<u>Games that you can buy</u> – a selection

There are an increasing number of games on the market that relate to climate change. There is normally a limit on how many people can play and that could constrain how useful they are to u3a groups. However, it may be possible to play in pairs, to increase the number of people involved in any one game; and/or a group could make use of more than one game on the same occasion; and/or members could take a game home to try out and then report back.

Quoting Sam Illingworth, Associate Professor, Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement at Edinburgh Napier University:

"Tabletop games (board games, card games, role-playing games – anything that can be played around a table) have a unique ability to engage players in complex systems. Experiencing a scary imaginary future in a game can inspire players to take action in the real world. Games engage our brains in a different way than just hearing news about climate disasters. And they can prepare us to make better choices…. They also foster dialogue, providing a shared experience that players can discuss, debate and learn from."

And Debra J. Rosenthal, Professor of English at John Carroll University:

"Most board games – think of Monopoly or Catan – are 'zero-sum' competitions: One player wins a clear victory over the others. But since climate change affects the whole world, climate change board games emphasize teamwork and group success. Either all players win together, or no one survives. These board games have a narrative arc that can spark discussion about values, perspective, conflict, emotions and decision-making."

The following pages provide details and reviews of several such games.

Games you can buy

Here is some information on a selection of games, mostly based on that available on-line. Prices, where mentioned, should be taken as indicative only, as they can vary a lot between different sellers.

Note that you can find very helpful videos on YouTube that explain the rules of many games.

We would welcome any feedback on any of these games and also any other recommendations.

A. Carbon City Zero



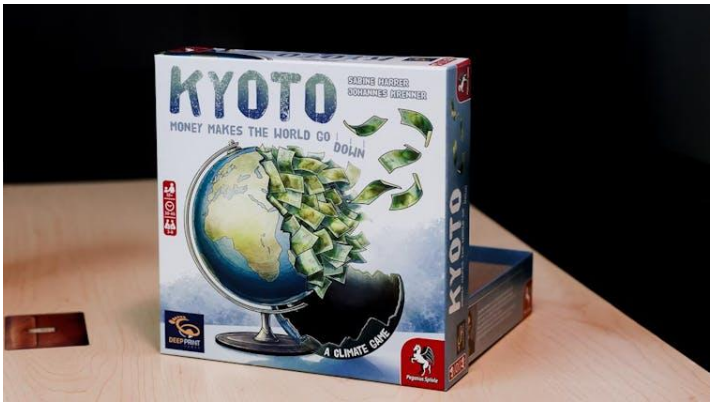
Age and players: Age 8+ 2-4 players. Approximately 60 minutes playing time
Cost: £20 – 25
Brief outline: Collaborative deck building game to build a sustainable city. It needs players to balance the need to generate income with reducing carbon. Collaboration is key in order for everyone to win…or lose.
What the reviewers say:
There will be Games says*:* 'It is really easy to learn. It doesn't take long to play, yet you do need to think about every choice you make and learn to live with the consequences. You see how different strategies work.' Recommended by them.
Meeple like Us says*: '*…enjoyable deck builder that does a good job of communicating an important science message in an intuitive way.'
Other comments:
We couldn't find a negative review. It is printed on FSC card, proceeds go towards providing schools with free copies. There is a second edition called Carbon City Zero: World edition. This is free and downloadable to print off at home.

B. Solutions



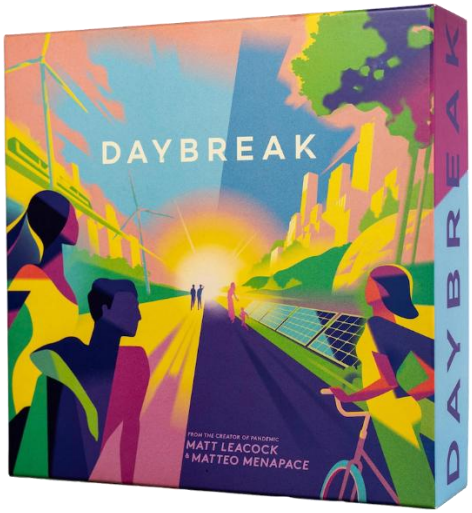
Age and players: Age 10+ 1-8 players. 60 – 90 minutes to play (Short mode 30 – 45 minutes)
Cost: £30
Brief outline: This is a collaborative, discussion-based game. The 76 cards have ranked solutions on them. The basis of their ranking is on how much impact the solution can realistically have between 2020 and 2050. It's up to players to deploy their cards based on their knowledge. As with Carbon City Zero, everyone wins...or loses.
What the reviewers say:
Boardgamegeek says*:* '… this game is designed to foster discussion around climate change'.
Kickstarter says: '…this is a highly informative and educational game. It is well made and has obviously been very well researched with lots of detailed information.'
The Conversation says: '…a valuable learning tool since it was easy to learn and based on accurate scientific information. The need to evaluate different solutions easily sparked conversation…'
Other comments:
It seems that is it well researched and factual. 10% of the profits go to Project Drawdown which reviews and analyses practices and technologies that can reduce greenhouse gas concentrations. This game is unusual amongst those listed here in that up to 8 people can play. There are virtual copies.

