

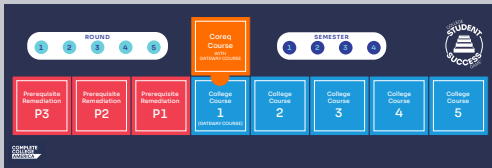
HOW TO PLAY



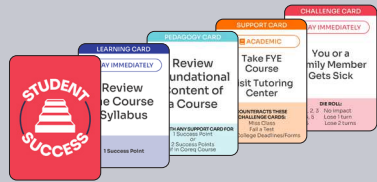
**COMPLETE
COLLEGE
AMERICA**



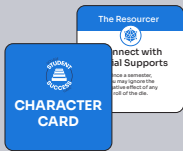
GAME COMPONENTS



1 BOARD



54 STUDENT SUCCESS CARDS
18 Learning Cards 12 Support Cards
12 Pedagogy Cards 12 Challenge Cards



6 CHARACTER CARDS



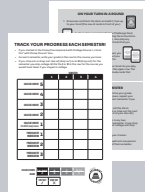
6 MEEPLES



1 DIE



2 WOOD DISCS



18 INDIVIDUAL TRACKERS/PLAYER AIDS



1 HOW TO PLAY BOOKLET

Additional Individual Trackers/Player Aids and other resources—including explanatory videos, sample hands and corresponding student stories, and supporting data—are available at completecollege.org/CCA-games.



OVERVIEW

You are a new student in your first semester of college. Can you pass your classes? How far can you advance in four semesters?

The College Student Success Game simulates the experiences and outcomes you, as a student, might encounter as you try to progress through college. You will face barriers, and you will have a variety of college supports to help you overcome them. Your progress will be influenced by these events and by where you begin your college experience.

Each semester, you will try to accumulate enough Success Points to pass the class you are taking. The player who completes the most courses—and advances the farthest—wins the game.

When the game begins, you have just completed new student orientation, and the college has placed you in what it thinks is the appropriate math or English class to start your higher education journey. In this game, you will start college in one of these places:

- One of three Prerequisite Remediation courses (P3, P2, or P1);
- College Course 1, the college-level gateway course, with a simultaneous Corequisite (Coreq) Course;
- College Course 1, a standalone college-level gateway course; or
- College Course 2, the first college course beyond the gateway course.

For some students, College Course 1, a gateway math or English course, will be their first college course. They might take that course as a standalone or with a simultaneous coreq course. Some students might be required to take one or more prerequisite remedial classes before moving on to College Course 1. Some students—those who might have taken college classes in high school through dual enrollment or who received credit for prior learning—may begin in College Course 2.

Each semester has five rounds of play that simulate your progress during that term. Along the way your learning will be increased by good classroom practices. You also will face life challenges that may (or may not) be mitigated by supports from your peers and teachers. Your goal for the semester is to earn enough Success Points to pass the class you are taking.

The cards you draw and the way you play them will determine the actions you take. Collect enough Success Points and you will pass your class, giving you the chance to move forward in the next semester. But as you will see, the cards that reflect the realities of college and life are sometimes stacked against you, and where you start affects how far and fast you can progress. At the same time, your college experience may be positively influenced by the supports your college provides. (Note: In the game, you take only one course per semester; it is not a simulation of full course load.)

This game is best played with four to six players. With this group size, all players will be able to see a range of experiences emerging over the course of the game—all of which are affected by the starting point of each player's college journey, their life events, and the supports their college provided.

We recommend that you allow 1.5 to 2.5 hours to play the game. This time includes 1 to 1.5 hours of game play (including storytelling between semesters) and .5 to 1 hour for the longer postgame storytelling and discussion.

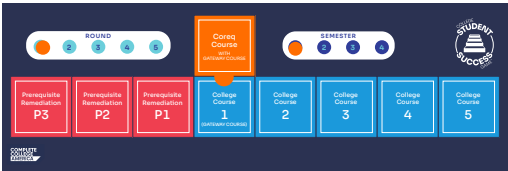
THE POINT OF PLAYING: Telling and Listening to Students' Stories

After each semester of play, players will tell the story of their experience. For example, part of a player's story might be, "I lost my job so I was stressed about money, but I managed to turn in an assignment. And then my advisor reminded me that my college provides emergency aid. I got some immediate help so I could keep up with my rent until I found a new job."

