



Tipping Point – Rules of Play

1. Introduction

Tipping Point is a cooperative puzzle game for up to four players; it takes about 45 minutes to play. Players assume the roles of project managers, working together to complete their company's assigned projects without allowing any of them to fail. The game is won by successfully completing all the projects; it is lost by allowing one of the projects to extend into the Red Zone, the outermost row of spaces on the game board. Players win or lose as a group; there is no competition between players.

2. Components

1 Game Board (*tipping_point_board.pdf*)

1 Project Counter token (*tipping_point_pieces.pdf*)

20 Project Start Date tokens (5 of each color; 4 different colors) (*tipping_point_pieces.pdf*)

8 Production Work tokens, 2 of each color (*tipping_point_pieces.pdf*)

10 Concept Work tokens (*tipping_point_pieces.pdf*)

192 Project Quarter tokens, 48 of each color (*tipping_point_pieces.pdf*)

1 Turn token (*tipping_point_pieces.pdf*)

100 Project Draw cards, in 4 sets of 1 – 25 (for A, B, C, & D) (*tipping_point_cards.pdf*)

For storage: 5 sandwich bags; a manila envelope (legal size)

3. Game Assembly

Print out the components – the Game Board, Project Draw cards, and all tokens. The Game Board takes 6 sheets of 8.5" x 11" paper. You can tape the board together, or just lay the sheets down next to each other. When assembled, the board should appear as below, with the four lettered sections next to each other and the Project Counter on the right side.

Cut out the tokens, and sort them into piles by color. For storage, use one bag to hold the Project Counter, Project Start Date, Production Work and Concept Work tokens, and then put each color's Project Quarter tokens into a separate bag. It will be easier to sort out the 10 unique tokens of a given color from the other unique tokens, rather than trying to fish them out of a bag of project tokens. If you don't have a color printer, you can use a marker to indicate token color.

Fold the tokens once on the vertical axis, but do not crease them. This way they will stand up on the board and be much easier to handle.

The Project Draw cards are divided up into four decks, one for each quadrant, A, B, C, and D. There should be a card for each square in the area (1 – 25).



3.1. The assembled game board and tokens.

4. Setting Up

Lay out the Game Board and shuffle the four decks of Project Draw cards. Place the decks around the board – position is not important, they should just be easy to reach. Place the Project Counter token at Start. Decide which player is going first; play proceeds clockwise from there. Each player should choose a color and take the tokens associated with it (Project Start Date, Production Work, and Project Quarter tokens). All projects of that color now belong to that player.

If there are less than four players, players should double up on colors until all colors have a player. For example, if there are three players, Player One chooses blue, Player Two chooses red, and Player Three chooses green and yellow. Player One and Player Two's turns proceed normally, but Player Three will actually be taking two turns each round: one for her green tokens, one for her yellow.

If there are two players, they should each choose two colors, and alternate turns: Player One takes his first color's turn; Player Two takes her first color's turn; Player One takes his second color's turn, Player Two takes her second color's turn, and so on.

The important rule to remember is all four colors are played each game, and each color gets a unique turn every round of the game, even when one player is playing multiple colors.

It is fine to use common objects instead of the provided tokens. For example, instead of the provided Concept Work tokens, pennies might be used.

5. Winning the Game

To win the game, the players must complete eight projects and then clear the board of any remaining projects. The game is lost if, at any time, a player must place a Project Quarter token on the outermost row of squares on the board.

6. Starting Play: The First Round

The first round is the initial project placement round. To complete this round:

- The player going first draws one card from the Project Deck of his or her choice, and places one of his Project Start Date tokens in the square indicated.
- The player then places a Project Start Date token in each of the four cardinal squares next to the Start token – up, down, left and right. This represents the beginning a project.
- Going clockwise, the next player draws a card from the Project Deck of his or her choice, and does the same. This continues until four starting projects have been placed – one for each color.
- If starting project placement requires a player to place a Project Start Date token or a Project Quarter token on a square that is already occupied, follow the “Compound Project” rules below. During the initial setup it is usually best for each player to draw from a different deck. This reduces the chances of starting with a compound project.

The player who placed first then begins his or her first turn.

Alternate Rule: Instead of randomly determining the first project start locations, players may choose to use one of the Initial Scenarios, listed at the end of the rules in the “Scenarios” section. Using the Initial Scenarios allows some control over the difficulty of the game.

