THE MEMOIRS OF MISSISSIPPI SMITH DESIGN DOCUMENTATION

Team 7

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Game Overview

Concept

The Memoirs of Mississippi Smith is a 3-5 player co-op board game. Players work together to explore an ancient pyramid, collecting treasures as they go and triggering events. When all the rooms inside the pyramid have been discovered, The Mummy spawns and the players must kill it before they can escape.

Target Audience

Due to the complexity and the number of rules involved in playing the game, *The Memoirs of Mississippi Smith* is aimed at individuals aged 14+.

It is made for people that enjoy a complex board game which revolves around player cooperation, includes a complex and board controlled enemy, and has a story centred around Ancient Egyptian lore.

Feature Set

- 3-5 player co-operation based gameplay
- Lots of re-playability and randomisation
- Item collection
- Dice-based combat
- Kill The Mummy to escape the pyramid – an NPC character hunting down players to regain its stolen treasures
- Multiple character choices – players can choose from 6
- Upgrading of the character's stats through the collection of treasure

Gameplay Features

Story

Being a family member of a retired archaeologist and grave robber has never been easy. You've managed to bring him back ancient treasures from across Europe, but now something else has taken his fancy. Mississippi Smith has flown you and a few other members of the family out to go and collect some artefacts from an Egyptian pyramid to help him better understand the ancient civilisation that built them.

You and the other adventurers will explore a pyramid that has been hidden from prying eyes for millennia, collecting the treasure that Mississippi seeks. He wishes you the best of luck, but will you be able to complete the mission?

Game Board

30 door tokens

20 room tiles

1 search die (D12)

20 search tokens

4 trapdoor tokens

1 Sarcophagus token

1 Mummy token

1 reveal die (D20)

6 combat dice (D6)

6 player tokens
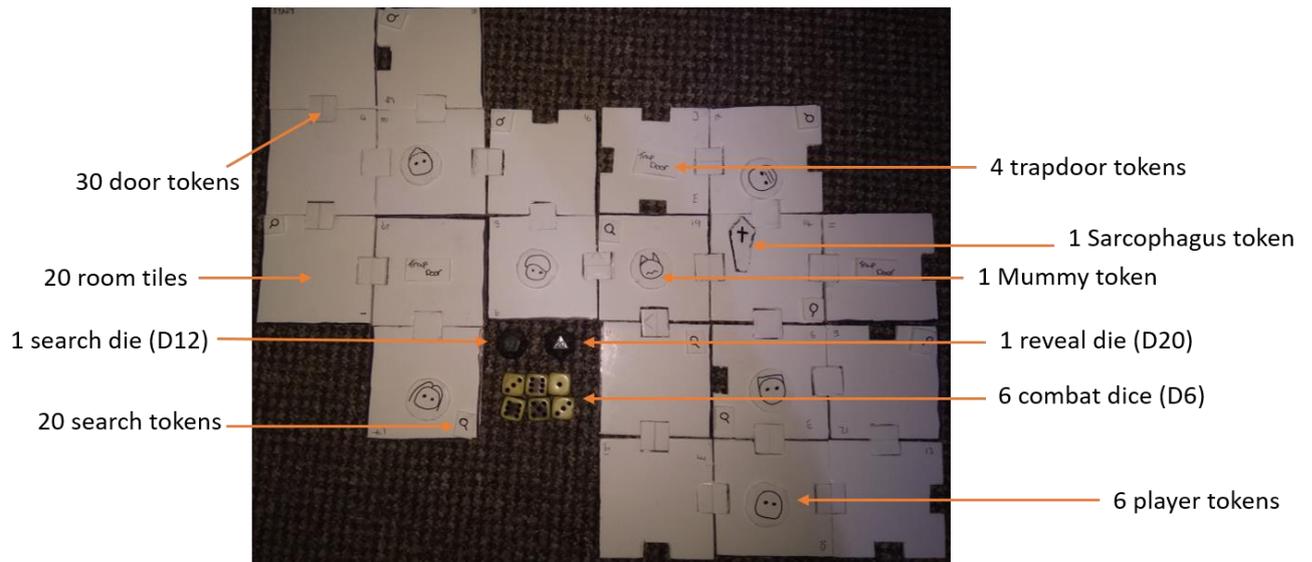
Room tiles

Players move through rooms, placing new ones from the ones left to build the board.

