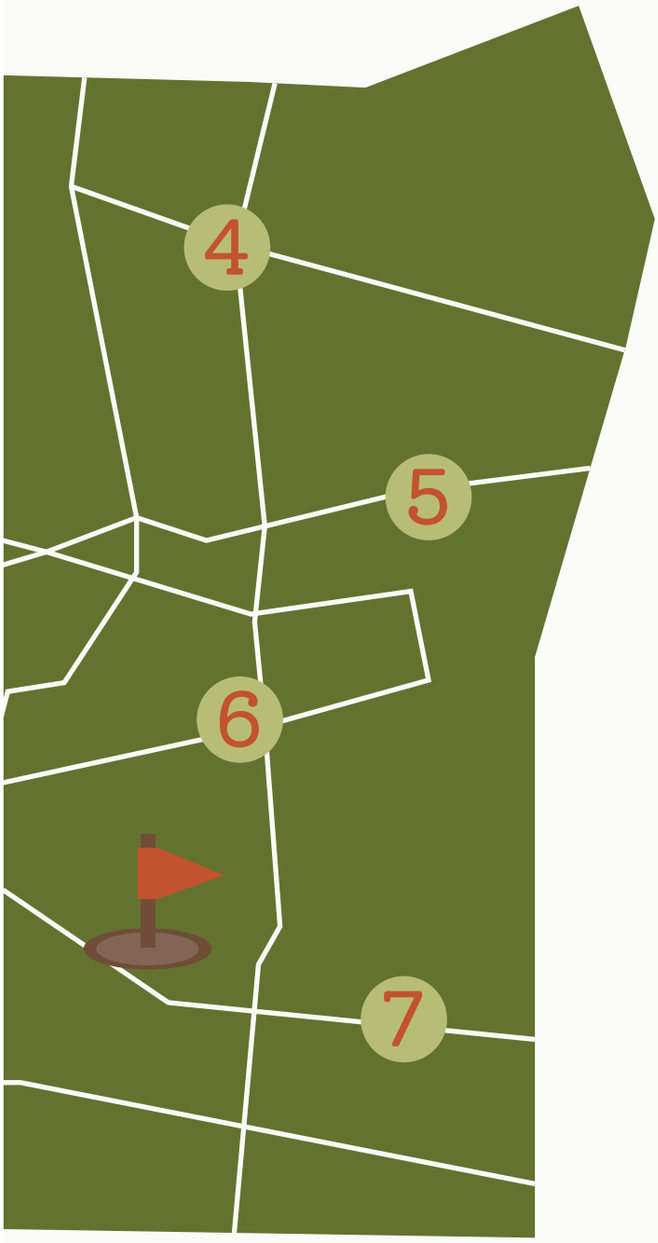
2. Working in groups students can first decide on the beginning and end point of the game–what do they think was the starting point of the people's rebellion and what was the biggest turning point for India's freedom movement in the aftermath?

3. They can then work through the question 'what more do I need to know about the time period I'm working with?' to identify areas of research and enquiry, dividing up the research in the group.

4. The next step is to choose the 10 scenarios.







5 They can then start designing the board game using visual references from 1857 as a starting point to develop their own visual style.

6 This is also a good time to think about how the scenarios will be spread across the board game and the movement that will be allowed when players land on a scenario square.

7 At this stage they can divide the scenarios between themselves to do further research on each event and come up with questions for the question cards.

8 Finally they can produce the game and most importantly test it with their peers.

9 They can then brainstorm ways in which they can display the games in the school and invite other teachers and students to play the game.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENT RESEARCH

Anonymous, Charge of the Highlanders before Kanpur, under General Havelock, 1858, Engraving on paper, 17.8 X 27.2 cm. Collection: DAG

Book - DAG Classroom Corner: 1857 resource pack

Sarmaya Collection of photographs by Felice Beato

https://sarmaya.in/spotlight/thestory-of-a-rebellion-in-5-pictures/

History for Peace- 1857 learning tool

https://www.historyforpeace.pw/post/1857reading-between-narratives

'A Begum and a Rani' and other **books on 1857 by Rudrangshu Mukherjee**

DAG