7. Turn Sequence

Each player's turn consists of six steps. Everyone follows these steps every turn.

1. Remove Production Work tokens.
2. Place two Production Work tokens, place one Concept Work token, or move one Concept Work token.
3. Grow projects.
4. Clear any completed projects.
5. Begin new projects if needed.
6. Pass the turn token to the left.

8. Production Work

Each player controls two Production Work tokens. During the first phase of his or her turn the player must remove their Production Work tokens from the board.

After his or her Production Work tokens have been removed, the player may then do one of the following:

- Place his or her two Production Work tokens, or
- Place one Concept Work token, or
- Move a Concept Work token.



Production Work tokens:

- May be placed in any unoccupied space.
- May *not* be placed in a space occupied by either token at the start of the turn.
- Must both be placed in the same turn.
- Must be removed at the start of their owner's following turn.

9. Concept Work

There are also 10 Concept Work tokens available. All players take Concept Work tokens from this pool, and once all of the Concept Work tokens have been used no more may be placed.



Concept Work tokens:

- Are placed one per turn.
- May only be placed within the white area of the board.
- Are never removed from the board.
- May be moved one square horizontally or vertically. They cannot be moved diagonally, and cannot be moved into or pass an occupied space.

No Work tokens of either type may be placed in a space that was occupied by the player's Production Work tokens at the start of the turn.

In other words, if a player begins his or her turn with one Production Work token in A-9 and one in B-9, he or she cannot place any Work tokens in either of these squares this turn.

10. Tasks

"Task" refers to the paths or arms that grow out from the Project Start Date. Every project has a number of Tasks associated with it. Each task grows one space out from the Start Date during the project owner's turn. Projects are completed when all of their tasks can no longer grow.

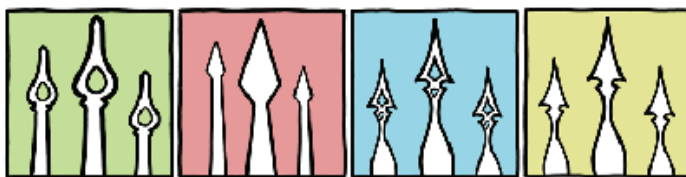
For more information, see "Growing Projects" and "Completing Projects" below.

11. The Deadline

The "deadline" is the line separating the white quadrants from the yellow areas of the board. Concept Work tokens may not be placed beyond the deadline, because at this stage the task needs to be finished as soon as possible. If any task goes too far beyond the deadline and enters the red zone the game is lost for all players.

12. Growing Projects

During the “grow projects” phase of a player’s turn, he or she places one Project Quarter token at the end of each project Task for every project he or she owns. Project Quarter tokens represent the quarters of the year. Placing a token represents the project taking another Project Quarter to complete and getting closer to the deadline.



Growth always occurs horizontally and vertically – never diagonally – and all tasks that *can* grow *do* grow.

Additionally, if a player owns part of any compound projects, all Tasks of the compound project grow, even those owned by other players. See “Compound Projects” below for more details.

If a Task is blocked by any token it does not grow this turn. A project is completed as soon as every Task is blocked. This means that often times a project will not be completed until *after* it has grown.

Projects do *not* grow on the turn they are placed. This is because the Grow Projects phase occurs *before* the Begin New Projects phase.

If a project grows such that a Project Quarter token is placed in the red zone at the edge of the board, the game is over, resulting in a loss for all players.

Compound projects grow differently from regular projects. For details see “Compound Projects” below.

13. Completing Projects

A project is not completed until every task is:

- “Completed” by Concept Work, or
- “Covered” by Production Work, or
- Merged into another project.

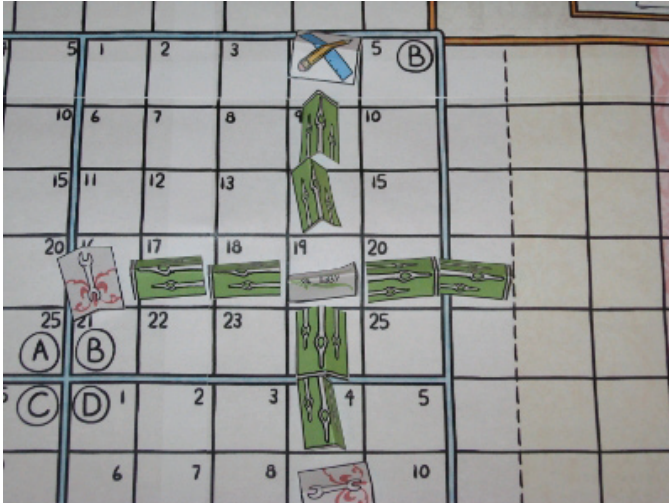
In other words, if the project cannot grow, it is completed. For Compound projects, all tasks of all colors must be completed or covered.