A modular board allowed for an aspect of randomisation, increasing playability. Due to the fact the tiles work together no matter what combination they're drawn from the deck in.

Certain tiles have built in events, meaning that when a tile is drawn and placed there is always a level of uncertainty of an event occurring or not. These events can either be detrimental or beneficial to player progress.

The numbers of the tiles also add another layer of randomisation; as there are 20 tiles our enemy can spawn on, the number the D20 lands on is where it spawns. It is never the same twice due to the randomisation of the dice roll.

Door tokens

Used to connect the room tiles together.

Search tokens

Placed in a room once a player has successfully searched it for treasure (i.e. the player picked up a treasure card).

Trapdoor tokens

Placed in a room when the trapdoor event card is drawn. Indicates that the room takes 2 moves to move through instead of 1.

Player tokens

Represents the character which the player is using that game.

Mummy token

Represents The Mummy. Players move this on The Mummy's turn.

Sarcophagus token

Represents the room in which The Mummy spawns. Needs to be destroyed before The Mummy can start taking damage.

A D20 dice which is rolled when all of the room tiles have been placed. The number it lands on is where the sarcophagus token, and therefore The Mummy token, are placed.

Search die

A D12 die which relates to a character's perception stat. If the number it lands on matches one of the numbers on the character's perception stat, then the player takes a treasure card from the top of the deck and has therefore successfully searched a room.

Combat dice

6 D6 dice that relate to a character's strength stat – the number is equal to how many combat dice a player should roll during combat with The Mummy.

Card Types

Mission Cards
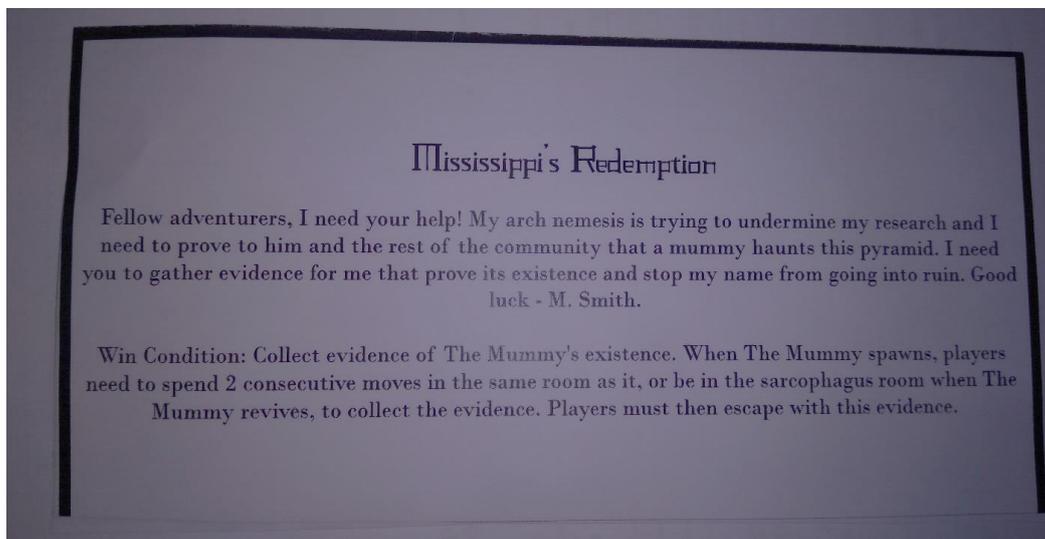
There are 3 mission cards.

One of these cards are picked before play starts. They tell players a small backstory about why they are in the pyramid this time around and have a win condition which players need to complete to win the game.

At the beginning of the game, players can choose one of 3 mission cards and this mission gives you the win condition for that playthrough. However, this win condition can only be met if The Mummy is defeated. This is done by players having to destroy the sarcophagus, where The Mummy spawns, before The Mummy takes any permanent damage and can be killed. If The Mummy isn't defeated and a player is killed by it, then all players lose the game. This was decided by us to add more co-op elements to the game, as stronger players feel that they have to protect weaker ones or risk losing the game. If players defeat The Mummy yet fail to meet the win condition, they also lose the game.

