MATERIALS MECHANICS
Each kind of material includes a basic suggestion for a starting point and several possible uses of that material in a game. You do not have to pick one of these uses. Feel free to mix and match, make up new mechanics, and take ideas from other materials too!

CARDS - An incredibly flexible game component. Don’t get too complicated!
A simple starting point: Four sets of cards with numbers 1-10 on each set.
- Use an existing deck. Try a standard deck of cards. Or the number cards from Uno. Or a deck of Tarot cards.
- One or two pieces of information. Limit each card to just a few pieces of information on it, like color + number.
- Different kinds of cards. Some cards might be special cards that break the usual format.
- Shuffle and sort. Cards can be randomized easily – then put into stacks, hands, or spread out.
- Make sets. A very powerful mechanic – build melds, sort by category, or make Poker-style hands.
- Two sided cards. Perhaps both sides of the cards are relevant to the gameplay.
- Cards as units. Each card is a creature. Or an emotion. Or a classic work of literature.
- Cards as identity. Each player get a card that gives them a unique ability or assigns them to a team.
- Cards as secrets. Nobody knows what is on your card or in your hand. But they wish they did!
- Cards that build. A slit cut into the cards can make them building materials! See the Eames’ House of Cards.

GRID - The terrain or board for your game.
A simple starting point: A 6x6 grid of squares with nothing special on any of the squares.
- Intersections. Perhaps the pieces move on the lines and intersections. Or maybe the squares too!
- Missing parts. Some of the lines or squares are missing, leading to a more maze-like space.
- Varied terrain. There are a few different “colors” of spaces, each with different game effects.
- Shapes that are not squares. The terrain is made of hexagons or triangles or something else.
- Paths, not spots. Rather than a grid, the game spaces are connected in more linear ways.
- Modular grid. The board is divided into sections which can be moved or reconfigured.
- Special spaces. There are a few key spaces that must be occupied or captured.
- Territory. Parts of the board are “owned” by players - for the whole game, or just at the start or end.

DICE - Classic randomization device.
A starting point: One 6-sided die for each player.
- Roll to do something. The die number is how far you move or how well you succeed at something.
- Roll and choose a die. Roll a few dice but only choose one of them as your action.
- Sort. After you roll them, sorting them into groups or an order depending on what you rolled.
- Assign dice. Roll dice, then choose how to use the number on each one in different ways.
- Match. Try to get particular combinations of results on multiple dice.
- Poker style. Roll a handful of dice, then choose to roll some or all of them a second time.
- Real-time rolling. Rolling the dice as quickly as possible to try and get a particular result.
- Dice as units. Dice can be pieces on a board or map.
- Information storage. The number currently facing up can be used to store information.
- Design a hand of dice. Before the game or between rounds, strategically choose which dice to roll.
- Replace the faces. Instead of pips, change the faces into icons or other non-numeric elements.
- Hidden dice. You keep the results of your die rolls secret.

TOKENS - A subtle and versatile kind of game component.
A simple starting point: 50 tokens that are all the same, divided into 5 colors.
- Instead of keeping score. Your pile of tokens is how close you are to victory.
- Collecting sets. Try to corner the market on one color type. Or collect Poker-style matches.
- Tokens as units. Tokens are your soldiers. Or pets. Or words in a conversation.
- Bag them. Put all the tokens in a cloth bag and pull out a few each turn.
- Secret tokens. Keep your tokens hidden from other players.
- Tokens as money. Use them to buy things, bid for other items, or just amass your wealth.
- Blind bidding. Each player selects tokens to bid each round without knowing other players’ bids.
- Physical actions. Depending on the tokens, they can be tossed, flicked, or stacked.

TILES - A special kind of token that lends itself to particular uses.
A simple starting point: A set of Dominos. Or a set of Scrabble tiles. Or the tiles from a Rummickub game.
- Different shapes. Tiles do not need to be square! They can be hexagonal, round, irregular...
- Multiple shapes. Lots of different shapes, each shape with a unique game meaning.
- Arrange into larger shapes. As with Tangrams, build a larger object out of tiles.
- Shuffle and turn over. Tile have different information on the back. You turn over one each round.
- Arrange in front of you. Keep your tiles to make sets or words or patterns.
- Stack them vertically. Your tiles become a pile. Perhaps the order of the stack is important!
- Make a board. Each tile becomes part of a larger game board or space.
- Physical actions. Tiles can be great as pucks or other things to shoot and flick.
The first game listed after each mechanic is required—you MUST play it. Other listed games are optional, recommended games.