After completing a project, the owner of the completed project chooses a letter deck and draws one card. He or she then places a new project in the indicated space.

If the completed project was a compound project, each player who owned part of the project must place a new project immediately. For more information see “Compound Projects” below.

14. Examples of Completed Projects

Example 14.1. Completing a Project



14.1.1. This project is almost complete.



14.1.2. Now that all tasks are covered, the project is complete.

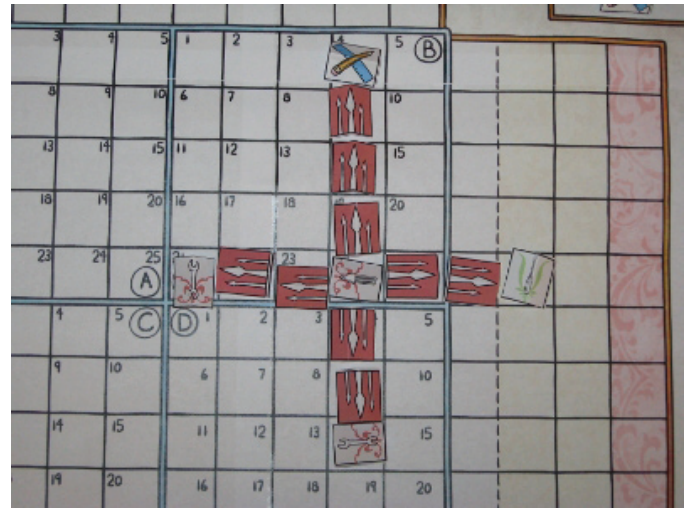


14.1.3. The project has been cleared from the board. The player owning the project now draws a letter card and begins a new project at the indicated space.

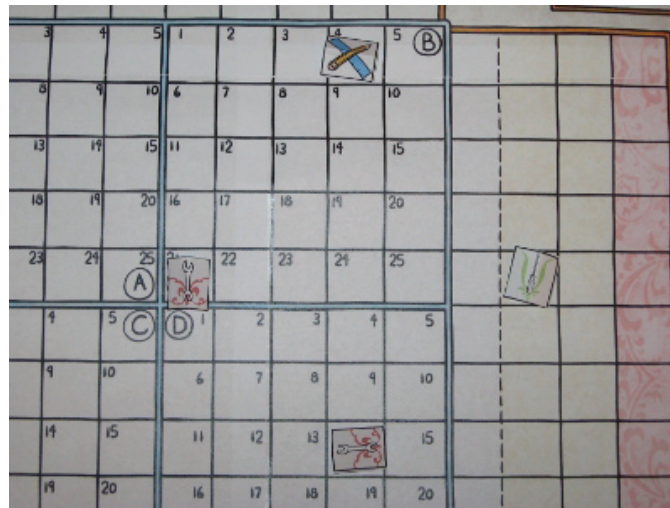
Example 14.2. A Project Completed by Growth



14.2.1. This project has not yet grown this turn.



14.2.2. Now that the project has grown it is completed.



14.2.3. The project is removed from the board. The player owning the project now draws a letter card and begins a new project at the indicated space.

15. Beginning Projects

To begin a project, the player who will own the project chooses a letter deck and draws one card. The letter indicates which section of the board the project will begin in. The number on the back of the card determines which space the project's Project Start Date token will be placed in. For example, if a card is drawn from the "B" deck with the number 9, the project will begin in space number 9 in the "B" section of the board.



If the space drawn is occupied by a Project Quarter token from another project, replace that token with the new Project Start Date token (examples are at the end of this section). These projects are now combined (see "Compound Projects" below).

If the space drawn is occupied by any other token:

1. Add one to the value shown on the card.
2. If that space is occupied, add one more to the value.
3. If 25 is reached and no space has been found, start over at space 1 of the same letter.
4. If no spaces are available within that lettered section, proceed to the next letter alphabetically, starting at space 1. If no spaces are available in D, start at space A-1.

