

**WOWE
GAMES**

RAINBOW WORLD



**A SHORT GAME OF COLLABORATIVE
WORLD BUILDING AND CANDY**

Rainbow World is a colorful and varied place with an exciting and complex history. Beyond that, any details are up to you and your friends. This is a game that helps you rapidly go through the process of creating a fictional world, brimming with as much interesting detail as you want. Rainbow World is an imaginary sandbox that you can build up, knock over, and rebuild as many times and in as many different ways as you want. Players don't really win or lose Rainbow World; it's a cooperative game about creativity.

Many games of Rainbow World will tend to gravitate towards a fantasy environment of magic and monsters. They may also develop elements of science fiction. Your game needn't be restrained by labels like sci-fi, western, or horror. Allow yourself to blend genres and tropes freely, creating wholly original places.

The world you create could be an end in itself. You can play Rainbow World just for the pleasure of playing it. It could also be the start of something bigger. If you and your friends are so inclined, the resulting world could continue to exist after the game has ended through stories and art you create. You could adapt it as the setting of a roleplaying game where your friends can continue to explore your world from another perspective.

There are many universal or generic RPGs available that could be used. Fate Core, Mini Six, and Risus would all work and are available for free online. There are many other options available too. Each game will appeal to players with different levels of experience and different play styles. Search for one that fits your group.

The name Rainbow World is derived from the Skittles candies that are used as a creative currency during the game. It in no way means that the world you create has to be saturated with bright colors. While color might be an inspiration, you can also make your world as dark, gritty, and monotone as you chose.



IN THE BEGINNING...

The game of Rainbow World begins with you and a few friends sitting around a table. There should be at least 50 blank index cards, some pencils, and a shallow container of Skittles candies in the center of the table within easy reach of all participants. A single package of Skittles should be sufficient for a group of 3 to play a game. At least one person should have read through this booklet and be able to teach the rules to any player who is unfamiliar with the game. A game of Rainbow World usually concludes within an hour.

If Skittles are unavailable or undesirable, the game could be easily modified to use any other small multi-colored food by rewriting the list in the “...History is Written by the Players...” section. Candies with shapes, such as Runtts, could be used to accommodate players who have difficulty distinguishing colors. Colored goldfish crackers or a variety of fresh berries might appeal to players with dietary restrictions. The game could also be played with inedible tokens, of course, but it would lose some of its fun.

Before the game begins, every player should take a moment to wash their hands. Playing Rainbow World involves handling Skittles (or an alternative foodstuff) for other players and no one wants to risk getting their friends sick.

At this point your world is dark and nebulous, formless and empty. Absolutely nothing has been defined; what is true for your world remains to be seen. All that exists now is infinite potential which will be harnessed and shaped by you and your friends. Over the course of the game you will do that by establishing basic facts and then altering them through historical events.





Henry arrives first at the comic shop where he and his friends like to play. Jeff let him know that he has to pick up a relative from the airport later so they can't play one of their usual board games; today they're going to play a short game of Rainbow World instead. Henry prepares for the game by purchasing a bag of candy and finding a table. They've all played before, so everyone is familiar with the rules, but Henry opens the game booklet up to the Rules Summary so it'll be easy to reference later. He pours the candy into a small bowl so that it can be easily accessed by everyone at the table. Soon, Cass and Jeff arrive and join Henry at the table. Cass brought some index cards and a couple mechanical pencils. The trio is ready to play!



...WHERE FACTS ARE FEW...

The process of building your world starts by defining basic facts. To do this, a player simply announces something, writes it on a blank index card, and places it on the table for everyone to see. It could be anything from basic environmental conditions to descriptions of the beings who live there or even naming specific important individuals. Whatever is written on the card, along with the other cards currently visible on the table, is considered true. Facts don't need to be expressed as complete, grammatically correct sentences. Fragmentary phrases and spelling errors are fine as long as they are legible and descriptive enough to be understood by the other players.