These stories are the true focus of the game because they help everyone understand how students move—or do not move—through higher education. Between semesters, the summaries can be brief, but the discussion at the end of the game allows for more nuanced, detailed discussion and deeper insights into what students experience. Visit completeccollege.org/CCA-games for examples of played hands and narratives that could accompany them.

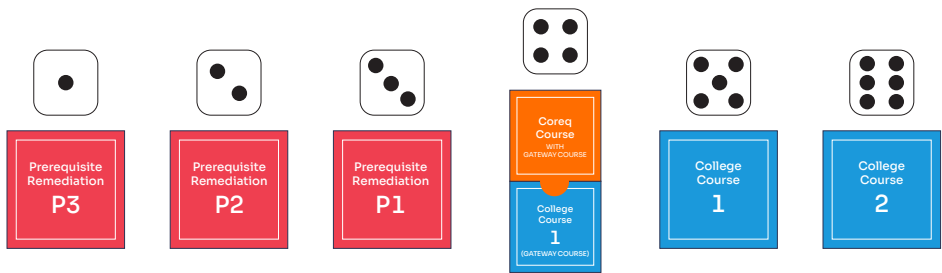
SETUP

Set up the board. You will use the wood discs to keep track of the rounds and semesters as you play. Place one disc on Round 1 and one disc on Semester 1. Shuffle the Student Success Cards and place them in a pile in a central place.



Determining Each Player’s Starting Position

Each player will roll the die to determine their starting position on the board. This roll simulates whatever assessment or other measures the college uses to place students.



Each player chooses a meeple (person-shaped game token), rolls the die, and then places their meeple on the appropriate square. More than one player can start on the same square.

Determining the Order of Play

Pick one player to go first. After each turn, play moves in a clockwise direction. Do not worry about who goes first. Going first does not provide an advantage, and different people will go first in each round.

Selecting Character Cards



Character Cards show that each student brings assets to the college. Your Character Card will help you imagine yourself as a specific student represented in the game. It also gives you a special power you can use once per semester. Use your special power wisely to overcome obstacles and foster success!

Each player selects a Character Card that they will keep for the entire game. While player order does not have a big impact, starting position does. Therefore, players pick their Character Cards in reverse order of starting position on the board. Whoever is starting in the lowest-level course chooses their Character Card first.

STUDENT SUCCESS CARDS

On each of your turns, you use your Student Success Cards to progress through the game. There are four categories of Student Success Cards. Three categories—Learning Cards, Pedagogy Cards, and Support Cards—will help you move forward. One category—Challenge Cards—may interfere with your progress.



Learning Cards turn into Success Points. The more Success Points you have, the higher your grade in your course. When you draw a Learning Card, you play it immediately. If you receive one or more Learning Cards in the initial deal, you play them on your first turn.



Pedagogy Cards can be paired with Support Cards to generate Success Points. If you are in the Coreq Course, the pairing counts for two Success Points. For all other courses, the pairing counts as one Success Point. You choose when to play Pedagogy Cards.



Support Cards are used in combination with Pedagogy Cards and Challenge Cards. You choose when to play Support Cards. Use them in one of two ways:

- » As stated previously, pair a Support Card with a Pedagogy Card for Success Points (two points if you are in a Coreq Course, one point for all other courses).
- » Use a Support Card to counteract a specific Challenge Card. To use a Support Card in this way, it must already be in your hand when you draw the Challenge Card. A Support Card cannot counteract a Challenge Card after the fact. In other words, Support Cards can help you face current or future challenges but not past ones.



Challenge Cards create barriers. When you draw a Challenge Card, you play it immediately. If you receive one or more Challenge Cards in the initial deal, you play them on your first turn. Each Challenge Card has one of these negative effects:

- » **Lose one or two turns.** The number of turns you lose is determined by rolling the die.



No impact



Lose one turn
(your next turn in this semester)



Lose two turns
(your next two turns in this semester)

If you do not have any remaining turns in this semester, the Challenge Card has no impact, but still treat is as a played card (explained in the “Game Play” section).