After placing the Project Start Date token in the space shown on the card, place one Project Quarter token on each of the four sides, excluding diagonals. If any of these spaces are occupied, the occupying token remains.

16. The Turn Token

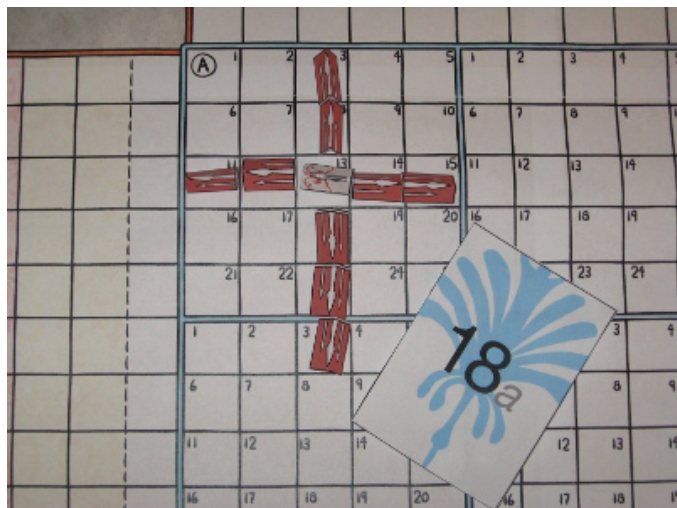
The Turn token is a way of keeping track of whose turn it is. Because players will often be placing new projects on somebody else's turn it can be easy to forget whose turn it is. Use of the Turn token is recommended but not required.



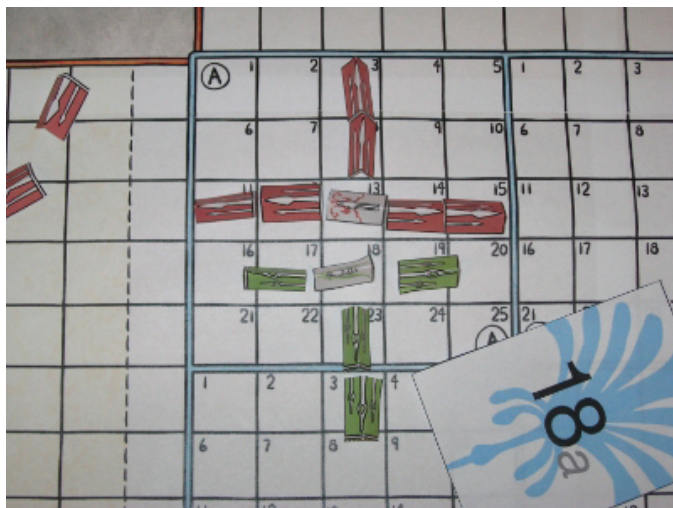
17. Replacing Project Quarter Tokens

If the letter card drawn when beginning a project indicates a space occupied by a Project Quarter token, the Project Quarter token is replaced by the new Project Start Date token. How this works is shown in the examples 17.1 and 17.2.