When someone creates a fact that the other players find interesting, they can award its writer a candy randomly picked from the bowl. It is important that the candy's color be randomly determined by plucking it from the bowl sight-unseen. A general rule of thumb is that if a card makes a player chuckle or otherwise emote, they should consider passing over a candy. A player may not award candy to himself and other players may each only award one candy per card. It's important to not eat candies immediately; they'll get used later in the game.

Additional facts can be created by players as the game progresses. These could cover other areas of the world or add further detail to previously defined facts. As they're created, new facts can't directly contradict other facts (or events, explained next) that are currently true. Players do not have to take turns in any particular order but no player can write two cards in a row.

While a card is written by a single player, it is important to remember that the element it introduces into the world does not belong to that player. Instead, it is communally owned by everyone at the table. Other players can and probably will expand on it or change it in exciting ways with their own cards.



Henry had been thinking about possible worlds while waiting for the others. He snatches up the first card and writes “World has very little usable water” on it, establishing the general environment of the world. Cass writes another card about the environment, “Land covered by towering mushroom forest.” Henry raises an eyebrow and thinks about protesting. Fungus generally don’t do very well in arid ecosystems so this might constitute a contradiction of his card. He shrugs and decides to leave it alone. This world might later reveal a secret that allows giant mushrooms to thrive in a desert.

Cass grabs another card but stops. She just put down the card about the mushroom forests; she'll have to let someone else go before she can write another. Jeff takes a card and writes “Tiny crab-people secretly live in every home.” This implies the existence of another intelligent species, as yet undefined, that builds and occupies homes, which is fine. It leaves a blank space in the world that the other players can fill in. The other two players think hidden house crabs are a fascinating idea. They each grab a candy from the box lid to award to Jeff. Now Cass can go again. She adds a new card: “Bloodsucking birds live on the dark side of the moon.”



Henry is inspired by the notion of predatory birds and jots “Wormian Empire is led by Bolgar, the blind mystic,” which adds another species to the world as well as some details about the species including their political and religious states and a named individual. Cass hands a candy to Henry. The three talk about the Wormians and decide that they are the dominant civilization and the primary occupants of the houses mentioned on Jeff’s card. This additional information doesn’t add anything new to the world, it just ensures that everyone at the table is thinking about the Wormians in the same way, so it doesn’t need to be written down on a card. Jeff now decides to return to the world’s geography by creating a card that reads “Extensive tunnels below the mushroom forest.” He is again leaving space for the other players to run with his idea by deciding whether the tunnels are natural, excavated by the Wormians, or something else.

Cass decides to inject some potential drama into the Wormian society by expanding on Bolgar’s situation. She wants to make a card declaring that Bolgar has been killed but she can't do that yet since she doesn't have any candy. A card like that would contradict the truth of Bolgar leading the Wormian people. Instead she writes “Bolgar is sick: his successor hasn’t been chosen.” Bolgar is still in charge, but the players know that the situation is unstable. Henry and Jeff like this very much and Cass gains two candies.

So far there are seven cards, seven facts, on the table between the three friends. Each card has added definition to what is known about the world. The players can picture the landscape, they know a bit about the species that live there and the dangers they might face. Every player has at least one candy.



...HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY THE PLAYERS...

Players can continue establishing new facts for the entirety of the game. However, after a few cards are on the table, players can also begin to build on existing facts with events. To do this someone must eat one of the candies that they've been awarded. Then they write an event on a blank index card and place it on top of the card it alters. Whatever was on the old card is no longer true, it is buried in history, and the new card has supplanted it. Events can modify facts or other events.

Just as with facts, if the other players really enjoy an event, they may award its author a candy. Also, just as with facts, no player can create two events in a row, nor can they create an event immediately after a fact. They must wait until at least one other player has had a chance to go before they can play again.

The kind of event created is not quite as wide open as the kinds of facts that get established. The color of the candy eaten determines the kind of event that can be written down.

PURPLE represents, for better or worse, the actions of incredible individuals.

RED represents war or other acts of widespread violence.

ORANGE represents change through exploration, discovery, or invention.

YELLOW represents social changes that bring about sweeping cultural shifts.

