

At Risk! An International Development Board Game

Lesson Overview

The object of the original board game Risk is global domination. In “At Risk,” players represent countries in order to realize global development. Despite the philanthropic nature of the game, there is nevertheless a competitive aspect to At Risk, inasmuch as rich countries compete to be the most successful humanitarian. If only life were really like that!

Grade Level

Grade 8, but may be adapted to more senior classes

Time Required

Two 70-minute periods

Curriculum Connection

Northwest Territories Strand 8: “The Changing World.”

From the interim curriculum documents that guide Grades 7, 8, and 9 Social Studies in the Northwest Territories.

Link to Canadian National Geography Standards

Essential Element #1 (Grades 6–8) – The World in Spatial Terms

- Map types (thematic)
- Major countries of the world

Essential Element #1 (Grades 6–8) – Places and Regions

- World political regions
- Factors that influence people’s perception of places and regions
- Concepts of formal, functional, and perceptual regions
- Patterns of culture in Canada and the world (economy, culture)

Essential Element #4 (Grades 6–8) – Human Systems

- Global economic interdependence

Essential Element #5 (Grades 6–8) – Environment and Society

- Effects of human modification of the physical environment
- Limits and opportunities of the physical environment for human activities
- World patterns of resource distribution and utilization

Geographic Skills #1 (Grades 6–8) – Asking Geographic Questions

- Identify geographic issues

Geographic Skills #2 (Grades 6–8) – Acquiring Geographic Information

- Use maps to collect and/or compile geographic information

Geographic Skills #4 (Grades 6–8) – Analysing Geographic Information

- Interpret information obtained from maps

Geographic Skills #5 (Grades 6–8) – Answering Geographic Questions

- Make generalizations and assess their validity

Canadian Geographic–CIDA Map

Hard copies of the Canadian Geographic–CIDA map *A Developing World* will be used as game boards. With up to nine players per board, additional print maps may be required, or the free mosaic map can be used. The on-line version of the map can be found at www.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap. Classroom sets of the printed map are available. [Click here](#) to order.

Additional Resources, Materials, and Equipment Required

- One die per game
- Coloured tokens to represent international development budgets of G8 countries (Game pieces from the original Risk game would be ideal, but improvised coloured tokens, such as beans, buttons, popping corn, or small pieces of paper, would also work.)
- Development project cards to be printed off and cut prior to the game (The cards describe projects inspired by real international development initiatives, as well as possible obstacles. The numbers on the cards correspond to the numbers obtained from the roll of the die.)

Main Objective

Through a role-playing game, students will be introduced to the themes of global poverty, international development, humanitarian assistance, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the world community in 2000. For details on the MDGs, visit these sites:

- www.un.org/millenniumgoals
- http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/pdf/hdr03_MDC.pdf

Learning Outcomes

Through this game, students will be able to:

- understand “the problems and expectations of developing nations;”
- understand that “levels of freedom and prosperity are not equal for all people around the world;”
- develop “an appreciation that social issues are complex and may take time to resolve;”
- develop an attitude of “open-mindedness, delaying judgment until evidence is considered.”

At Risk also embraces three different skill sets, related to processing, communication, and participation. Specifically, the students will be able to:

- “identify values underlying various positions taken on an issue;”
- “organize material under topical headings;” and

- “contribute to...(and) observe the courtesies of group discussion.” (The citations pertaining to learning outcomes are from Northwest Territories Junior Secondary Social Studies interim curriculum—Strand 8.)