Example 17.1

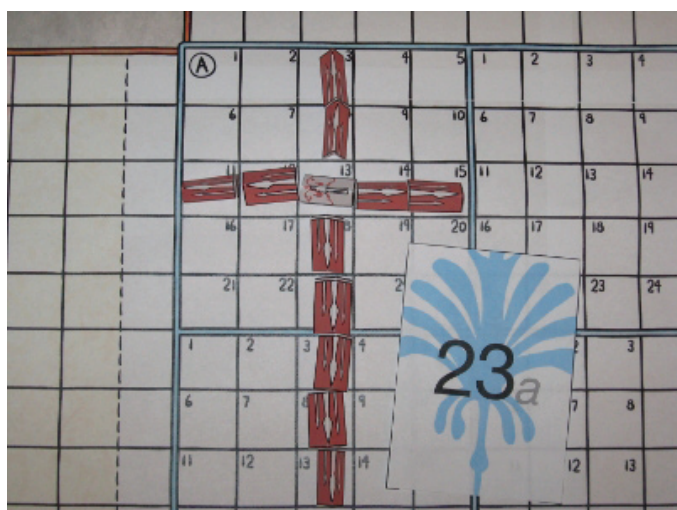


17.1.1. A new Project Start Date token must be placed at space A-18, which is occupied by a Project Quarter token.

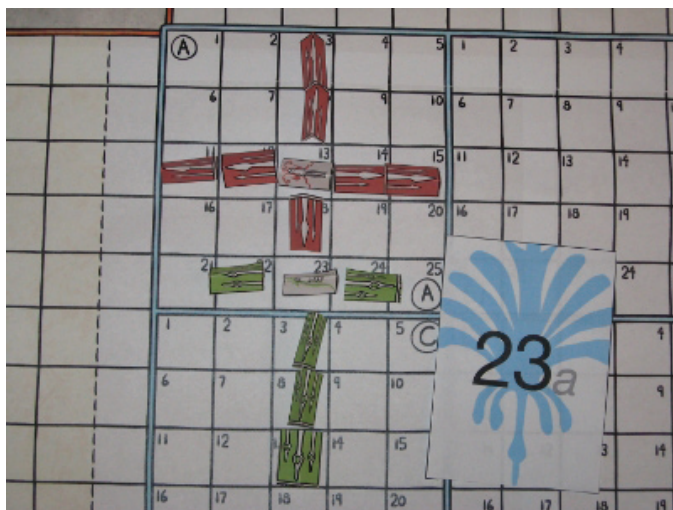


17.1.2. Normally new projects only start with one Project Quarter token on each side. In this case, doing so would create a stranded red Project Quarter token at space C-3. The stranded token is replaced by a Project Quarter token belonging to the new project, in this case green. The two projects are now one compound project.

Example 17.2



17.2.1. This example is similar to the above, except that A-23 has been drawn.



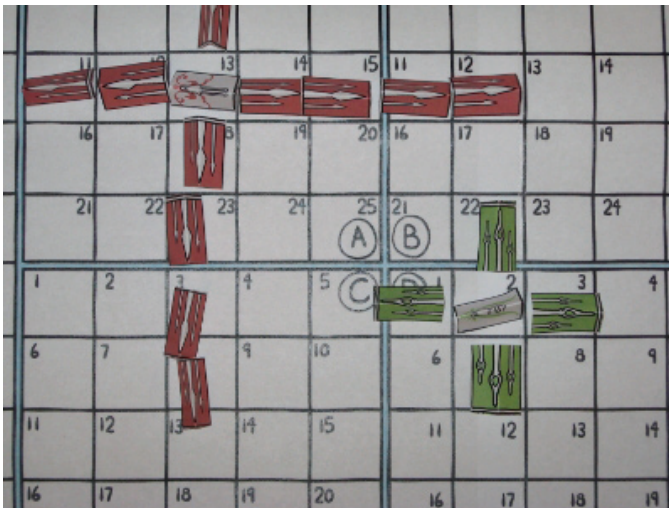
17.2.2. The Project Quarter token is replaced, and the stranded red Project Quarter tokens are replaced by green Project Quarter tokens. The two projects are now one compound project.

18. Compound Projects

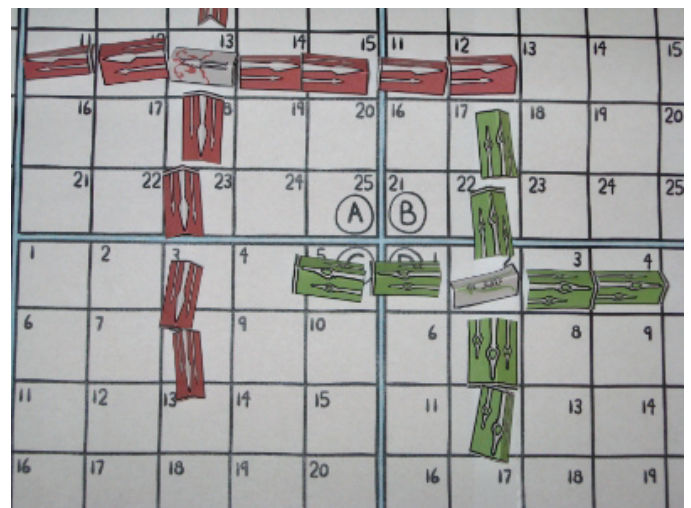
Projects combine when:

- A Project Quarter token from one project is adjacent *and* perpendicular to a Project Quarter token from another project, or
- A Project Start Date token is adjacent to a Project Quarter token from another project, or
- Two Project Start Date tokens are adjacent to each other.