The 3 current win conditions are:

- Be in the same room as The Mummy when it respawns for 2 total turns
- The group must collect at least 5 dark treasures
- The group must collect at least 1 canopic jar
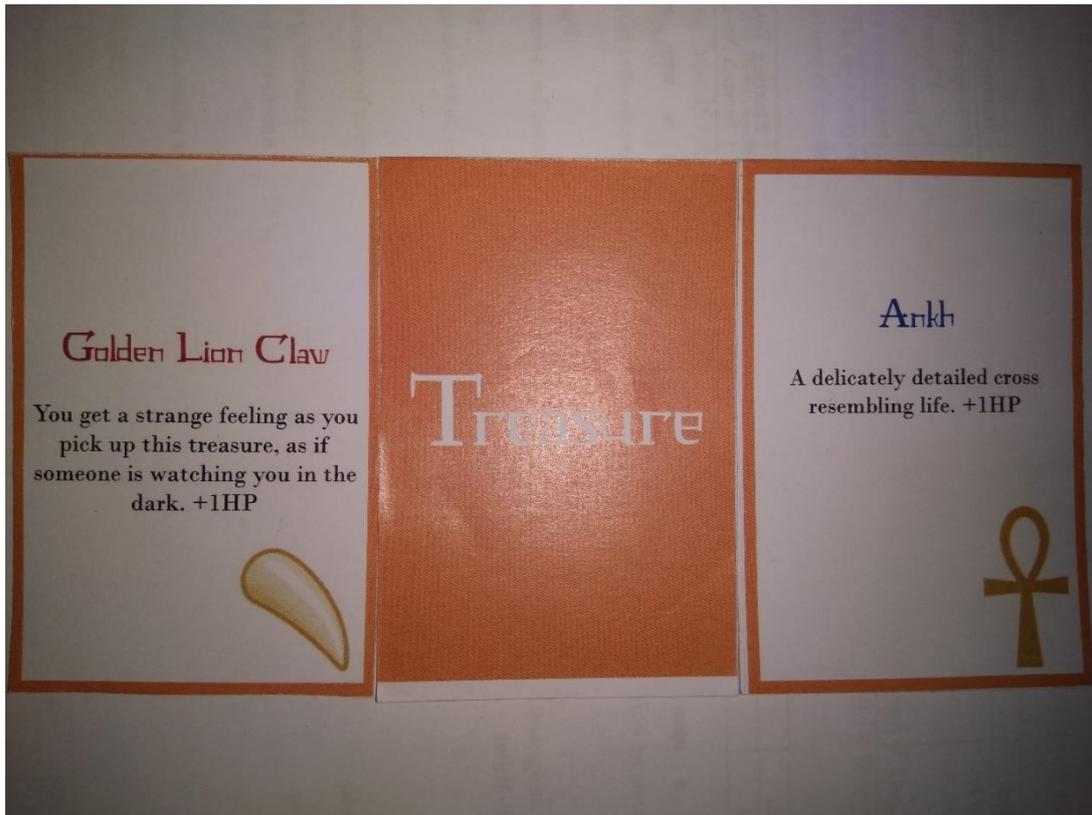
There are 41 treasure cards.

Treasure cards are split into 3 categories: dark treasures (red name), light treasures (blue name), and neutral treasures (black name). Treasure cards increase player stats by a minimum of 1HP, unless otherwise stated on the card drawn.

Lost treasure cards are returned to the bottom of the deck.