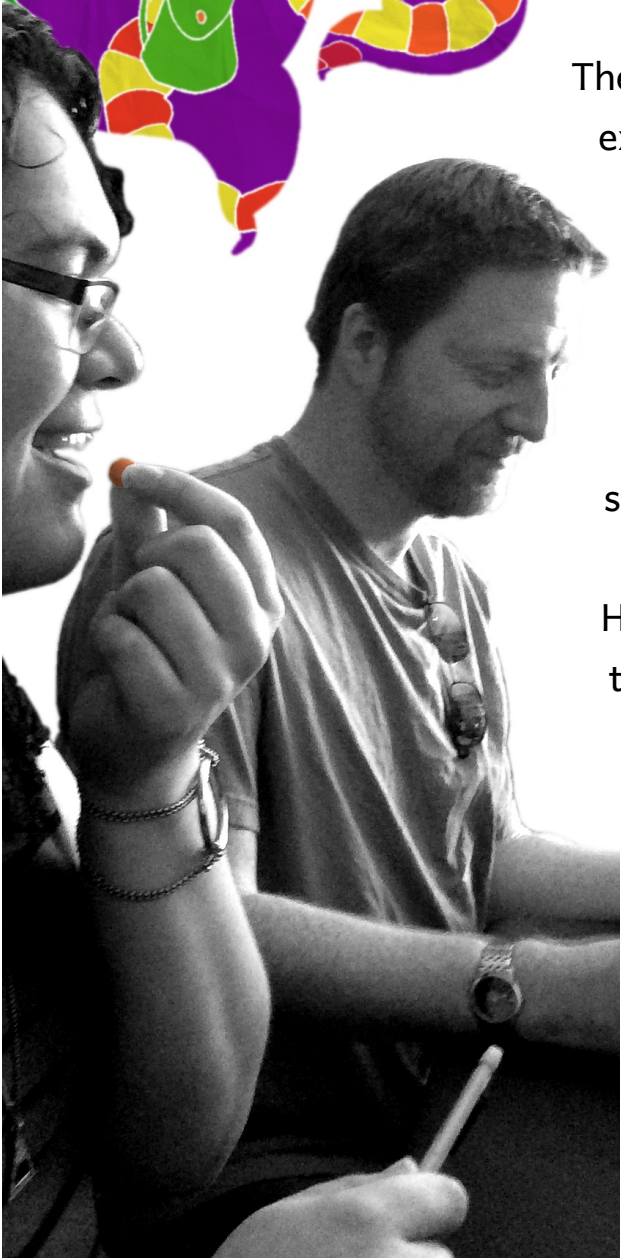
GREEN represents environmental and natural disasters of any scale.



Jeff looks at the two candies he has, and eats a red one. He makes the game's first event card. The table says that red candies create violent events, so his card says "Guerrilla dissidents ambush crowds at Bolgar's Funeral" and is placed on top of the fact card about Bolgar being sick. This event card is different from the others that have been played so far because it changes something that was previously true in the world; Bolgar was alive but now he's dead. Cass is thrilled that Jeff killed off Bolgar, just like she wanted, so she gives him another candy.

Then Cass eats an orange candy and writes out an exploration event that says "Vast reservoir of water discovered deep underground", which changes the first card about the limited water. The world now has an abundance of water, it's just difficult to access. Henry smiles and passes a candy to Cass, happy to see the mystery of the mushrooms solved.

Henry takes a moment to rearrange the cards so that similar topics are near each other, consolidating all the cards mentioning Bolgar into one pile with his funeral on top since they were all altered by his death. Meanwhile Jeff adds another card with "Each full moon, birds descend to feed on Wormians." on it. He can do this without eating one of his candies because it doesn't change or contradict any other card on the table; it's a fact card rather than an event.



Henry has one candy at this point, a green one. He eats it to create a natural disaster. He places a card with “Wild fires wipe out most of the mushroom forest” written on it on top of the card that declared the mushroom forest’s existence. No one decides to award him a candy for this event so he’ll have to create facts until he earns some more.