Example 18.1

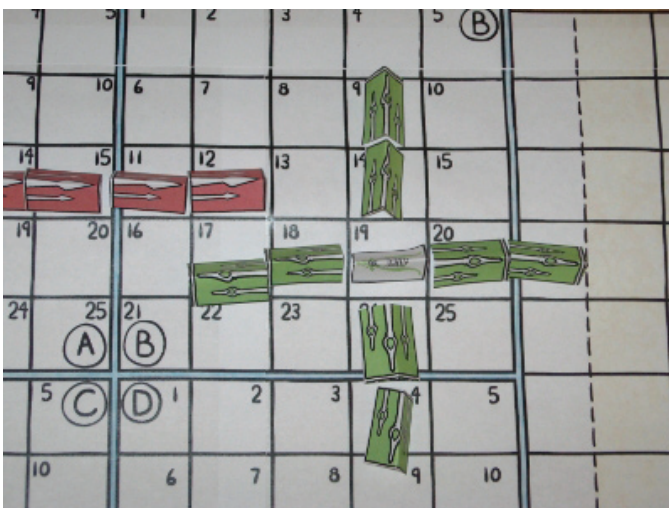


18.1.1. If the green project grows it will combine with the red project.

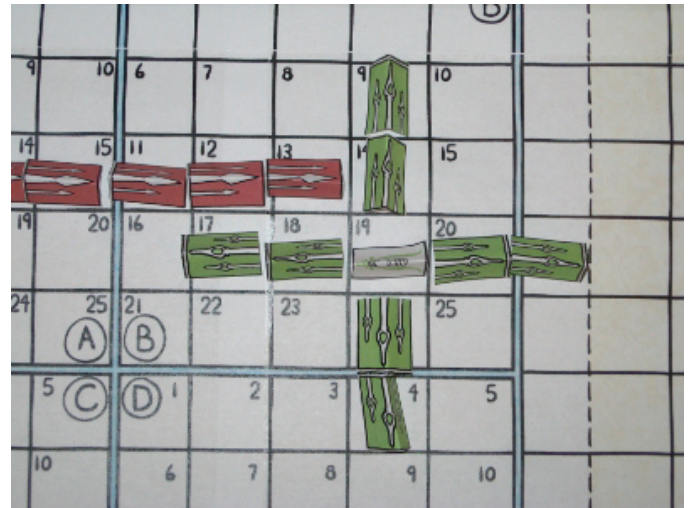


18.1.2. The green project grows, and now the two projects are one compound project.

Example 18.2



18.2.1. These two projects are separate. The red task is parallel to the green task, so they have not combined.



18.2.2. The red project has grown, and now the projects are one compound project. This is because the red Project Quarter token in space B-13 is adjacent *and* perpendicular to the green Project Quarter token in B-14.

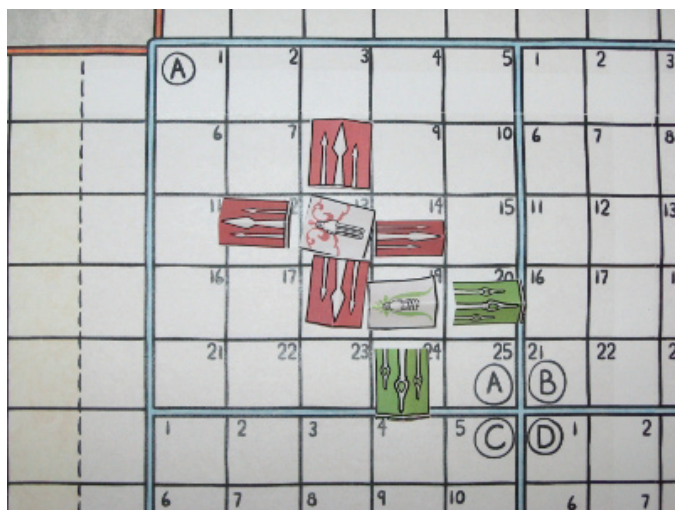
Projects that have combined count as a single project. To complete a compound project all tasks that are part of the project must be covered or completed simultaneously. In other words, if a compound project is made up of both a red project and a green project, all of the red tasks *and* all of the green tasks must be unable to grow. If all of one color's tasks are covered or completed, the project as a whole is not completed until all of the other color's tasks are covered or completed.

For the purposes of the Project Counter, a compound project is worth only one point.