The Lesson

	Teacher Activity	Student Activity
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame the lesson in the context of a recent humanitarian crisis, for example, the Southeast Asian tsunami of 2004. • Proceed to differentiate between international relief and international development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in class discussion.
Lesson Development	<p><u>Day 1: Concepts and Definitions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to playing the game, teachers should present the following terms and ideas. The suggested links may provide teachers with background material for such a presentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>developed/developing countries</i> - <i>First World / Third World countries</i> - <i>sustainable development</i> - <i>G8 countries</i>: Teachers might also present information on the global distribution of wealth, through “The World as 100 People” activity (http://smart.tin.it/luccacos/miniaturereearth/miniature_earth.htm) - <i>Human Development Index (HDI)</i> http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/faq.html - <i>gross domestic product (GDP)</i>: Note that the “development budgets” in this game are based on the United Nations’ (UN) recommended 0.7% of national GDP - <i>MDGs</i>: www.un.org/millenniumgoals <p><u>Day 2: Playing the Game</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project cards (provided) detail 20 MDG-inspired initiatives. Teachers should photocopy multiple sets, so that a game deck may consist of 40 or 60 cards. • The teacher presents the rules of play as described in the next section. • After grouping up to nine students for each map, tokens and die should be distributed to players. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are involved in note-taking on technical, economic concepts: G8 countries, sustainable economic activity, gross domestic product, etc. • Students participate in small group or class discussion of possible definitions for “developed” and suggestions about how development can be measured, as well as a discussion about the responsibility of rich nations to contribute to international development. • Students are involved in note-taking on the HDI and MDGs. • Students play the game.

The Lesson (cont'd)

Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the game, students may be required to complete the following discussion questions to assess their understanding gained through the game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which country had the most tokens at the beginning of the game? Why is this the case? - The dues paid to the UN by players were not equal. Why? Is this fair? - Were projects more or less successful when players sought partners? Do you think this would be true in the case of a real project? - Why were projects sometimes unsuccessful? What do you think could help to ensure a successful international development project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either individually or in groups, students complete and hand-in discussion questions.
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Lesson Extensions

- In your playing groups, categorize the project cards according to the HDI measurements: standard of living, longevity, and education. Be prepared to explain your choices.
- What other development projects are not included in this game? Do some research and make new cards to add to the game.

Assessment of Student Learning

The teacher may wish to evaluate the participation level of each student in playing the game and then answering the summary questions.

AT RISK! AN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GAME

Rules of Play

Players:

Up to nine players: each player represents one of the G8 countries, commonly understood as the richest, most powerful countries in the world; one player represents the United Nations.

Object of the Game:

Players “invest” in international development projects as described on the game cards. Projects are either successful or unsuccessful, depending upon the roll of the die. The player with the most successful projects at the end of the game wins.

The Cards:

- The project cards on the following pages detail 20 Millennium Development Goal-inspired initiatives. The numbers on the cards correspond to numbers rolled on the die.
- Teachers should photocopy multiple sets so that a game deck may consist of 40 or 60 cards. Have the students cut the cards out and assemble the game sets prior to starting the game.

Rules:

- 1) Each player adopts the identity of a G8 country. One additional player must represent the UN.
- 2) Each player starts with tokens that represent his/her country’s national wealth (see column 3 in the table on page 8). However, the player who represents the UN starts with **no** tokens and depends on dues paid by other players to finance projects.
- 3) At the start of the game, players should have tokens representing their development budget in front of them, the map *A Developing World* should be spread as a game board, and project cards should be face down, in a pile.
- 4) Determine which player is to go first and then follow the instructions below (in order).

Round 1

Player 1:

- Pay the UN dues according to the table on page 8 (column 2).
- Choose a developing country to assist (orange and red countries on the map).
- Invest a token from the national budget, by placing it on the chosen country.

Players 2 to 7:

- Complete the same steps. The player representing the UN will only be able to collect dues at this point in the game.

Round 2*Player 1:*

- Pay the UN dues according to the table on page 8.
- Ask for UN support in a development project in the country you identified in Round 1.
- The player representing the UN then invests tokens to support your development project. For each development project, the player representing the UN must invest at least one token, from **each** of the G8 nations playing the game. For example, if five players represent G8 countries, then each UN project must have an investment of five different tokens. This reflects the international, cooperative character of the UN. At the end of the game, the UN, **not** the member countries, is credited for these successful projects.
- Roll the die.
- Choose a project card from the pile.
- Determine the success or failure of the project, as indicated on the back of the card.
- Return the card to the bottom of the pile.

