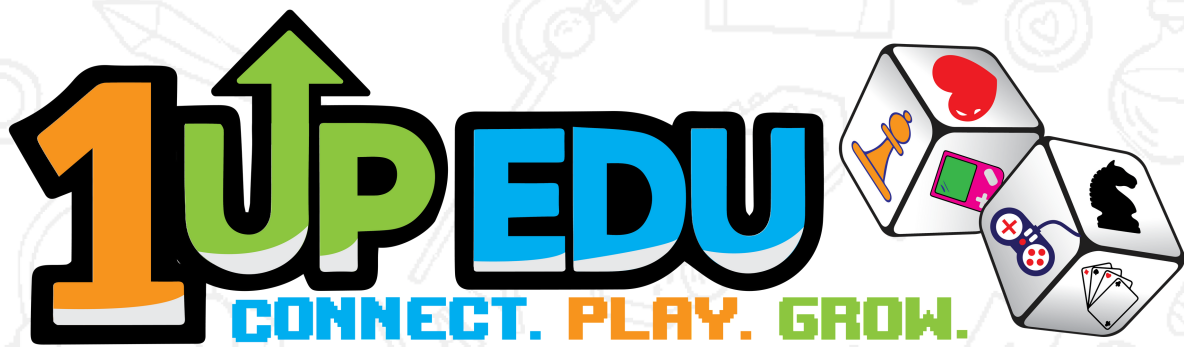




An Educator's Guide to Promoting Social Emotional Learning Through Gaming

The logo for 'Deck of Worlds' is centered over a landscape image of a river winding through a valley with mountains in the background. The text 'DECK OF WORLDS' is in a large, white, serif font, with a yellow sun-like shape behind the words. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is visible at the bottom right of the logo.

DECK OF
WORLDS™





CASEL Intro to The Deck of Worlds

The Story Engine: Deck of Worlds is a fun, easy-to-use World building tool that has helped educators introduce World building, creative writing and storytelling to young writers through a structured game.

The deck can be used as a solo activity, or in collaboration with other players, to engage in creative play, create ideas for fictional settings and worlds, explore strategies and skills for collaboration, and learn about core World building concepts. It can even be used to create settings and story hooks for tabletop roleplaying games like *Dungeons & Dragons*.

CASEL Principles

When used in a group setting, Deck of Worlds provides numerous opportunities to develop the five core competencies of CASEL: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making



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This lesson was designed for The Story Engine Deck. For more resources, visit storyenginedeck.com. p. 1

Self Awareness

- **Integrating personal and social identities:** Players will practise expressing their identities through the ideas they contribute to the setting, which means sharing themselves with the group in collaborative play.
 - *Modification: After a microsetting or world map is complete, have players reflect on what elements of their identity they contributed to the story.*
- **Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets:** Players will be able to see how their unique experiences, values, and vocabulary contribute to the setting that unfolds.
 - *Modification: After a prompt is complete, have players reflect on how their experiences, culture, and vocabulary contributed to the microsetting or world map.*
- **Identifying one's emotions:** Players will identify and empathize with the emotions that unfold through World building and collaboration.
 - *Modification: Ask players if they had any strong reactions to any of the cards (like, dislike, anxiety, interest, anger, etc.). Have them discuss how they feel when they think about the world they have created.*
- **Demonstrating honesty and integrity:** Players are encouraged to share their true selves through their creative choices in setting, while respecting the creative choices of others in group play.
 - *Modification: Ask players to discuss if there are parts of a fictional world that can be "true," even if it isn't a real place.*
- **Linking feelings, values, and thoughts:** World building and roleplay give players the opportunity to explore the connections between the feelings, values and thoughts of the people in their world, building their capacity to explore these connections in their own life.
 - *Modification: Ask players to brainstorm a word cloud of feelings, values, and thoughts for their setting. Draw lines connecting related words.*
- **Examining prejudices and biases:** World building provides an opportunity for players to break down barriers and learn about each other through creative collaboration and imagining alternate worlds, cultures, and social structures.
 - *Modification: Have players reflect on the choices they contributed to the world. What motivated that choice? Have players reflect on the choices contributed by the other players. Did any of them surprise you?*
- **Experiencing self-efficacy:** Deck of Worlds helps bypass creative blocks, procrastination, and anxiety, helping players experience their own creativity and build confidence.
 - *Modification: At the end of the prompt creation process, ensure players record the prompt in a notebook and highlight their contributions to it.*

- **Having a growth mindset:** Deck of Worlds gamifies the creative process, helping players discover motivation for developing their skills for writing, communicating, creativity, and collaboration.
 - *Modification:* After the activity, have the player write down their favorite idea or sentence they contributed and which skill they developed by contributing it: brainstorming, writing, characterization, vocabulary, conflict, communication, description, creativity, etc.
- **Developing interests and a sense of purpose:** Players have the opportunity to discover and nurture their interest in World building, storytelling, writing, roleplay, and idea generation.
 - *Modification:* After the story-prompting activity, encourage players to pursue writing a story set in the world or prompting more settings in their hobby time.