- » **Lose one Success Point** that you have already earned that semester. Indicate a lost Success Point by turning over a Learning Card that you already played so it is face down. If you earned two Success Points for pairing a Support Card and a Learning Card during a Coreq Course, you may lose one Success Point and keep the other. Indicate this status by turning over one of the two paired cards. If you have not earned any Success Points yet, the Challenge Card has no impact, but still treat it as a played card (explained in the “Game Play” section).
- » **Lose a Pedagogy Card.** If you have a Pedagogy Card in your hand, indicate a lost Pedagogy Card by moving it into your row of played cards (explained in the “Game Play” section) and turning it over so it is face down. If you have already paired a Pedagogy Card with a Support Card, you may choose to separate the pair, put the Support Card back into your hand, and leave the Pedagogy Card face down in your row of played cards. If you do not have a Pedagogy Card yet, the Challenge Card has no impact, but still treat it as a played card (explained in the “Game Play” section).

While Learning Cards and Challenge Cards must be played immediately, you choose when to play Pedagogy Cards and Support Cards. You may choose to play them immediately to earn points, or you may keep your Support Cards in your hand in case you get a Challenge Card.

GAME PLAY

Each semester, your goal is to accumulate enough Success Points to pass the class you are taking. A semester consists of five rounds of play. A round is one turn per player.

At the beginning of each semester, the person who is going first shuffles the Student Success Cards and deals four cards to each player. Place your cards in a row (face up) in front of you.

On each of your turns, you take three actions:

1. Draw one card from the deck and add it, face up, to your hand (the lower row of cards).
2. If you draw a Learning Card or Challenge Card, play it immediately by following the instructions on the card. On your first turn, also play any Learning Cards or Challenge Cards that you received in the initial deal. Once you play a card, move it out of the lower row and into the upper row.
3. If you have other cards that can be played, you may choose to take one more action, but you do not have to do so if you do not want to. If you do play another card (or pair of cards), move whatever cards you play to the upper row, which has all played cards.

Throughout the five rounds of each semester, players continue to take one turn per round, in order, unless someone has to skip a turn based on a Challenge Card.

Open Hands Show Students’ Stories

This game uses open hands. Every player’s Student Success Cards and Character Card are always visible to all other players. In this way, everyone sees the progress that each player is making and the challenges that each player is facing. You see how each player’s story unfolds.

Each player keeps their Student Success Cards face up in two rows. The row closest to the player (lower row) is the player’s hand. The hand includes all cards that have not been played yet. The row above the player’s hand (upper row) is the cards that have been played. The upper row of played cards may include cards that interact with or counteract other cards (e.g., a Support Card canceling the effect of a Challenge Card). Each set of paired cards should be kept face up and stacked. If you lose a Pedagogy Card, keep it in your row of played cards (upper row), but do not pair it with a Support Card.

Keeping cards in this arrangement will make it easier for players to track the story of what happened at the end of their semester. For example, “I had a Challenge making things work with the financial aid office, but a good advisor gave me Support and helped me sort it out quickly.”

CARDS YOU HAVE PLAYED



CARDS YOU HAVE NOT PLAYED YET (YOUR HAND)



As you go through the semester, the two rows of cards in front of you will evolve. You will have fewer cards in your hand (the lower row) and more cards that you have played (the upper row).

Keep Track of Rounds

Keep track of the rounds for each semester using the wood disc on the game board. After each round, move the disc to the next round.



AT THE END OF EACH SEMESTER, Determine Success and Progress for the Next Semester

After five rounds, the semester ends. Your starting point for the next semester is determined in two steps: (1) counting Success Points to see if you passed your class and (2) rolling the die to see if you will stay in college or stop out for a semester. As the game progresses, you also may stop out or drop out in other ways.

Determining Your Grade

Once every player has taken all of their turns in a semester, count your Success Points and determine your grade in the class you took. Move your meeple to your course for the next semester, but be aware that roll of the die may mean that you do not return for the next semester.

