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# GAME ON!

Recreation & Play in the Fanshawe Library  
Learning Commons

With Carlie Forsythe

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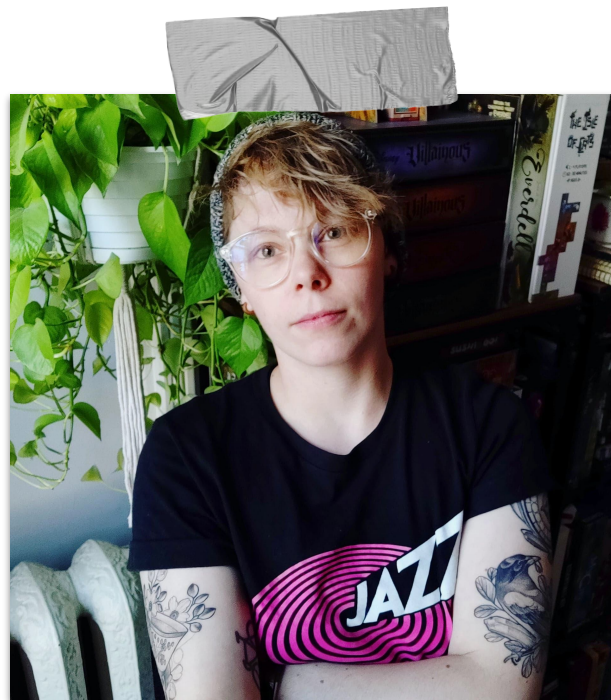


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# A Quick Introduction

## Carlie Forsythe

- 2020 MLIS graduate
- Reference Specialist and (unofficial Board Game Librarian) at the Library Learning Commons at Fanshawe College
- Owns ~84 board games!
- Favourite games: *Carcassonne* and *The Crew*



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# How familiar are you with board games?

<https://www.menti.com/3web24femi>





# Outline

## → Why Board Games?

The importance of recreation and play in libraries.

## → Gaming in the Library

Board Games at the Fanshawe Library Learning Commons

## → Recommendations

A few helpful recommendations and reflections.

## → Toolkit & Resources

A toolkit to help get you started with your own board game collection or library program.

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# Why Board Games?

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**FINAL  
JEOPARDY!**

**THIS IS ONE OF THE OLDEST  
LIBRARY GAMING PROGRAMS  
IN NORTH AMERICA**



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# Recreation & Play

**Recreation** “activities that people choose to do to refresh their bodies and minds and make their leisure time more interesting and enjoyable” (Recreation, leisure and sports, 2010).

**Play** “imaginative, intrinsically motivated, nonserious, freely chosen, and actively engaging” (Hurd & Anderson, 2010).

- Improves physical and mental health;
  - Develops physical and social skills/supports;
  - Lowers blood pressure and stress levels (Pressman et al., 2009).
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# Benefits of Board Games

## Social Benefits

- Build interpersonal relationships, often between social groups and generations (Pappas, 2013; Zander 2019).
- Builds confidence and sense of belonging.
- Culture of positive interaction (Pappas, 2013).
- How to win and lose gracefully (Zander, 2019).

## Skills Development

- Language development and reading comprehension (Zander, 2019).
  - Critical thinking, inquiry, and problem solving skills (Mayer & Harris, 2010).
  - Communication and information sharing skills (Mayer & Harris, 2010).
  - Creative thinking (Pappas, 2013).
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# Community-Building in Libraries

## Three Functions of Libraries

- Educational
- Social
- Democratising

**Educational.** Aid in information literacy, critical thinking skills, self-education (Adams, 2009).

**Social.** “Third place”; provision of meeting spaces, recreational reading and other forms of media, programming (Adams, 2009).

**Democratising.** Provision of collections, services, programs equitably (Adams, 2009).

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# Gaming in the Library

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# Board Games in the LLC

## Alignment with Library's Core Values

- Improvement of students' social and technical skills.
- Friendly and safe library environment.
- Attraction of non-users to the library.
- Collaborative learning.