Round 3:

- The play continues as in Round 2, except that players may need to choose another developing country in which to initiate a project, if the first project was successful.
- 5) Players whose projects succeed leave their token on their chosen country, and the UN gives back one token to each of the G8 countries to represent the shared wealth. For unsuccessful projects, tokens are removed from the game.
 - 6) Each player takes a turn initiating a project.
 - 7) G8 players **may** partner with other players in a project in order to increase the chances of success. This must occur at the beginning of a turn. When partnered, players must each pay their dues to the UN, each place a token in the selected developing country, and then may have two rolls of the die (one each) to achieve a “successful project” in a given country. If the project is successful with the first draw of a card, the second player need not choose a card.
 - 8) The game is ended when either a) all development budgets have been spent, or b) all developing countries have benefited from international development.

Start of the Game:

1 G8 countries	2 UN dues to be paid during the game	3 Game tokens
France	1 token every turn	32
Germany	2 tokens every turn	46
Italy	1 token every turn	31
Russia	1 token every other turn	10
Japan	3 tokens every turn	73
United Kingdom	1 token every turn	33
United States	6 tokens every turn	150
Canada	1 token every other turn	26

Orphanage Project	
Deaths due to HIV/AIDS have left children without parents. This project aims to care for orphans and find them new adoptive homes.	
1	Through training and drop-in centres, orphaned children are supported by the community. Successful project.
2	Foster families don't have enough money to take in orphans. Project is a bust.
3	Through training and drop-in centres, orphaned children are supported by the community. Successful project.
4	Through training and drop-in centres, orphaned children are supported by the community. Successful project.
5	Through training and drop-in centres, orphaned children are supported by the community. Successful project.
6	Through training and drop-in centres, orphaned children are supported by the community. Successful project.

Wheat Farming Project	
Farm scientists start a bank of hardy wheat seeds. Local farmers borrow and then repay seeds after harvest. Self-sufficient food production is the goal.	
1	Good harvest and the bank is full for next year. Successful project.
2	Poor harvest means no seeds to repay the bank. Project is a bust.
3	Seeds get wet and rot in the winter. Project is a bust.
4	Good harvest and the bank is full for next year. Successful project.
5	Good harvest and the bank is full for next year. Successful project.
6	Good harvest and the bank is full for next year. Successful project.

All-Women Radio Project	
A new radio station allows women who can't read or write to discuss issues important to them. Improved education and empowerment are the goals.	
1	News and opinions are heard and shared by more women. Successful project.
2	Transmitter falls down in a wind storm and there is not enough money to repair it. Project is a bust.
3	News and opinions are heard and shared by more women. Successful project.
4	News and opinions are heard and shared by more women. Successful project.
5	News and opinions are heard and shared by more women. Successful project.
6	Women are discouraged from listening to the radio. Project is a bust.

School Construction Project	
This project proposes to use local workers and materials to build a schoolhouse in a native community. Primary education is the main goal.	
1	Most parents can't afford school fees. Project is a bust.
2	New local school allows students to remain in the village. Successful project.
3	Students are needed at home and can't attend school. Project is a bust.
4	New local school allows students to remain in the village. Successful project.
5	New local school allows students to remain in the village. Successful project.
6	Bus to transport students breaks down permanently. Project is a bust.

Fish Farming Project	
Using a local pond, this project instructs a community how to feed and harvest fish for food. Better nutrition is the primary goal of this project.	
1	Mysterious disease infects the fish, which die. Project is a bust.
2	Locals overfish the pond with no fish left to breed. Project is a bust.
3	Heavy rains flood the pond and send fish into the streets. Project is a bust.
4	Fish add fat and protein to a mostly vegetarian diet. Successful project.
5	Fish add fat and protein to a mostly vegetarian diet. Successful project.
6	Fish add fat and protein to a mostly vegetarian diet. Successful project.