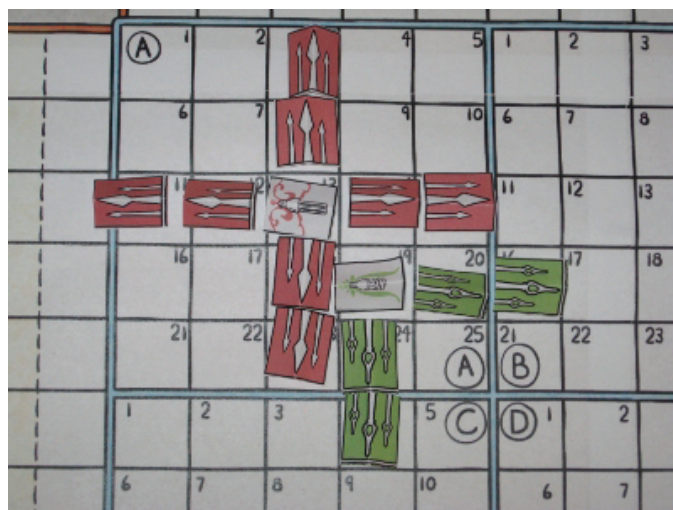
Compound projects grow differently from regular projects. Any time part of a compound project would grow, the entire compound project grows, regardless of whose turn it is.

For example, assume Player One currently has two projects. One of these projects is in a compound project with Player Two. On Player One's turn, he grows his project and his part of the compound project. Additionally, Player Two grows her part of the compound project, even though it is Player One's turn. Likewise, on Player Two's turn, she will grow her part of the compound project, and Player One will grow his.

Example 18.3



18.3.1. A compound project. On the next green or red turn, both the green and the red parts of the project will grow.



18.3.2. The entire compound project grows at the same time. Every red turn and every green turn the entire compound project grows.

19. Project Timeline

The Project Timeline is located along the edge of the board, and is used to keep track of how many projects have been completed. The Project Counter begins in the space marked zero.

Once a project has been completed, move the Project Counter one space along the timeline. A compound project counts as one project, so when a compound project is finished the Project Counter only moves one space.

When the Project Counter crosses one of the lines labeled "+1" one player must take on an additional project. Ownership of the new project is determined by group consensus, and this new project is placed immediately. Note there are three boundaries, so the game will start with four projects on the board at the same time, and towards the end there will be seven. This means that most players will end-up having more than one project at a time.

After the eighth project has been completed and replaced, no new projects are placed. At this point the remaining projects must be cleared in order to win the game.

20. End Game

After the eighth project has been completed it is not replaced. At this point further completed projects are not replaced. All of the remaining projects must now be cleared in order to win.

21. Rules Variants

Increase Difficulty

Choose a color to start with one additional project at the beginning.

Decrease Difficulty

Allow Concept Work to be done past deadline.

Increase the pool of Concept Work tokens.

Concept Work tokens may be moved anywhere, not just one space at a time.

22. Scenarios

Instead of placing initial projects randomly, the players may elect to use a scenario. Scenarios specify where to begin the first projects, and are classified as being easy, moderately difficult, or difficult games. After placing the initial projects, play resumes as normal.

In the notation below, the letter specifies the quadrant into which to place the Project Start Date token, and the number specifies the space.

<i>For an easy game, begin projects at:</i>	<i>For a moderately difficult game, begin projects at:</i>	<i>For a difficult game in which all four projects start at the deadline, begin projects at:</i>	<i>For a difficult game in which the starting projects threaten to merge, begin projects at:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A-25• B-8• C-11• D-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A-18• B-13• C-12• D-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A-3• B-3• C-11• D-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A-20• B-21• C-2• D-8

Credits

Jason Begy – Production, Design, Documentation

Dustin Katzin – Design

Geoffrey Long - Rules Layout and Design

Mike Rapa – Design, Art

Jennifer Swann – Design

Sara Verrilli – Product Owner, Documentation

Game inspired by Nelson Repenning et al.'s "Past the Tipping Point."

Repenning, Nelson P., Gonçalves, Paulo, and Black, Laura J. "Past the Tipping Point: The Persistence of Firefighting in Product Development." California Management Review. Vol. 43, No. 4. Summer 2001.

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For more information on this game, please visit <http://gambit.mit.edu/loadgame/tippingpoint.php>.