Collecting treasure is the main objective for the first phase of the game. Many of these treasure items increase the player's HP as well as having specific attributes to increase other stats such as strength and evasion. Some items of treasure also allow the player to avoid certain traps within the pyramid. Some treasure cards also cause the player to take damage, and some don't add any HP and are merely for collection purposes.
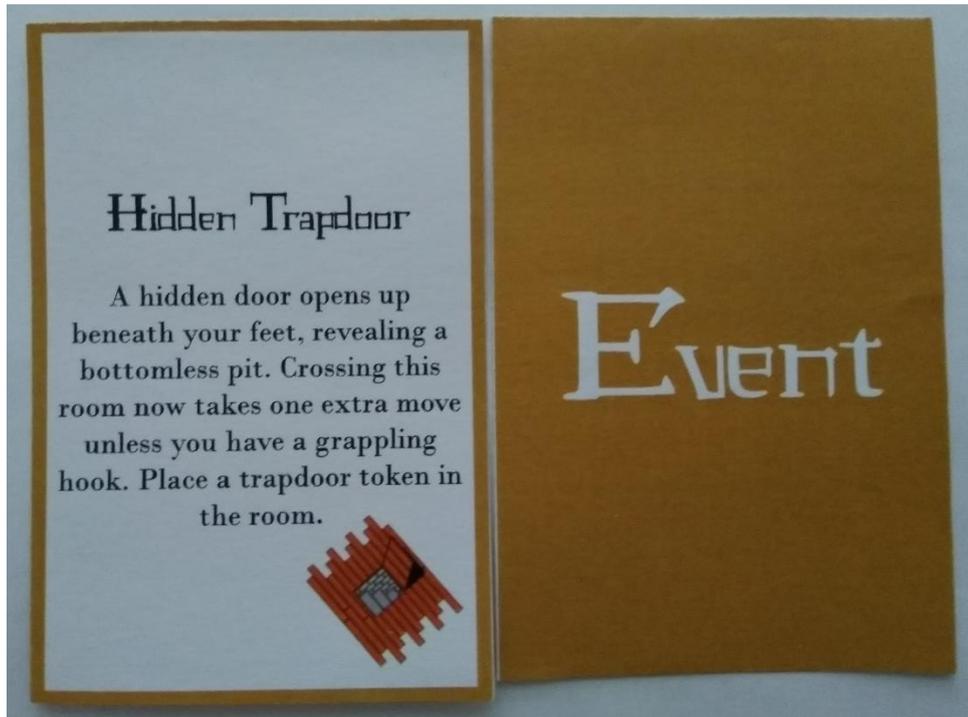
There are 20 event cards.

If a player moves into a room marked with an 'E', then they draw an event card from the top of the deck and read it out. The event is then carried out. Event cards that have been drawn are placed in a discard pile. If all event cards are in the discard pile, then it is reshuffled, and all cards are back in play.
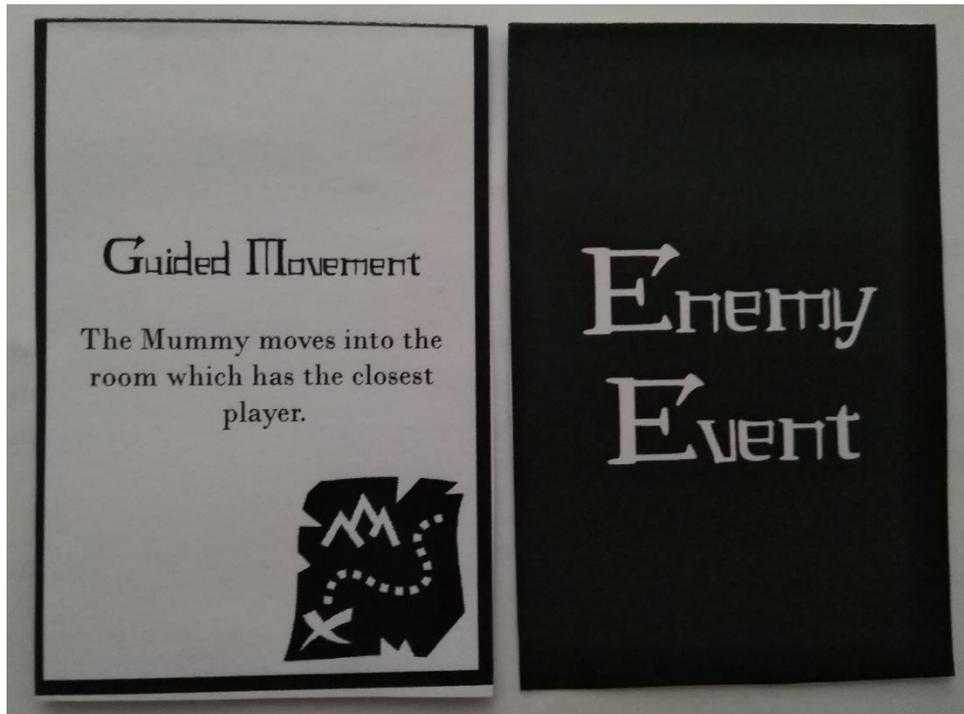
There are 17 enemy event cards.

