TRAPWORDS

Before reading this book, check out the **Overview** which is included as a separate leaflet. The Overview shows how to play one round of the game. The rules are simple, and some people will prefer to learn the game just by reading the **Rules Summary** on the back side of the leaflet.

This rulebook will show you how to play the game and give some advice for teaching the game to new players.

- **Setup** instructions are on pages **2** through **4**.
- Complete rules are on pages 5 through 9.
- **Clue-Giving Rules** are on pages **10** and **11**.
- And notes on specific cards are on the back page.

rules overview video

http://cge.as/twv

COMPONENTS



7 room tiles



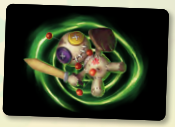
5 monsters



2 team figures



4 books



10 curse cards



10 monster cards



3 plastic stands



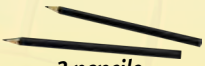
50 word cards



pad of trapword list sheets



sandtimer



2 pencils



2 torches

SETUP

Trapwords is a team game. You'll need to split up into **two teams**, sitting on opposite sides of the table. Each team needs at least two players. If you have an odd number of players, one team will have more than the other, and that's okay.

Push the team figures into two of the plastic stands and start them in room 3. Your team's figure is the one closer to you.



Lay out 5 room tiles in increasing order. One team sees them left to right, the other sees them right to left. We recommend rooms 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, as shown.



Looking for room 3? It's on the flipside of room 10.



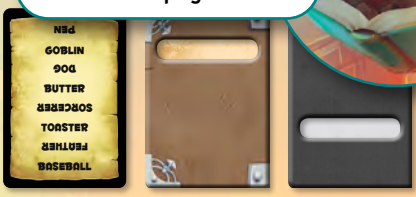
Shuffle the curse cards and choose 2 at random. Unlike monsters, the curses remain face down and unknown. Place one curse beside the second room and the other beside the room that is just before the monster.



Take the torch matching your team's figure and place it in front of the player who will be your team's first clue-giver. If no one cares who starts, both teams can give their torches to the players who are sitting on the end, as shown.



We'll explain the books and the word cards on the next page!



There are two decks of monster cards. We recommend the monsters without asterisks. (The ones with asterisks are for players who need nastier monsters.) Shuffle the deck and choose one monster at random.

Find the cardboard figure matching the chosen monster. Push it into a stand and place the monster in the final room – the one with the highest number.



Fold the paper to hide your trapwords from the other team.

Each team will need a trapwords sheet.

You also need a pencil to write with.

ALTERNATIVE SETUPS

Once you know the game well, you can experiment with more curses and different rooms. For example, you can try rooms 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, with curses in the first four rooms. The game is easy to customize.

CHOOSE A WORD SET

Place the deck of word cards on the table. You can shuffle it if you want, but try to avoid looking at the words – you don't want to spoil the surprise.

Trapwords has two separate sets of words. Both sets are written on both sides of the cards. You choose your set by choosing books:



word card *fantasy* *not fantasy*

Which books should you use? It really doesn't matter. Both lists have lots of "normal" words. The fantasy list contains some words that seem normal only in a fantasy world. The other list has some words that would not fit into a medieval fantasy world.

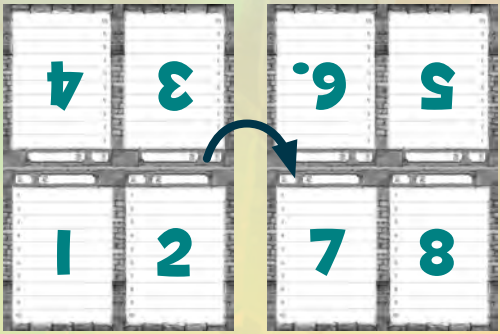
Both teams should have the same type of book. You will not use the other pair of books in this game.

TRAP LIST

The game is played in rounds. In the first part of each round, both teams will be making a list of trapwords. The game includes a tablet of trapwords sheets for this purpose. Each team uses 1 sheet for the entire game.

After 4 rounds, flip the sheet over and continue on the back.

The game will not go longer than 8 rounds.





THE ROUND

Each round has two parts:

- First, both teams simultaneously make lists of words to trap the other team.
- Then, each team gets a turn to try to guess their secret word, while avoiding the traps set by their opponents.

For a quick overview of gameplay, see the Overview leaflet.

SETTING TRAPS

Each team should draw a word card from the deck. The other team might have seen the words on the face-up side, so put the card into your book with the flipside up. Then close the book. Your book has magically chosen one of the eight words on that side of the card. **This is the secret word that the other team must guess.**

Look at the secret word and try to think of words their clue-giver might say when giving clues for it. Remember, you know who their clue-giver is, so you can use what you know about your friend to set more devious traps.