Alternative Paper Project	
By using fibres from cotton, banana, and corn plants to make paper, a new product can be sold and forests are saved.	
1	Paper is too thick and sticky to run in photocopiers. Project is a bust.
2	Paper is sold in environmentally friendly stores around the world. Successful project.
3	Paper is sold in environmentally friendly stores around the world. Successful project.
4	Paper is too expensive to produce—no buyers. Product is a bust.
5	Paper is sold in environmentally friendly stores around the world. Successful project.
6	Paper is sold in environmentally friendly stores around the world. Successful project.

Malaria Project	
Malaria is a disease that is carried by mosquitoes. This projects tries to develop and promote traditional drugs to treat the disease.	
1	Local knowledge of antimalarial drugs produces cheap and effective drugs. Successful project.
2	Local knowledge of antimalarial drugs produces cheap and effective drugs. Successful project.
3	Local knowledge of antimalarial drugs produces cheap and effective drugs. Successful project.
4	Local knowledge of antimalarial drugs produces cheap and effective drugs. Successful project.
5	Local knowledge of antimalarial drugs produces cheap and effective drugs. Successful project.
6	Local knowledge of antimalarial drugs produces cheap and effective drugs. Successful project.

Free Condom Project	
A sex education project provides free condoms to all participants. Fighting HIV/AIDS is the main goal.	
1	Condom use increases and HIV infection goes down. Successful project.
2	Condom use increases and HIV infection goes down. Successful project.
3	Local religious practices don't allow condom use. Project is a bust.
4	Condoms are stolen and sold on the black market. Project is a bust.
5	Condom use increases and HIV infection goes down. Successful project.
6	Condom use increases and HIV infection goes down. Successful project.

Ecotourism Project	
By training local guides and promoting the local forest as a tourist attraction, this project aims to protect the environment and bring money to the region.	
1	Tourists flock to see exotic plants and animals. Successful project.
2	Tourists flock to see exotic plants and animals. Successful project.
3	Tourists flock to see exotic plants and animals. Successful project.
4	Poor advertising means no tourists. Project is a bust.
5	Guides are too busy on the farm to work in the office. Project is a bust.
6	Tourists flock to see exotic plants and animals. Successful project.

Food Relief Project	
A drought has left millions of people without food. This project aims to provide emergency food relief.	
1	Short-term relief from famine, but no long-term benefits. Project is a bust.
2	Short-term relief from famine, but no long-term benefits. Project is a bust.
3	Short-term relief from famine, but no long-term benefits. Project is a bust.
4	Short-term relief from famine, but no long-term benefits. Project is a bust.
5	Short-term relief from famine, but no long-term benefits. Project is a bust.
6	Short-term relief from famine, but no long-term benefits. Project is a bust.

Traditional Food Project	
This project tries to promote and sell traditional foods abroad. Increasing income and promoting local culture are the goals.	
1	Cannot get export licence for non-inspected food. Project is a bust.
2	Food shipments are stolen by local rebel army. Project is a bust.
3	Foreign restaurants excited to serve traditional foods. Successful project.
4	Foreign restaurants excited to serve traditional foods. Successful project.
5	Foreign restaurants excited to serve traditional foods. Successful project.
6	Foreign restaurants excited to serve traditional foods. Successful project.

Solar Cooking Project	
Using mirrors to focus the sun's rays, local communities have a cleaner, less destructive way of cooking their food. Safeguarding the local forest is a main goal.	
1	Locals don't return home from work until after the sun has set. Project is a bust.
2	Using the sun to cook food means preservation of trees. Successful project.
3	Using the sun to cook food means preservation of trees. Successful project.
4	Using the sun to cook food means preservation of trees. Successful project.
5	Solar cookers aren't big enough to cook for an entire family. Project is a bust.
6	Ten thousand solar cookers break during shipment. Project is a bust.