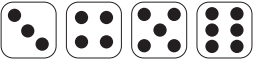
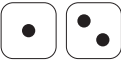




Success Points	Grade	Impact for the Next Semester
5 or more	A	You have passed your course, and you progress to the next course for the next semester.
4	B	
3	C	
0, 1, or 2	F	You have failed your course and must repeat it the next semester. If you fail the course but have two Success Points, you may keep one Success Point for the next semester of play. Keep one Learning Card in your row of played cards to keep track of this Success Point. If you earned two success points with a different combination of cards, take one Learning Card from the deck and return the other cards. (You keep one Success Point because what you learned this semester was not enough to pass, but it will help you when you repeat the course.)

Note: If you began in a prerequisite remediation course and move up to College Course 1 (the gateway course), you will take the standalone College Course 1 and not the simultaneous Coreq Course. (Coreqs are typically initial placements.)

Rolling the Die and Seeing If You Stay in College

Failing a course is only one way that a student loses momentum. Students also stop out for a number of other reasons that may interfere with their ability to persist.

If you passed a college course this semester, you will stay in college for the next semester. If you did not pass a college course, roll the die to see if you will continue in school for the next semester or stop out for one semester.

Player Status Based on Success Points	Roll	Impact for the Following Semester
Failed a prerequisite remediation course		Stay in college
		Stop out for one semester (do not play the next semester)
Passed a prerequisite remediation course		Stay in college
		Stop out for one semester (do not play the next semester)
Failed a standalone college course or a college course paired with coreq		Stay in college
		Stop out for one semester (do not play the next semester)

Stopping Out or Dropping Out in Other Ways

Students who fail courses are more likely to stop out. If you get two Fs during the game—Fs in any two semesters—you stop out the semester after your second F. You do not have the option of rolling the die to stay in.

Students who stop out are more likely to drop out. If you stop out for any two semesters during the game, you drop out of college and stop playing the game.

Record Your Outcome on Your Player Tracker

Record your outcome on your player tracker.

- If you started in the Coreq Course paired with College Course 1, check the “with Coreq Course” box.
- For each semester, write your grade in the row for the course you took.
- If you stop out or drop out: Use a / (stop out) or an X (drop out) for the semester you skip college. Write the / or X in the row for the course you would have taken if you stayed in college.

Remember, your goal for each semester is to accumulate enough Success Points to pass the class you are taking. The player who completes the most courses—and advances the farthest—wins the game.

Sample Trackers at the End of the Game

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS EACH SEMESTER!

- If you started in the Coreq Course paired with College Course 1, check the "with Coreq Course" box.
- For each semester, write your grade in the row for the course you took.
- If you stop out or drop out: Use a / (stop out) or an X (drop out) for the semester you skip college. Write the / or X in the row for the course you would have taken if you stayed in college.

		SEMESTER			
		1	2	3	4
COLLEGE COURSE	5				
COLLEGE COURSE	4				B
COLLEGE COURSE	3			B	
COLLEGE COURSE	2		A		
COLLEGE COURSE 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> with Coreq Course	B			
PREREQUISITE REMEDIATION	1				
PREREQUISITE REMEDIATION	2				
PREREQUISITE REMEDIATION	3				

SUCCESS POINTS

5 or more	4	3	0, 1, 2
A	B	C	F

GRADE

STOP OUT	DROP OUT
/	X

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS EACH SEMESTER!

- If you started in the Coreq Course paired with College Course 1, check the "with Coreq Course" box.
- For each semester, write your grade in the row for the course you took.
- If you stop out or drop out: Use a / (stop out) or an X (drop out) for the semester you skip college. Write the / or X in the row for the course you would have taken if you stayed in college.

		SEMESTER			
		1	2	3	4
COLLEGE COURSE	5				
COLLEGE COURSE	4				
COLLEGE COURSE	3				
COLLEGE COURSE	2				B
COLLEGE COURSE 1	<input type="checkbox"/> with Coreq Course		/	C	
PREREQUISITE REMEDIATION	1	C			
PREREQUISITE REMEDIATION	2				
PREREQUISITE REMEDIATION	3				

SUCCESS POINTS

5 or more	4	3	0, 1, 2
A	B	C	F

GRADE

STOP OUT	DROP OUT
/	X

TELL YOUR STORY

Pause for a moment before starting the next semester. Choose at least one person who did well and one person who did not do well. Have them tell the story of their semester in first person based on the cards they played. The stories should explain how far they progressed and how long it took them to reach (or to not reach) their goals. When players tell their stories, see if they reflect the experiences of your students. Visit completeccollege.org/CCA-games for examples of played hands and narratives that could accompany them.