There are rules about what words you can write down as trapwords. Basically, you are supposed to write down trapwords related to that specific secret word, and not words like "is" or "it" that might be used in any clue for any word. **Full rules for legal traps are on page 10.**

Your team writes their trapwords on the piece of paper. **Pass the paper around.** Give everyone a chance to suggest trapwords by writing them down.

The number of trapwords in your list must equal the number printed on the other team's room. For example, if the other team is in room 3, you will write 3 trapwords. After everyone has suggested trapwords, you might have more than you need, and then your team must decide which ones to cross off the list.

Your trapwords should be chosen by the team, not by one person. Inform the other team when you have completed your list.

WHO GOES FIRST?

Once both teams have made their lists, it is time to exchange books and give clues. For this part of the game, teams will take turns. **If one team is behind, that team gives clues first.**

At the start of the game, neither team is behind, so each team should look at their books. The books are identical, except that one has a glowing symbol. **If neither team is behind, the book with the glowing symbol is the one that is passed first.** The team receiving that book will give clues first.



These books are passed first.

GIVING CLUES

Let's say you are your team's clue-giver, and the other team has passed you the book. Pick it up and look at your secret word.

The other team will give you a few seconds to read the word. Then they will start the timer.

You need to give your team clues that will make them say this word. You have a few restrictions. One obvious restriction is that you can't say the word or any form of the word.

The full list of clue-giving rules is on page 11. When you are teaching the game to a new group of people, you might want to let them play a few rounds before teaching them all the clue-giving rules.

When you are giving clues, **you must not say any of the trapwords** the other team wrote down. This will be challenging because **the other team does not show you their list of trapwords.**

You can give as many clues as you want.

Example:

So let's say you need to get your teammates to guess BUTTER. The other team has probably written down *milk*, but you might try to get around that by saying:

- "It's made from cow juice."

Of course, you could have just said it's a dairy product, but maybe they wrote down *dairy*. What about "toast"? They can choose only three trapwords, so maybe "toast" is safe.

- "My toast always falls with this side down."

That's a really good clue. Your team will probably guess BUTTER. Either that, or the other team will stop you because they trapped *toast*.

GUESSING

While you give clues, your teammates try to guess the word. They say their guesses out loud. Anyone on your team (except the clue-giver) can guess, and they don't have to take turns. However, they should guess wisely because **your team is allowed only 5 guesses.**

Guessers are not allowed to ask the clue-giver questions. They are not allowed to discuss their guesses. Some people like to ask permission before making a guess. ("I think I might know.") That's legal, but it's not recommended. It's usually better to just blurt things out.

If your team guesses the secret word, your figure advances to the next room.



FAILURE

Of course, you can't always be successful. Your team fails if any of these things happens:

- The clue-giver says a trapword, or any form of a trapword.
- The clue-giver gives an illegal clue.
- Your team makes 5 incorrect guesses.
- Time runs out.

If any one of these happens, your team is done guessing, and does not advance this round.

THE OTHER TEAM'S TURN

After the first team's turn, regardless of the outcome, **the other team gets a turn to guess their word.** During the other team's turn, your team has several jobs:

1. Start the timer once their clue-giver has read and understood the word.
2. Stop them if their clue-giver says any form of any of the trapwords you wrote down.
3. Stop them if their clue-giver gives an illegal clue.
4. Count their guesses. Stop them after their fifth guess.
5. Watch the timer. Stop them if time runs out.

Remember: The traps apply only to the clue-giver. **It is okay for the guessers to say trapwords.**

END OF THE ROUND

IF BOTH TEAMS FAIL

If neither team advances during the round, move the monster one room closer to the players' figures. (If one or both teams advanced, the monster stays where it is.)

If the monster moves into a room with a curse, move the curse one room closer to the players. If the curse moves into a room with another curse, then move that curse closer to the players.

Example:



If neither team guesses their word in round 1, the monster will move closer. Because it moves into a room with a curse, the curse also moves closer to the players.

CHANGE CLUE-GIVERS

At the end of the round, the clue-givers pass the torch to the next person in line. **Everyone should get at least one turn to be the clue-giver.** (But if you really don't want to give clues, you can pass the torch on.)

LATER ROUNDS

As teams advance deeper into the dungeon, remember these rules:

- **The number of traps you write down is equal to the number of the room that the other team is in.** So if they are in room 4, you write 4 trapwords. And if you are still in room 3, they still write only 3 trapwords.
- After both teams have written down their trapwords, **the team that is behind guesses first.**
- **If both teams are in the same room, then the team receiving the book with the glowing symbol guesses first.** Note that the books are exchanged each round, so if teams stay evenly matched, they will take turns going first.