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Self Management

- **Identifying and using stress management strategies:** Players will have to wait for their turn to contribute to the world and respect other players' contributions, even if they disagree with the creative choice. Collaboration provides opportunities to build tolerance for stress and skills for communicating when in disagreement.
 - *Modification: Establish rules as to whether or not players can give each other suggestions on their turns. If a player talks over another, encourage them to wait their turn. If they are feeling stressed about not being able to speak up, have them write their thoughts down so they can be discussed later.*
- **Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation:** Deck of Worlds does not have traditional "win condition." Players are motivated by the desire to create, collaborate, improvise, and develop their skills. The activity can help players understand the intrinsic value of the time and skill they dedicate to creative work and social activities.
 - *Modification: Have players reflect on the parts of the process that were challenging. What helped them overcome those challenges?*
- **Setting personal and collective goals:** Players have the opportunity to set both collective goals (like completing a world map together) and personal goals (like writing a story or running a roleplaying session based on the prompt).
 - *Modification: Whenever you start a new world map, review the end goal with players. If players decide to write stories based on a prompt, set a goal word count or deadline.*
- **Using planning and organizational skills:** The deck helps students exteriorize the creative process, developing the skills to build a fictional setting step by step and organize the elements of their world into a map and timeline.
 - *Modification: After completing a microsetting or world map, have participants create a quick map sketch and some quick notes about their world. If they write a story set in their world, have them compare the story to their initial notes, reviewing any differences to make sure they are satisfied with how the story came out.*
- **Showing the courage to take initiative:** Players build their confidence in making creative decisions, starting with choosing between multiple creative cues printed on the card, and culminating with them providing their own personal interpretation of the setting.
 - *Modification: If a player feels stuck on their choice between cues, remind them that collaboration is a safe space and there are no wrong choices when being creative.*

- **Demonstrating personal and collective agency:** Players can create settings on their own or as a group, learning how to make choices independently or in concert with one another.
 - *Modification: After completing a prompt, discuss with players how only minutes ago, nothing existed, and now they have a fictional world that they developed together. Remind them that every great creation—from their favorite movie to the invention of the cell phone—was nothing until someone decided to try creating something.*

Social Awareness

- **Taking others' perspectives:** Building a world encourages players to engage in roleplay and think about the feelings and experiences of their collaborators and the people who live in their world.
 - *Modification: After creating each microsetting, have players reflect on what the people in the setting might be thinking or feeling, especially in response to events or changes described in the 6 Advent card. Players can also discuss how the setting made themselves and others feel.*
- **Recognizing strengths in others:** Players are encouraged to celebrate each other's contributions to the setting, as well as to think about the positive cultural values of the people who live in their world.
 - *Modification: After creating the prompt, have each player highlight their favorite idea that someone else suggested, or their favorite thing about a fictional culture in their world.*
- **Demonstrating empathy and compassion:** Effective World building requires thinking about the problems and conflicts of the people who live in their world.
 - *Modification: After completing a story prompt, have players reflect on how the Conflict might affect the Agent of the story.*
- **Showing concern for the feelings of others:** The deck gives opportunities for players to recognize, explore and connect with their emotions, the emotions of the characters who live in their world, and the emotions of other players.
 - *Modification: When a card, cue, or prompt evokes an emotional response, have players discuss. What emotion was evoked? What evoked it? Discuss how players can check in with each other if someone is experiencing strong or difficult emotions.*
- **Understanding and expressing gratitude:** Using the deck in a collaborative manner gives opportunities for players to recognize and appreciate each others' contributions. The most interesting prompts created with Deck of Worlds involve contributions from every player.