### VICTORY POINTS

**Splendor, Ticket to Ride, Tokaido, Roll Through the Ages, Settlers of Catan, Lords of Waterdeep, King Domino**
- Players get points during the game in some way.
- Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins.
- There can be other kinds of points or currency, but “victory points” determines the winner.
- Tip: Give players multiple ways to earn victory points. Can you create different approaches to victory?

### ONE VS. MANY

**King of Tokyo, Sheriff of Nottingham, Shadows over Camelot, Letters to Whitechapel, Last Night on Earth, Betrayal at House on the Hill**
- One player has a special and more powerful role in the game. Others play together against the special player.
- The challenge: make the game NOT just boil down to a 2-player game.
- Perhaps the “many” players are still competing for resources with each other.
- Or perhaps the activities of the “many” players are very different from each other, so they need to coordinate.

### A TICKING CLOCK

**Forbidden Island/Desert, Pandemic, Escape: The Curse of the Temple, Heads Up, Clank, Boggle, Fortress**
- Something moves the game steadily towards a conclusion.
- Are there ways for players to pause or even reverse the clock?
- What happens when it reaches zero?
- Suggestion: DON’T make the clock an actual real-time clock. Make it tick down once per turn or round.

### SHARED OWNERSHIP

**Hanabi, Dvonn, Zertz, Colossal Arena, Cheating Mages, El Grande, Tiny Epic Kingdoms, Acquire**
- The main units or elements in the game are not owned or controlled by a specific player.
- That means anyone can jump in and take charge of them when it is their turn to play.
- The key is making sure that things still can advance towards an endstate.
- For example, make sure that it is not easy to just “undo” what another player just did.

### MODULAR UNITS

**Quantum, Galaxy Trucker, Dominion, Checkers (“kinging” a piece), Tiny Epic Quests**
- Simpler parts combine into more complex wholes.
- How do they fit together and what do you do with them?
- How different can you make the final combinations of parts?
- Tip: This can quickly get overcomplicated! Start with a simple system and a handful of elements to combine.

### REPEATING SHORT ROUNDS

**Zombie Dice, 7 Wonders, Dixit, Resistance, Codenames, Skull**
- The game plays from start to finish in a minute or less.
- But then I players get to prepare in some way before the next round starts.
- Are players accumulating something between rounds?
- Are they making decisions about their setup for the next round? Or somehow improving their position?

### RANDOMIZED FIELD OF PLAY

**Labyrinth, Forbidden Island/Desert, Settlers of Catan, Set, Five Tribes**
- When the game starts, some or all of the board, terrain, or starting conditions are randomized.
- Ideally, each game feels very different. Different starting combinations lead to different kinds of games.
- Make sure that no one player gets a big advantage due to random luck.
- Suggestion: make your game short so that you have time to playtest lots of different permutations.

### MOST IN A REGION

**Carcassonne, El Grande, Tigris and Euphrates, Stone Age, Diplomacy, Kemet**
- Players take turns putting a resource into a region or category.
- At certain intervals, if you have the most in a region, you score or capture that region.
- What does it means when you have the most (or maybe the least?) in a region?
- Tips: Pay close attention to player order and rotation. Build in multiple paths to victory.

### REAL-TIME PLAY

**Magic Maze, Falling, Space Alert, Galaxy Trucker, Set, Escape: The Curse of the Temple, Pit Crew, Space Cadets Dice Duel**
- Players do not take turns. They take actions (or choose to wait) whenever they want.
- Build in constraints on player action, such as using only one hand, or acting once per round.
- Avoid full-body sports or overly chaotic play.
- The challenge here is to make a game that is still focused and strategic.

### BUILD A NETWORK

**Waterworks, Burrows, Ant Trails, Ticket to Ride, Power Grid, Tsuro, Twixt**
- Tiles or cards or board elements are used to create interlocking paths / pipes / roads / etc.
- It can be a single common network or players can each have their own they are building.
- Perhaps players travel along the network. Or try to build the longest or biggest network.
- How do you win? By getting rid of your network elements? Or building up to a particular size?