Include storytelling after each semester. After the fourth semester, you will tell stories for the last time and then vote on the best story before having a more detailed discussion (see “Ending the Game”).

START THE NEXT SEMESTER

After all players have determined their starting point for the next semester and recorded their outcomes—and at least some players have told their stories—start the next semester.

- One player moves the wood disc on the game board to the next semester.
- Players keep their Character Cards.
- The starting order shifts one position clockwise. (For example, the person who went second in the previous semester will go first in the new semester.) As in the previous semester, play moves in a clockwise direction.
- The person who goes first shuffles all of the Student Success Cards (except any Learning Cards players are allowed to keep for the next semester), and play begins again.
- Play a total of four semesters.



ENDING THE GAME: Recognize the Winner and Best Story; Then Discuss and Reflect

After four semesters, see how far each student has progressed. The player who completes the most courses—and advances the farthest—wins the game. In the case of a tie, all students who completed the most college courses share the victory. Congratulate the winner(s) with a round of applause.

But winning is not the true purpose of the game. You are playing the game to better understand the student experience and discuss how the events in the game relate to what happens at your college.

Choose the Most Compelling Story

After each semester, players have told stories about their outcomes. After storytelling for the last semester is done, vote on who told the best, most compelling story during the game. And remember that the best story is not about who had the most positive outcome. No matter the outcome, the best narratives are those that give the most insight into a student's experience and lived realities. Congratulate the best storyteller with a round of applause.

Discuss and Reflect

Allow 30–60 minutes for a detailed discussion about this simulation of the student experience and how it relates to students' lived reality at your college. Use the discussion questions as a starting point. Start by having one person read all of the questions aloud. Then, as a group, choose a few to start your conversation. You do not have to get through every question. The goal is to spend some time discussing your college's structures and supports—and whether the college does everything it can to help students progress through college.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The cards played throughout the game were designed to represent how life—including both challenges and supports—can unfold for students. Did the challenges seem to reflect the lived experiences and realities of your students? Did the Support and Pedagogy Cards make sense as ways to anticipate and counter the challenges students face?
2. Many of the challenges that students face, e.g., a family member getting sick or losing a job, are unrelated to the student's academic potential. Other challenges, e.g., being assigned to prerequisite remediation, are part of the college structure. How can colleges take a holistic view of student success and provide institutional supports to address both of these types of challenges?
3. During the game, you may have had semesters during which you excelled and others during which you faced many challenges and obstacles. How does your experience in the game relate to the experiences students face? Did playing the role of a student help you empathize with their experiences?
4. Did you notice that Pedagogy and Support Cards are based on institutional resources and programs while Learning Cards are based more on students' actions? How does your college consider this distinction between what the college supports and what the student does? Do your college's programs reinforce or disrupt expectations about who is traditionally more or less likely to succeed?
5. How did your starting position in your first semester affect your academic progression? Did participating in coreq or dual enrollment help players build momentum toward academic success? Why or why not? How did being assigned to prerequisite remediation affect students' progress?
6. Did any of the Pedagogy or Support Cards provide benefits that could last beyond a single semester? If so, which ones and why? Are there any additional concepts that could be included in the game as Pedagogy or Support Cards?

7. In this game, each player had a Character Card that gave them the option of using a special power for their own individual success. Did your Character Card make you feel like you had more control over events in the game? Did any of these special abilities seem more or less powerful than others?
8. How did telling your story at the end of a semester affect your experience of the game? Did telling your story in first person make a difference? Did the ways Support Cards combined with Pedagogy Cards and Challenge Cards make the student experience more clear? Do you have any insights from how the Support Cards interacted with the other types of cards in the game and in real life?
9. Given that the game is a simulation that has been simplified for game play, does it effectively capture elements of the student experience? What would you add, remove, or change to make the simulation more effective?

For more information—including summaries of research on coreq courses versus prerequisite remediation as well as variables that predict academic success—visit completecollege.org/CCA-games.



We hope that this game and its supplementary materials will spark conversations among you and your peers about students' successes, students' challenges, and how best to support their growth and progress. Thank you for playing!

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Views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Gates Foundation.

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