Cooperative Housing Project	
For this project, locals help to build the low-cost housing that they will live in. The goal is improved living conditions.	
1	Not enough research was done, and houses are built on an earthquake fault. Project is a bust.
2	Clean, safe, and warm housing. Successful project.
3	Clean, safe, and warm housing. Successful project.
4	Clean, safe, and warm housing. Successful project.
5	Clean, safe, and warm housing. Successful project.
6	Houses are too far out of town, and no one wants to live there. Project is a bust.

Computer Project	
This project tries to connect small communities with teachers and doctors in the big city, through the Internet. Improved health and education are the goals.	
1	Used computers and satellite dishes bring community and experts together. Successful project.
2	No one in the community can repair computers. Project is a bust.
3	Power source is unreliable. Project is a bust.
4	Used computers and satellite dishes bring community and experts together. Successful project.
5	Big city doctors are not interested in helping a “backwards” community. Project is a bust.
6	Computers are used only for e-mail with relatives in other countries. Project is a bust.

Police Training Project	
Female police officers help to train the first class of women police. Empowering women is the primary goal of this project.	
1	Women are forbidden by husbands and fathers from participating. Project is a bust.
2	People trust new female police officers. Successful project.
3	People trust new female police officers. Successful project.
4	Authority of women police officers is not respected. Project is a bust.
5	People trust new female police officers. Successful project.
6	Women are forbidden by husbands and fathers from participating. Project is a bust.

Literacy Project	
This project aims to start a library in a small village. Promoting reading is the main goal.	
1	Daily reading groups gather at the new library. Successful project.
2	Daily reading groups gather at the new library. Successful project.
3	Foreign books have no elements of local culture and aren’t read by the villagers. Project is a bust
4	Daily reading groups gather at the new library. Successful project.
5	English books are sent to a community that doesn’t speak the language. Project is a bust.
6	Daily reading groups gather at the new library. Successful project.

Nutrition Project	
This project aims to add vitamins that aren't found in local foods to milk. Improved health is the main objective.	
1	Vitamin-enriched milk tastes terrible, and no one wants to drink it. Project is a bust.
2	Many preventable diseases are avoided through a more nutritious diet. Successful project.
3	Many preventable diseases are avoided through a more nutritious diet. Successful project.
4	Many preventable diseases are avoided through a more nutritious diet. Successful project.
5	Many preventable diseases are avoided through a more nutritious diet. Successful project.
6	Locals have allergic reactions to new levels of vitamins. Project is a bust.

Reforestation Project	
By planting trees on hillsides, this project tries to stop erosion of fertile topsoil. Better soil means better harvests and more food.	
1	The trees take root! Successful project.
2	The trees take root! Successful project.
3	The trees take root! Successful project.
4	Trees planted in the rainy season. Heavy rains wash the seedlings away. Project is a bust.
5	Tree seedlings die in warehouse before they can be planted. Project is a bust.
6	The trees take root! Successful project.

Doctor Training Project	
Local students are trained to provide basic health care in isolated communities. Better health care in small communities is the goal.	
1	Drugs and materials are stolen before they reach the village. Project is a bust.
2	Long-term care means better health for villagers. Successful project.
3	Long-term care means better health for villagers. Successful project.
4	Long-term care means better health for villagers. Successful project.
5	Long-term care means better health for villagers. Successful project.
6	New doctors leave for the big city, where they can make more money. Project is a bust.

Mass Transit Project	
Too many cars have created a smog problem in the big city. This project introduces electric buses to address the problem of exhaust and traffic.	
1	Cheap and reliable bus service is a hit in the city. Successful project.
2	No storage room for people to put their shopping on the bus. Project is a bust.
3	Cheap and reliable bus service is a hit in the city. Successful project.
4	Electric buses aren't powerful enough to get up the hills. Project is a bust.
5	Cheap and reliable bus service is a hit in the city. Successful project.
6	Cheap and reliable bus service is a hit in the city. Successful project.