Enemy event cards are drawn when triggered by an event room or at the end of The Mummy's turn. The last player reads this card out and the event is triggered. The card is then returned to the bottom of the deck.

Characters and Stats

The game currently has 6 playable characters: Maine Mann, Flo Rider, George Uh, Louise Anna, Ol' York and Ali Ska. Each of these characters has 5 stats attributed to them and a starting treasure to give them at least 1HP at the start of play. Each of the stats vary from character to character to make each one unique and the stats have been balanced so they all work well together, no matter if all characters are in play or not. Character stats are made known to the player using a character sheet that matches the character token they are playing with. A slider at the bottom of the sheet helps them to keep track of their health, a design decision that was influenced by the tracking system seen on character tiles in Betrayal at House on the Hill.

Character Stat Descriptions

- **Perception**: This stat tells players what number they need to roll on the search die to find treasure.
- **Strength**: The number of combat dice the player can roll.
- **Evasion**: The number that is subtracted from the combat roll of The Mummy.
- **Speed**: The number of rooms a player can move through on their turn.
- **Starting treasure**: This is the treasure that the player starts with at the start of the game.
- **HP**: This is affected by the treasures that the player collects.

Maine Mann

Perception	Strength	Evasion	Speed	Starting Treasure
1, 2, 11, 12	3	1	2	Flaming Torch

Flo Rider

Perception	Strength	Evasion	Speed	Starting Treasure
3, 5, 7, 9	2	2	2	Grappling Hook

George Uh

Perception	Strength	Evasion	Speed	Starting Treasure
3, 7, 9, 10	2	1	2	Cat Statue

Louise Anna

Perception	Strength	Evasion	Speed	Starting Treasure
9, 10, 11, 12	1	1	2	Shield of Isis

Ol' York

Perception	Strength	Evasion	Speed	Starting Treasure
1, 6, 12 – if he rolls a 1 or 12, he picks up 2 treasures	2	1	1	Sceptre of the Pharaoh

Ali Ska

Perception	Strength	Evasion	Speed	Starting Treasure
2, 4, 6, 8	2	1	3	Scarab Necklace

How To Play

The game is divided into 2 phases, Exploration and Escape:

- During the Exploration phase, players work together to collect treasure and discover new rooms within the pyramid. The player with the lowest speed stat goes first, with turns moving clockwise around the table.
- When all the rooms have been discovered, The Mummy spawns and the game moves into the Escape phase. Players need to destroy the sarcophagus before The Mummy can be killed and they escape. Players win the game should they escape and complete the win condition on their mission card.

Exploration Phase

Players move according to their speed stat, using this stat to either move through existing rooms or reveal a new room. If a room doesn't have a search token, the player can choose to search it.

Some rooms are marked with an 'E' and they trigger an event.

When all room tiles have been placed, the player that placed it rolls the reveal die and the game moves into the Escape phase. If the reveal die lands on 20, roll again.

Escape Phase

The sarcophagus and The Mummy tokens are placed in the room which the reveal die lands on. The Sarcophagus token is placed light side up. Players continue to move around the board, with The

Mummy taking its turn last. If either the player or The Mummy ends in the same room as the other, then combat is triggered.

Players can continue to search and explore rooms as normal.

Players need to defeat The Mummy by either blowing up the sarcophagus with dynamite or returning the heart. When the sarcophagus has been destroyed, the token is flipped.

Gameplay Mechanics

Searching a room

If a player chooses to search a room, they must roll the search die. If the die lands on a number matching one of the numbers on their character's perception stat the player takes a treasure card from the top of the deck.

Once a room has been successfully searched by a player, a search token is placed in the room and it cannot be searched again.

The Mummy

When it is The Mummy's turn, it moves towards the closest player. Should it move into a room which triggers an event, the last player picks up and reads an enemy event card.