## Collection Development Criteria

- Number of players
  - User ratings on BGG
  - Play time
  - Weight
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# Board Games in the LLC

## Benefits

- Can help dispel library anxiety and make students feel comfortable using library services.
- Equity - students able to access costly board games for free.
- Students able to socialize and improve their language, global citizenship, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

## Challenges

- Programs are way easier to manage with volunteers, which are hard to come by.
  - Limited resources.
  - COVID-19.
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# Library Learning Commons

[Library Home](#) / [Research Guides Home](#) / [Game On: Gaming in the Library](#) / [Guide Home](#)

## Game On: Gaming in the Library

[Guide Home](#)

[Board Game Resources](#)

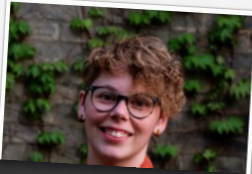
[Games A-O](#)

### How to Use This Guide



# Game On! Guide

### Meet the Analog Gaming Nerd



### Welcome to the Game On: Gaming in the Library Guide!

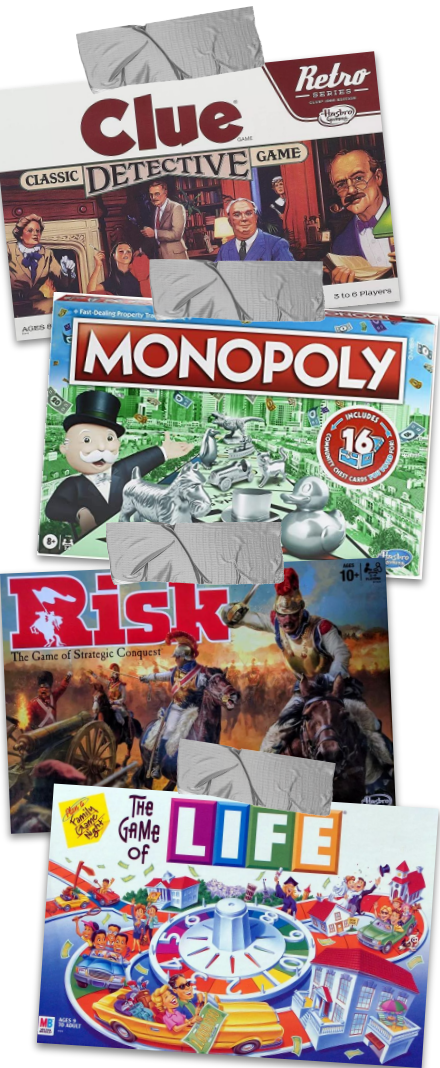
This guide is meant to provide students and faculty with tabletop gaming resources.

- Looking to learn how to play a new game? Check out some popular YouTube channels on our [Board Game Resources Page](#).
- Looking to play a game in the Fanshawe Library Learning Commons? Take a look at our [A-Q](#) and [P-Z](#) collection of games.
- Can't get together to play board games with friends? Learn about free online platforms, selected games, and games that you can

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# Recommendations

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# Traditional American Games

## Pros:

- Games are rules-light.
- Similar and familiar.
- Easy-to-learn mechanics.

## Cons:

- Games can overstay their welcome.
- Player elimination.
- Randomness over strategy.

## Why Include in a Library Collection?

- Games are familiar and safe for new gamers.
  - Accessible gateway games.
  - Great for attracting new gamers to programming.
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# Abstract Strategy Games

## Pros:

- Instantly recognizable.
- Rules-light.
- Timeless classics.
- Easy to learn, hard to master.

## Cons:

- Very abstract.

## Why Include in a Library Collection?

- Creates multi-generational play spaces within libraries.
- Inexpensive.
- Familiar and great for attracting players at events.







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# Eurogames / Euro-Style Games

## Pros:

- Complexity varies.
- Deep, strategic decisions.
- Highly replayable.
- Easy to learn, hard to master.
- No player elimination.

## Cons:

- Weak themes and abstract components.
- Low player interaction.

## Why Include in a Library Collection?

- Easy to learn/teach.
  - Predetermined game length ensures games rarely overstay their welcome and allows for players to try a variety of games.
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# Thematic Games

## Pros:

- Tense, immersive gameplay.
- Storytelling potential.

## Cons:

- Heavily reliant on theme.
- Rules can become very complicated.

## Why Include in a Library Collection?

- Immersive gameplay and storytelling.
  - Cooperative nature is great for developing certain skills.
  - Attracts reluctant players with interesting themes and intellectual properties.
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# Game Weights

## 5-point Scale (BGG)

- Light
- Medium Light
- Medium
- Medium Heavy
- Heavy

## Considerations

- How long does a game take to play?
  - How complex are the rules?
  - How much luck is in the game?
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# Other Considerations

## School, Academic, & Public Libraries

Educational games vs.  
recreational games

## Cultural Backgrounds

Easy ways to  
expand the  
collection and  
increase  
engagement



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# Gateway Collection

→ Core collection that will see the most use/circulation

## Strikes a balance between:

- Thematic vs. Classic vs. Eurogames
  - Games range from low to medium weight
  - Variety of game mechanics
  - Inclusion of familiar games
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