Keep playing until one team (or both) starts the round in the same room as the monster. Remember that if neither team advances, the monster will come looking for you.

CLUE RESTRICTIONS

Some groups are shy and have a lot of trouble giving clues. If your group is struggling, feel free to ignore the clue-giving restrictions on page 11 until everyone is comfortable with the game.

However, some people catch on quickly and even find ways to give clues that are impossible to trap. Before they get out of hand, you should introduce the restrictions on page 11.

ADJUSTING THE TIMER

The official rule is that the clue-giver should have time (about 3 seconds) to read and understand the secret word before the timer starts. This works for most groups. However, every group is different, and your group might need some adjustments:

If your group needs more pressure, you can start the timer when the book is picked up.

On the other hand, if you have players who frequently run out of time, you can agree that their timer will not start until they start giving clues.

CURSES!

In later rounds, you might find yourself in a room with a curse – either because you advanced into it or because the monster pushed a curse into your room. Either way, flip the card over to reveal the curse.

The curse will apply only to the first round that is played in that room. It adds additional rules that will make the round more challenging for anyone in that room. If both teams start the round in that room, the curse applies to both. If one team is behind, the curse will apply only to the team in the cursed room.

At the end of the round, discard the curse, regardless of the outcome.

Curse cards spice up the game by giving an additional challenge to the team in the cursed room. However, **you can ignore the curses in your first game.** If people are struggling to give clues, just quietly put the curse cards back in the box and save them for a time when your group is more experienced.

BATTLING THE MONSTER

There are two ways to find yourself in the same room as the monster:

- You can advance into the monster's room.
- Or the monster can enter your room.

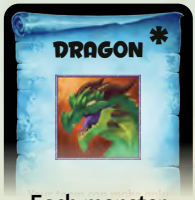
When your team starts the round in the same room as the monster, you have a chance to win the game. The monster has a special rule that will apply to your team during that round. If both teams are in the room with the monster, the rule applies to both teams.

There are several possible outcomes. First, let's suppose that your team is battling the monster, and the other team is behind. In this case, the other team will guess first. (This is standard – the team that is behind always guesses first.) Then your team battles the monster:

- If you guess your word, even with the monster's special rule, you win the game.
- If you fail to guess your word, the game continues. The monster does not move anymore, not even if the other team has also failed. Your team remains in the room to fight the monster again.

So now let's suppose that both teams are in the same room as the monster. The team receiving the book with the glowing symbol goes first. Regardless of the outcome, the other team also gets a chance to battle the monster.

- If each team guesses their word, both teams win.
- If only one team guesses their word, that team wins.
- If neither team guesses their word, they play another round.



Each monster also has a nastier version marked with an asterisk. You can use these in later games, if you think the regular monsters are too easy.

ALTERNATIVE TIEBREAKER

If your group prefers to have a single winner, use this tiebreaker rule: **If both teams are fighting the monster, the winner is the team that defeats the monster in less time.**

Tip the timer on its side when the first team defeats the monster. The sand in the bulb that was on bottom is the amount of time they used. When the second team guesses, this part of the timer goes on top. The second team will have exactly as much sand as the first team used. If they guess before time runs out, they win. Otherwise, the first team wins.

EIGHT-ROUND LIMIT

You have at most 8 rounds to run through the dungeon and defeat the monster. Your trapwords sheet holds 8 lists of trapwords, so if you are writing the last list on your sheet, it must be the last round of the game. (The trapwords sheet is explained on page 4.)

If neither team defeats the monster by the end of the eighth round, the monster wins. But it is much more likely that one or both teams will win.

WHAT'S LEGAL?

LEGAL TRAPS

In general, your trapwords should be words related to the word the other team is supposed to guess and not words that the clue-giver might have to use to describe any secret word.

- Your trapwords must be nouns (*head*, *strings*, *animal*), adjectives (*fuzzy*, *musical*, *large*), or verbs (*wear*, *playing*, *eats*).
- Numbers are also legal traps (*two*, *eight*, *hundred*), except for the number "one", as explained below.
- Your trapwords cannot be pronouns (*his*, *it*, *I*) or helping verbs (*is*, *has*, *can*).
- These words cannot be traps because they are too much like pronouns: *one*, *thing*, *some*, *something*, *someone*, *blank*. However, it's okay to trap words like *person* or *place* because they have a lot of synonyms.

Keep your traps in the spirit of the game. "Okay" is technically an adjective, but don't write it down just because you know your friend will say, "Um ... okay ..." And if you write down a word like *can*, it can only trigger on clues like "It comes in a can," and not on clues like "It can be green."

WHAT TRIGGERS A TRAP?