C. Kyoto



Age and players: 10+ 3-6 players 30-45 minutes to play
Cost: £16
Brief outline: This is a negotiation game which is set at a Climate Change conference and all players are representatives of different countries. Again, a collaborative game but each country or Bloc has its own agenda too (Surprise! Surprise!)**.** There is a balance that you have to negotiate between greed and the welfare of the environment without other players knowing your self interests. Takes more time to learn than *Solutions*.
What the reviewers say:
Boardgamegeek says*: '*Time restraint makes it tense… Fun…. Neat and simple.... Perfect for entry level, families and anyone wanting to introduce the theme in a fun way'.
Gamesreviews says: 'The mechanics are great and the components outstanding'. They felt with only 3 players the game would 'fall flat'. 'If you enjoy fast paced, aggressive games, Kyoto will be one for you!'
The Conversation says: 'the game provides insight into possible barriers to achieving emissions goals, and how nations juggle meeting emission-reduction goals with their own economic self-interest.'

D. Daybreak.



Age and players: 10+ 1 – 4 players. 60 – 90 minutes to play
Cost: £40
Brief outline: Another co-operative board game. It is a hopeful game where the players act as world leaders working together to mitigate climate change by implementing clean energy and increasing resilience. The game's rules enforce targets and penalties, for example through consequences of rising global temperatures and community crises if emissions are not reduced. Players constantly have to decide between different actions.
What the reviewers say (this game is quite new with few reviews):
Opinionatedgamer says*:* 'Daybreak is a very compelling game…. it's rare to find a game that carries this level of tension through most of the game…. It's a lot to think about'.
The Guardian says in an article called 'Can board games teach us about the climate crisis?' that game creators say yes. This is not a review but is worth looking at as it features this game amongst others.

Other comments:
It's quite visual but the pieces are numerous and look quite fiddly. No plastics or no textiles used and FSC card only used. All the descriptions of the game said it was 'hopeful'. The creators were also keen to make sure it wasn't too 'preachy'.

E. **CO2: Second Chance Edition 2**



Age and players: 12+ 1 – 4 players 60 – 120 minutes
Cost: £65
Brief outline: In this game players represent energy companies who are attempting to keep pollution levels down by building green power plants around the globe. It is double sided, one side competitive, the other cooperative.
What the reviewers say:
Coopboardgames says: 'PROS: I think it works in both game modes… I'm all about satisfying moments in games and there are a bunch of those in CO2: Second Chance… Every single decision you make in this game is important… The rule book is excellent.
CONS: There are misprints. You need a large table to play it on. There are some 'feel-bad' moments that may lead to anger.
But overall this was a very positive review

Tabletopgaming says: ‘Whilst still as demanding and heavy as its first edition, the addition of an outstanding co-op option makes playing either game mode a rewarding brain teaser with a solid theme. A challenge to learn and play, but nevertheless a fantastic game.’

Other comments:

This looks like quite a complex game.

F. Somewhere Everywhere Water Rising



Age and Players: 9+ 1 – 4 players

Cost: £20 (from Canada so postage a consideration)

Brief outline: A collaborative game where players take on the roles of consultants who make collective decisions about developing land projects in the face of sea level rise.

What the reviewers say:

The Conversation says: ‘The game is easy to learn and relies on conversation…but it had lower educational value [than some other games] because it does not teach about the human activity that creates and perpetuates increasing global temperatures.’

G. **Nunami** (meaning *Out on the Land* in Inukitut)

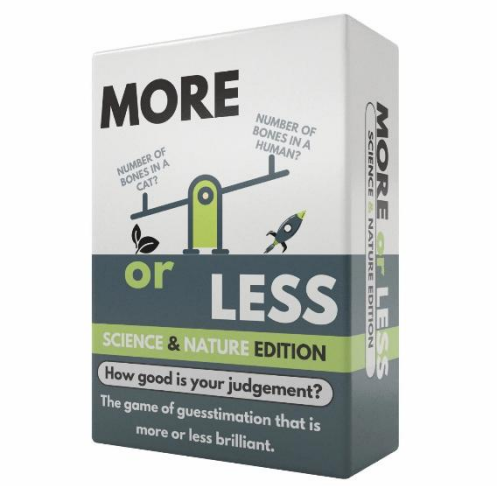


Age and players: 10+ 2 – 4 players 15 - 45 minutes

Cost: Around £20, available in English, French and Inukitut.

Brief outline: Nunami is an Inuit game that starts simple and becomes more challenging. The game aims to teach players about balancing life in fragile terrain. There are cards for humans, animals, sand and snow.
What the reviewers say:
Publicnewsservice says: 'It does not teach the drivers of Climate Change.'
Amazon customer reviews: 'There are enough variables to keep you interested for a good long time… Easy mechanics but a lot of strategy… The artwork is beautiful and the focus of balance on man and nature cards is so timely and relevant'
Reddit says: 'the rule book is pretty unclear'

H. **More or Less**, Science & Nature edition



Age and Players: 8+ with 2 or more players
Cost £12

Brief outline: A quiz game based on fun trivia! Are sharks more or less old than trees? Are there more or less than 500,000 meatballs consumed in Ikea stores daily? Simply answer with "more" or "less"!

What the reviewers say:
Comments from Jenny Wilson of Croydon u3a Environment & Climate Crisis Group…
It's definitely worth the money – I used it as a quiz rather than a team game. Because the answers are all 'More or Less' it's supportive and participants don't have to have specialist knowledge, just a gut feeling. The answers are informative and useful. I picked out the More or Less Questions which were climate related. For example:
Q. Do forests cover more or less than 40% of the world's surface?....
A. Less - Forests cover about 30% of the world's land area, but they are disappearing at an alarming rate. Between 1990 and 2016 the world lost 502,000 square miles of forest, an area larger than South Africa.