The Mummy always completes an enemy event at the end of its turn. The last player picks a card from the top of the deck.

The Mummy went through many iterations from our initial concept to our current one. It was our most difficult balancing point due to the constant changes in the way it behaved. It started off as a player controlled character which spawned from a reveal roll. This made the placing and discovering of new rooms redundant as The Mummy could spawn when only a few were placed, making it unfair on the player. We didn't want it to be around right at the beginning of play either as it would give players an unfair disadvantage by being hunted down by a much more powerful character while having nothing to defend or attack with. Because of this, we decided to make The Mummy an NPC character, which spawned when all board tiles had been placed. This change also led to us making numerous tweaks to its stats, adding one to The Mummy's strength and HP after each playtest as a recurring theme was that it was too weak. To make it more powerful, we also added enemy events which The Mummy plays to further hinder the progress of the players. These were removed for a while as we thought it would make The Mummy too powerful, however we eventually added them back in as it made the gameplay much more interesting.

Throughout the iteration of stats and the change of the character from player to board controlled, we finalised the behaviours of The Mummy for our current game concept. When all room tiles have been placed, The Mummy spawns. This is determined by rolling a D20 and it's spawn point, the sarcophagus, is placed on the numbered room tile determined by the die roll. It has a speed stat of 2, meaning that it can move a maximum to 2 room tiles, and it moves towards the closest player. Should it or a player enter the same room as another, then combat would be triggered. If the player loses the combat encounter, they lose a piece of treasure and take 1HP of damage. If The Mummy loses the combat then it is taken of the board for one round of turns, then respawns at the sarcophagus. The Mummy's HP isn't affected unless the sarcophagus has been destroyed. If The Mummy dies when the sarcophagus has been destroyed, then it can no longer respawn and players win the game. At the end of The Mummy's turn, it always draws an enemy event card to hinder the progress of the players.

Speed	Strength	HP
2	5	2

Combat

The entity (either a player or The Mummy) that moved into the room rolls their combat dice first. A player other than the one in combat rolls the combat die for The Mummy. The player then rolls the number of combat dice equal to their strength stat.

The highest roller wins the combat:

Player wins and the sarcophagus hasn't been destroyed
The Mummy returns to the sarcophagus room and is removed from the board for one round.

Player wins and the sarcophagus has been destroyed
The Mummy takes 1HP of damage and returns to the sarcophagus room and is taken off the board for one round.

If The Mummy takes 1HP of damage and its HP is now 0HP, players escape the pyramid and see if they have completed the win condition on their mission card.

The Mummy wins
The player takes 1HP of damage and returns an item of treasure to the bottom of the treasure card deck.

If a player is killed by The Mummy, all players automatically lose the game.

Draw
If the combat dice rolls result in a draw, nothing happens. There are no re-rolls.

Games of Influence

Betrayal at House on The Hill

Betrayal at House on the Hill is a game where you explore and old and (presumably) haunted house, placing down room tiles and triggering events. This is one early idea we had for our game and we needed to look into it to see how a successful game had done it previously, as to not make it an exact copy, but draw influence from the systems.

Scotland Yard

Scotland Yard is a "1 vs many" hidden movement-based board game, where you play as a team of detectives looking for a mysterious villain known only as "Mr X". The method of hidden movement used here is interesting, as it revolves around public transport, and you can only see the method of transport used, but not where they started or ended. Our initial idea involved hidden movement, and this was an inspiration for that.

Not Alone

Not alone is similar to the other games we played, as it is a 1 vs many hidden movement-based game, however unlike the other games, this is a card game, and it has many nuances that come with that, such as a hand of cards to use, many options for your turn, and a general idea of the enemy not having all of the knowledge. Although we enjoyed this game, we didn't implement many ideas from this game, as we play with all resources open.

Camp Grizzly

Camp Grizzly is a co-operative "player vs board" game, in which you are a team of camp counsellors trying to escape from a masked killer terrorizing the campsite, gathering items to make your escape. Once we transitioned from a player-controlled enemy to a board controlled enemy, we played this game as we wanted to see how another game implemented this idea. This game was also an inspiration for the mission system, with some of our missions requiring certain items to complete.