A trap is triggered when the clue-giver says a trapword or any form of a trapword.

- A compound word can be triggered by either part of the word. *Baseball* will be triggered either by "base" or "ball".
- Similarly, a trapword is triggered when it appears in a compound word. *Light* is triggered by "daylight".
- A trapword is triggered by all closely related forms of the word. For example, *scientist* is a trap for "science", "scientific", and even abbreviations such as "sci-fi" and "SF".
- But don't be too pedantic. "Conscience" was related to *science* back when people were speaking Latin, but in English, those words are not close enough to trigger a trap.

COUNTING GUESSES

Be lenient and reasonable when counting guesses. "Hot dog" counts as one guess. "Science fiction" counts as one guess. "I'll eat my hat if it isn't a goblin," counts as one guess.

STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Traps and clue-giving rules only trigger if you realize them immediately, say, within 3 seconds. If no one catches it, the clue-giver has avoided the trap.

However, sometimes you aren't certain. You think it *might be* a trap or an illegal clue, but maybe not. This is not the same as failing to catch the clue-giver in time. In this case, you should let the other team continue their turn. When they are done, players can discuss the situation and apply their decision retroactively.

LEGAL CLUES

To ensure that clues are trapable, there are several restrictions on clue-giving:

- **You can't say any form of the secret word.** Essentially, the word itself is a trapword and follows the rules for triggering traps.
- **You can't give examples of the secret word.** The word DOG, for example, would be impossible to trap if the clue-giver were allowed to name any type of dog. (But synonyms for the secret word are okay.)
- **You can't say proper nouns or proper adjectives** ("American", "Lord of the Rings", "Nancy Drew"). This may depend on context. You can't mention "Drew" when the word is MYSTERY, but "drew" is okay when the word is PEN.
- **Your clues must be about the meaning of the word, not about the way it sounds or the way it is written.** Don't give "rhymes with" or "sounds like" clues. Don't say what letter the word starts with. If the word is PAIL, don't give clues for PALE.
- **You can give clues for phrases that contain the secret word, as long as they are about the meaning and not just the spelling.** For example, if your word is DOG, clues about hot dogs are okay, but don't give clues about DOGMA.
- **You can't use abbreviations for proper nouns like "UK" or "FBI".** However, an abbreviation like "TV" is okay. It's not a proper noun, even though it is normally capitalized. (Note that "TV" can be trapped with the trapword *television*.)
- **Don't try to refer to titles by pretending they aren't proper nouns.** "I'm thinking of a game one might play with thrones," is not a legal clue. If you want to refer to *Game of Thrones*, try something like, "That fantasy series where everyone dies."
- **You can't give clues based on personal information unknown to the other team.** "That place where we used to hang out at the mall," is only legal if people on the other team used to hang out with you.
- **Don't give clues based on objects in the room.** Don't refer to anything the players are experiencing "right now".
- **Your clue must be based on words that can be written down.** It can't be based on hand gestures, or your tone of voice, or a melody.

GUESSES

- A guess is correct if it contains the secret word. "Dogs" and "hot dog" are both correct guesses for the secret word DOG.
- But it's not enough just to guess a closely related form of the word. For example, if the word is SCIENCE, the guesses "scientist" and "scientific" are not close enough. (They are close enough to trigger traps, but not close enough to be correct guesses.)
- You can't ask the clue-giver questions.
- You can't consult with your fellow guessers. If you say, "I think it might be 'goblin'. Should we guess 'goblin'?" then you have guessed "goblin".

NOTES ON SELECTED CURSES



FLOOD

Breathe normally while you are thinking of your clue. Then take a deep breath. It is legal to give a clue, hold your breath, give another clue, hold your breath, and so on. However, as soon as you inhale – even a tiny bit – you can give no more clues.



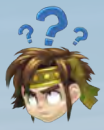
PETRIFICATION

Once a teammate makes a guess, you (the clue-giver) should also freeze in a rigid posture, as though you have been turned to stone.



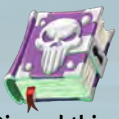
ECHO

The clue-giver is expected to make a good-faith effort to echo every word. The other team is expected to cut the clue-giver a little slack. Perfection is not required.



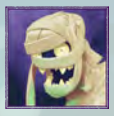
FEEBLEMIND

A noun is a person, place, or thing. However, you can't use pronouns like "I" or "it". Good luck!



WORD OF TERROR

Discard this curse if it is in the first room.



THE MUMMY'S CURSES

You draw a new curse for each round against the Mummy.

The more-challenging version of the Mummy gives you two curses at once. The curse combinations should be self-explanatory, but if you run across something puzzling, everyone should come to an agreement on it before starting the round.

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