

VLAADA CHVÁTIL

# THAT'S A QUESTION!

Players take the roles of squirrels climbing a mountain. As they climb, they ask each other questions. Because, you know, that's just what squirrels do.

Why squirrels? That's a question! If you are hoping to find the answer in this rulebook, you will be very disappointed. But if you are just hoping to learn the rules of the game, read on.



## How to Use This Book

You can learn the rules just by reading these yellow boxes.

Okay, that's not entirely true. You probably also have to look at the pictures. But the rest of the text is just explanation, clarification, and not a small amount of provocation. Which is worse: a dry, straightforward rules explanation or a rulebook writer who gets paid by the word? That's a question!

# Setup

1. Each player takes components in one color.



squirrel



A card



B card



times-3  
kicker



tough-question  
kicker



2. Place the **game board** in the center of the table.

The side for 5 or 6 players is marked by this: 6 5

The other side is for 3 or 4 players.

During the game, discarded  
kickers go here, in this patch of  
empty sky.

The meadow.  
Please do not taunt the sheep.

The lake.  
Swimming time!

All squirrels should follow this path up the mountain. Shortcutting the trail causes erosion.

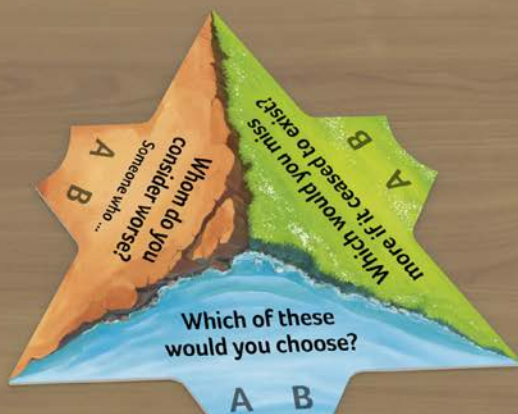
3. Each player places his or her squirrel on the **starting space**.

4. Shuffle the deck of **answer cards** and deal 5 to each player.



5. Then make a stack of answer cards to be used as a **draw pile**. The game board shows how many cards to use, depending on the number of players. Place the draw pile on the marked space of the game board.

6. Return the remaining answer cards to the box.



7. Put the **question board** somewhere near the game board.

8. Setup of **acorns** is explained on the next page.

The acorns also have a hazelnut side because, in many countries, popular folklore says that squirrels eat hazelnuts. This rulebook will call them acorns, but you can use either side. (Note: In nature, real squirrels eat doughnuts.)

# The standard rules are for a 5- or 6-player game.

Adjustments for 3 or 4 players are on page 11.

## Game Play

Choose a starting player.

The starting player should be someone who knows how to play the game. If no one knows how to play the game, then you should tell everyone that the rulebook says you get to start. That's not actually a yellow-box rule, but they can't call you on it if they haven't read the rules.

Give 1 acorn to everyone except the starting player. Put any extra acorns in the box.

Oh man! You let this rulebook trick you into being the starting player, and now you don't get an acorn! Don't worry about it.

Players will take turns asking questions, beginning with the starting player and moving clockwise around the table.

## A Turn

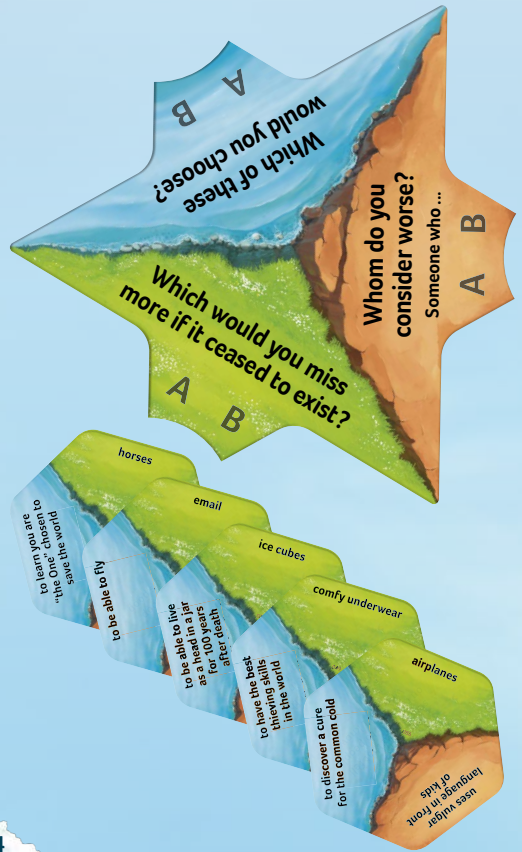
On your turn, you will have to ask a question. There are three basic questions, and these are written on the question board. Each question involves a choice between A and B. What are A and B? That's a question! You have to choose the answers from among your answer cards.

Each card has 3 answers. Grassy green answers match the grassy green question. Rippling blue answers match the rippling blue question. And rocky red answers look majestic at sunset.

To make a question, you pick two of your five answer cards to go with one of the three questions. So you have a lot to choose from.

Please don't try to match an answer to a question of a different color. It might seem funny, but that's not what the game is about. The game is about squirrels.

