

Illustrious Artifacts

a word game by Peter Johnson and Matthew Ice

A council of aliens land on Earth and each secretly acquires a noun of some sort. Each then uses the descriptor list (on back) to build up their noun as the one that should be added to the Intergalactic Museum of Illustrious Artifacts.

How to Play:

1. Determine turn order however you care to.
2. Each player chooses and secretly writes down a noun on a piece of paper.
3. Player 1 rolls 1d100 three times and reads aloud the words that correspond to the rolled numbers, then chooses one and adds it to their paper. This choice is publicly known. If a player rolls and chooses an adjective already on their list, they instead append "very" to that word. "Very" is two syllables and counts against your total allowed syllables. Players are encouraged to note the syllable count for each of their adjectives when adding to their list.
4. Player 2 repeats this process, and so on, until each player has adjectives that total 15 or more syllables. Once your adjectives total at least 15 syllables, skip your turn. If your turn comes up and you are at exactly 14 syllables, you do not roll as normal. Instead, you will roll 1d6 and add the corresponding adjective from the list to your paper.
5. Player 1 reads all of their adjectives (NOT THEIR NOUN) aloud, and player 2 rolls 1d100. As a group, all players except player 1 review the list of adjectives that are numbered at or above the rolled number and add one to player 1's list. (ex: player 2 rolls an 85, so the group may add any adjective from "dilapidated" to "atavistic".) This process is repeated once for each player so that everyone has one adjective added to their list by the rest of the group.
6. Players 1 and 2 read their full adjective lists, plus noun, and the rest of the group (by show of hands) decides which is the "most interesting." The presenting players may only say their written words unless the rest of the council has additional questions. The winner of this contest is paired against player 3, and so on. Once a "most interesting" noun is chosen overall, that player wins. Remember: this is a chance to sell the rest of the players on how great your choice is; if someone offhandedly says "how can a blender be pedantic?" it's an opportunity to explain how the blender is pedantic and why that's good.

Choosing a Noun:

It may be useful to constrain the nouns that players can choose, especially when playing for the first time. If all players agree, set some rules for what the nouns can be. These rules can be as strict or free as you wish. Here are some to consider:

- Your noun must be larger than a person
- Your noun must start with the same letter as your first name
- Your noun must be found in a museum
- Your noun must be made entirely of wood
- Your noun must not have more than three syllables

1. raw
2. chic
3. rank
4. smug
5. wild
6. crude
7. eerie
8. harsh
9. mangy
10. pious
11. rigid
12. silky
13. stoic
14. tepid
15. vivid
16. witty
17. abject
18. acidic
19. bitter
20. dapper
21. greasy
22. impish
23. lethal
24. mature
25. rueful
26. rustic
27. shabby
28. silent
29. trusty
30. urbane
31. abysmal
32. alleged
33. bashful
34. buoyant
35. compact
36. defiant
37. hulking
38. mundane
39. premium
40. reviled
41. scrappy
42. sizable
43. thrifty
44. velvety
45. viscous
46. abrasive
47. charming
48. ghoulish
49. pedantic
50. reusable
51. scornful
52. soothing
53. succinct
54. timeless
55. venomous
56. assertive
57. cavernous
58. conceited
59. courteous
60. exquisite
61. infantile
62. intricate
63. makeshift
64. permeable
65. repugnant
66. saccharin
67. seditious
68. spineless
69. unearthly
70. antiquated
71. artificial
72. autonomous
73. contrarian
74. delinquent
75. fraudulent
76. melancholy
77. nonviolent
78. persistent
79. productive
80. satisfying
81. subversive
82. tyrannical
83. alternative
84. charismatic
85. dilapidated
86. operational
87. pessimistic
88. resourceful
89. translucent
90. unrepentant
91. appreciative
92. disenchanted
93. unassailable
94. lackadaisical
95. prefabricated
96. reprehensible
97. sanctimonious
98. sophisticated
99. quintessential
100. atavistic