Cass eats a yellow candy and makes a card about a social change. While the Wormian Empire is ripe for social change, she goes a different direction. She covers Jeff’s card about the full moon feedings with one that says “Bloodsucking moonbirds realize prey is sentient. Decide they need consent to feed.” She doesn’t receive any candies for this event either but she still has one left.

Jeff writes a new event while eating a purple candy. His card reads “Minky-doo, wise, old house-crab, befriends a Wormian child. Reveals their existence” and is placed on the card he originally wrote describing the secret house-crabs. They’re not a secret any more! Cass and Henry both give him candies.



...AND IT WAS GOOD

The game continues with players establishing new facts, altering them with events, and then altering them again. Together, everyone builds up the history of your world. A complex, tangled network of ideas forms as one person's card inspires another's. The final result will surely be something no one player could have predicted or created alone.

Over the course of the game there will, hopefully, be disagreements over the shape of the world. Players will struggle when they see facts and events being established by others that don't fit with the world they envision. To a degree this is good; through the act of compromise, the world that is being generated becomes richer. However, the game is not worth hurt feelings and broken friendships. If the differences of opinion prove to be too great, the game should be paused. After an honest discussion by all the players about their expectations, once everyone's views are more aligned, play can resume. If players find themselves placing cards with the intent of canceling out or undoing other cards instead of progressing the game, the game should be paused for discussion.

The game could continue as long as players want it to. There is no need to end unless you run out of index cards, candy, or time. However, most games seem to reach a conclusion on their own well before then. They naturally arrive at a point where everyone is satisfied, a well-rounded world is documented in the stacks of cards on the table, and no one feels the need to add more.



The friends continue playing, writing cards, earning and spending candy. The history of their world continues to build. Leaderless, the Wormian Empire breaks down into bickering city-states. The leader of the dissidents that attacked Bolgar's funeral, named Lurgic by Cass, seizes control of a larger territory on the edge of the Wormian land. Lurgic begins an aggressive expansion, gathering up the shattered pieces of the empire as his forces march towards the old capitol.

While Lurgic is building his new empire, Henry writes a card that declares that the Wormian child Minky-doo befriended is actually Bolgar's niece, Nerkew. A secret movement grows, aiming to reform the old empire with Nerkew taking up her uncle's mantle. The movement uses a network of house-crabs to gather information, allowing them to stay one step ahead of Lurgic.

As Nerkew's movement spreads, Lurgic finds that his forces are overextended. He gets desperate as he begins losing ground. In a final act of bitterness, he poisons the underground lake. There is not enough clean water for the Wormians. The first act of Nerkew and her advisory council is to create a trade agreement with the moon-birds. In exchange for lunar ice they will provide the birds with the blood they need.



RULES SUMMARY

Create Facts

1. Write something new about the world on a card and place it on the table.
2. Earn candies from other players by making interesting facts

Create Events

1. Eat a candy you've already earned, reference the color chart below for the event type.
2. Write something that alters an existing fact (or event) on a card and place on top of the card it modifies.
3. Earn candies from other players by making interesting events.

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YELLOW represents social changes that bring about sweeping cultural shifts.

GREEN represents environmental and natural disasters of any scale.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rainbow World was first written for the 2016 200 Word RPG Challenge. This version is mechanically identical to the challenge entry though the text has been expanded for clarity's sake. It draws inspiration from other world building games such as Microscope, Dawn of Worlds, and The Quiet Year, which frequently get lumped in with RPGs even though they deserve a category of their own.

Rainbow World was written and illustrated by Matt Bohnhoff. It was edited by Jennifer Bohnhoff. Madison Maldonado, Nicholas Hopkins, and William Aitken posed for photos. It utilizes Andika New Basic and Sigmar typefaces and was released under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license. The game was playtested by Matt Chisholm, Jaye Foster, Tomer Gurantz, Nicholas Hopkins, Madison Maldonado, Ryan Shea, and Mike Vivian. To purchase a copy of the game, look for it on DriveThruRPG.com.

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