No, wait, the game is about making tough questions.



When it is your turn to ask a question, you:

1. Choose one of the three questions on the board and two of the answer cards in your hand.
2. Choose any other player with an acorn.
3. Take that player's acorn and set the question board down where he or she can read it.
4. Read the question aloud.
5. Place one answer card against the board as answer A. Read the answer that matches the color of the question.
6. Do the same for answer B.



See? You get an acorn as soon as you ask the question. We told you not to worry.

The acorns help make sure everyone gets asked. Well, actually they just make sure that no one gets asked too many times. But if you're not sure whom to ask, the nice thing to do is to pick the person who has the most acorns.

But that's not a rule. The rule is that the player you ask must have at least one acorn. Choosing the right person to ask is an important part of the strategy. (Yes, this game has strategies. It's a CGE game.)

Oh, and you can't ask yourself. Sorry for not writing that in the yellow box, but we thought it was obvious. If it's your turn to ask and no one else has acorns, you should ask the player on your right. We're pretty sure that player recently forgot to take an acorn.

## Answering and Guessing

The player chosen to answer the question should answer it honestly. When the answerer has decided, he or she indicates the decision by playing either A or B face down.

When you are asked a question, answer from your personal point of view. As long as you are honest, you can't be wrong. If the question needs interpretation, you get to decide how to interpret it. Just don't do anything that might give away your answer.



Anyone who is not the asker or the answerer is a guesser. Guessers try to guess what the answerer will choose. A guesser indicates his or her guess by playing either A or B face down.

The asker does not guess, but he or she is allowed to act smug while everyone else struggles with the question.

No one should give away their answer or guess while others are deciding.

## Scoring

Once everyone has chosen A or B, the answerer reveals the answer. Then the guessers reveal their guesses.

The answerer might give a brief explanation while revealing the answer. The guessers might argue, but it's too late to change the answer.

The answerer's card shows the right answer. Everyone with this answer moves their squirrel ahead one space.

The answerer always moves ahead one space, and so do all the guessers who guessed correctly. Once all the right answers are dealt with, it is time to look at the wrong ones:

Move the asker's squirrel ahead one space for each incorrect guess.

**Example:** Suppose the answerer played B. Someone should say, "B is the correct answer." Everyone with a B in front of them should move one space ahead. Then the asker moves one space ahead for each A that was played.

In some groups, each player moves his or her own squirrel. In other groups, a responsible player who loves bookkeeping handles all the squirrels. This squirrel-pusher soon discovers that the typical cases are pretty simple. If all players guessed correctly, everyone but the asker moves one space. If one player guessed wrong, everyone but that player moves one space.

**Tip:** Do not mix these two methods. "Has anyone moved my squirrel yet?" is not the type of question this game should be about.

# Kickers

You know what? Skip this part until you've tried a couple questions. Once everybody is comfortable with the scoring system, you can explain how kickers work.

When you are a guesser, you have the option to play one of your kickers along with your A or B card.

When you play your card, you should cover it with your paw so no one can tell if you are playing a kicker. Of course, most squirrels leave their other kicker sitting alone face up, so it's easy to figure out what they played. Usually this doesn't matter. No one pays attention to other people's kickers because they are too busy weighing the relative merits of forests and beer.



When you reveal your guess, you also reveal the kicker.



**times-three kicker:** This makes you move 3 spaces instead of 1 if your guess is correct. On an incorrect guess, it has no effect.



**tough-question kicker:** This makes you move 1 space for each other player's incorrect guess. It is not affected by your own guess.

You can play a kicker only when you are a guesser. You do not have to play a kicker. You cannot play both kickers on the same guess.

**Tip:** If you push squirrels for everyone, you may find it easier to score kickers separately. First, move all squirrels with the correct answer one space. Then move the asker's squirrel for the incorrect answers. Then move those with correct times-three kickers an additional 2 spaces. And finally move squirrels for the tough-question kickers. This technique works smoothly and efficiently as long as players keep the cards and kickers on the table until you are done.

Leave your card and kicker on the table until scoring is done!

That's probably so obvious that it doesn't need to be an official yellow-box rule, but it's pretty important, so we gave it a yellow box anyway. And an exclamation point.

Kickers are so cool you'll want to play them on every question. But you can't.

After scoring is done, the kicker you played is discarded to the game board, regardless of whether it had an effect.



**Example:**

Yellow asks Green a question. Everyone except Yellow chooses A or B. Then everyone reveals what they played:

Green answered A. As the answerer, she cannot play kickers.



Pink guessed B and decided not to play a kicker.



Teal guessed A. He felt confident enough to play his times-3 kicker.



Blue guessed B. He expected someone to guess wrong, so he played his tough-question kicker.



Yellow is the asker, so he does not make a guess.



Orange guessed A. She can't play a kicker. Both of them are on the game board after being used on earlier questions.



Green reads her answer, and perhaps gives a short explanation. Then Yellow says, "The correct answer is A. Who answered A?"

Orange, Green, and Teal answered A, so they all move their squirrels. Teal moves 3 spaces because of the times-3 kicker. (If Teal had answered wrong, Teal would not move.)