- *Modification: After a creative session with the deck, have players thank each other for their contributions, sharing specific reasons they appreciated each others' ideas, support, or behavior.*
- **Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones:** Many of the deck's cues encourage players to explore social themes like inclusion/ exclusion, acceptance/prejudice, belonging/disconnection, and justice/ injustice.
 - *Modification: When a social theme comes up in a prompt, have players try to discuss and define the terms on the card. Is it an example of a social norm? Are social norms helpful or harmful?*
- **Recognizing situational demands and opportunities:** Deck of Worlds can create billions of different combinations of cards. Each combination is unique and invites players to recognize the situational world building opportunities provided by that particular set of cues.
 - *Modification: After completing a prompt, have players review the cards they drew and explore which elements appeared in the final setting idea. How would the result be different if different cards were drawn or different cues were chosen on each card? Replace one of the cards with a random draw and explore how the setting changes.*
- **Understanding the influences of organizations and systems on behavior:** **World building** can be an excellent venue to explore how social systems affect individual people. Many cues in Deck of Worlds explore social norms, systems, and organizations, giving players the opportunity to explore alternative ways of creating or operating a society.
 - *Modification: When a social system or organization comes up in a prompt, have players discuss how it might affect the setting. What impact will it have on the people who live in that setting? How is it similar to or different from the society they live in?*

"SEL is not one more thing
on the plate. It is the plate."

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Lisa Xagas

Naperville Community Unit School District 203



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Relationship Skills

- **Communicate clearly and listen intently:** Each player's contribution to a group prompt requires them to listen to the contributions of players who came before them, and to communicate their contribution clearly so other players can build on it.
 - *Modification: Encourage players to listen carefully during each other's turns and ask questions to better understand each other's ideas and how to communicate their own ideas.*
- **Cultivate relationships:** Group World building is an excellent activity for icebreaking and group bonding.
 - *Modification: After completing a prompt, have players break away into smaller groups to write stories together based on the prompt.*
- **Resist negative influence:** Many cards in Deck of Worlds allow players to explore the effect of both positive social values (like cooperation, community support, education, and respect) and negative social values (like violence, greed, and exploitation). By exploring these concepts in a fictional setting, they gain experience and context for recognize and resisting these negative effects in real life.
 - *Modification: Create a world map together, then brainstorm which aspects of the world they see has being helpful or harmful for the people who live there. When they experience pressure to engage in harmful behaviors in their own lives, how can they resist and stand for positive values instead?*
- **Negotiate conflict:** Players will often have competing ideas for how a cue, card, or prompt should be interpreted. Using the deck and guidebook for structured collaboration helps players recognize and respect each others' boundaries, and their own.
 - *Modification: Before starting a creative session, have players discuss ground rules for collaboration. Are they allowed to talk or make suggestions during each other's turns? Are they allowed to interpret other players' chosen cues in their own way? When a conflict or disagreement comes up, refer back to your ground rules. Remind them that sometimes, collaborating means letting other people make choices you disagree with.*
- **Seek and offer help when needed:** Players can sometimes get "stumped" by a cue, and may have trouble knowing how to interpret it or connect to previous cards. The guidebook has a long list of strategies for working through roadblocks in prompts, all of which can be conducted as a group.
 - *Modification: Discuss ground rules for what to do when a player gets "stuck" interpreting a cue or prompt. They may choose to ask for help and/or other players may choose to offer it. Use the strategies in the guidebook as a group to work through roadblocks together, always deferring the player whose turn it is to make the final decision.*

Responsible Decision Making

- **Consider ethical standards, social norms, and safety while making responsible decisions:** Not only does collaboration give players an opportunity to see how their behavior and creative decisions affect each other, but World building can help participants explore how ethical standards and social norms can protect people from harm and exploitation in society.
 - *Modification: Create a world map together. Discuss who in the various microsettings might be most vulnerable to negative social issues. How could the setting be made safer for them, and how could ethical standards and social norms help in this process?*
- **Use a systematic approach to decision making:** Collaborative World building offers players a structured and systematic framework for making creative decisions to build a setting card by card and cue by cue.
 - *Modification: After creating a prompt, discuss how each cue was chosen and how the framework of collaboration allowed players to build on each others' suggestions.*
- **Consider the implications of decisions and reflect on decisions made:** Whenever an individual player or group creates a prompt, the cards on the table serve as a record of the sequence of creative decisions that was made to assemble the prompt, card by card and cue by cue. Players can always review and reevaluate their creative choices.
 - *Modification: After a player creates a solo microsetting prompt, have them review the decisions they made on each card. Were there any decisions they would change now that the prompt is complete? How would changing this decision affect the other creative decisions they made? Invite them to adjust their cards and explore the alternative prompt they could have created.*