Yellow doesn't ask who answered B, because it doesn't matter who. What matters is how many. There are 2 B answers, so Yellow moves ahead 2 spaces. This is not affected by kickers.

Blue also moves, because he played a tough-question kicker. However, Blue cannot count his own wrong answer. He only scores for other players' wrong answers. Blue moves ahead 1 space. (If he had answered correctly, he would also have moved ahead 1 space with everyone who answered A.)





## The Lake and the Meadow



When your squirrel reaches the lake or the meadow, you may retrieve one of your kickers from the game board. This applies even to a kicker you played this turn.

If your squirrel moves more than one space, it might swim across the lake and keep on moving up the mountain. That still counts and you get a kicker back. The same thing applies to the meadow. Well, the kicker thing applies. We know you can't swim in a meadow.

**Example:** In the example on the facing page, Orange moves onto the meadow and takes one of her kickers back. Teal moves three spaces, passes through the lake, and also gets a kicker back. Teal may either keep the times-3 played this turn, or put it on the board and take back the tough-question kicker.

## End of Turn

After scoring, discard the 2 answer cards. The asker draws 2 new cards from the stack on the game board, bringing his or her hand back up to 5.

By the way, if you forgot to take the acorn when you asked the question, you should take it now.

The player to the left of the asker now gets a turn to be the asker.

Yes, it really is that simple. It doesn't matter who answered the question. It doesn't matter who seems to be hoarding acorns. Play just passes clockwise.

## Take-Backs

Sometimes you put down A even though you meant to play B, or B when you meant A. There is really only one way a rulebook can handle this:

The card that you play as your answer or guess is final. It cannot be changed after it is revealed.

There. That's the official rule. We hope you don't play by it. Because, let's face it, that's stupid.

If a player carefully explains why he chose answer A and then reveals his card and it turns out to be B, then it's pretty clear that his honest answer is A. The answerer should be allowed to correct any mistakes, preferably before seeing other people's guesses.

If a guesser puts down A by accident and A happens to be the correct answer, she should admit that she meant to play B and give the point to the asker instead.

Of course, if you play A and the correct answer is B, then your play should stand. It's not that we don't believe that you meant to play B; it's just that changing a guess from incorrect to correct is not very classy. You're a squirrel. You gotta stay classy.

But in general, yeah, you can correct honest mistakes. We think you can be trusted. If anyone tries to abuse this trust, tell them they can't change their card and show them the official rule. Or just don't play with them anymore. You're squirrels, not weasels.

# The Final Round

The game is played in rounds. You don't have to keep track of the number of rounds because you carefully counted out the stack of answer cards at the beginning of the game.

When the last 2 cards are drawn from the stack on the game board, it is the beginning of the final round. Each player will get one more turn as asker.

This will just magically work out. The player who started the game will also be the first asker in the final round. The player who drew the last 2 cards will be the final asker of the game.

If the player who draws the last 2 cards is not the player on the starting player's right, then something has gone wrong. Count cards. Check under the table. Maybe you set up the stack wrong? Fix it somehow. Everyone should start the final round with 5 cards. The final round should start with the starting player. The player on the starting player's right should ask the last question of the game.

At the beginning of the final round, each player may retrieve one of his or her kickers from the board.



This is in addition to any kicker you might have gotten back at the lake or the meadow. Players who have no kickers on the board get nothing.

So you'll start the final round with at least one kicker. Each player will get one more turn to ask a question, so you will have opportunities to use it. Even in the final round, you can retrieve a kicker at the meadow, as usual. (You can retrieve a kicker at the lake, too, but if you haven't passed the lake already, not even a kicker can help you.)

The final round is played as normal, except that askers do not draw new cards after scoring.

You don't need cards after your last question. And anyway, the draw pile ran out. If you want, you can end your final turn by discarding the three cards left in your hand.

# End of the Game

The winner is the player with the most acorns. ... Ha ha! Just kidding.

The winner is the player farthest ahead.



If someone insists that there must be some sort of tiebreaker, look in the rulebook and pretend to find a rule that makes that player the winner. You just have to humor some people. Tied squirrels secretly remain tied.

During the game, the frontrunners may actually leave the mountain and start walking on the clouds. We're not sure how squirrels do that. It's just one of nature's mysteries.

Even if you didn't win, getting to the top of the mountain feels pretty good. Of course, sometimes you only make it to the meadow. But that's okay, because it's a nice meadow. Even if you finished somewhere near the lake, we still hope you had a fun walk, because that's really what this game is about. That, and squirrels.

## With 4 Players

In a 4-player game, everyone starts with an acorn.

Yeah! Now you'll be plenty fat enough to get through winter!

The tough-question kicker counts double.

That's great, but only one other player is guessing. You get 2 points if he or she guesses wrong.

## With 3 Players

This is a really cozy game. One person asks, one person answers, and the one left over has to guess.

In a 3-player game, use 4 acorns. Give one to each player and an extra one to the person on the starting player's right.

You could also just leave the acorns in the box and let players ask whoever they want. With only 3 players, everyone is likely to get asked several questions.

Since only one person is guessing, the tough-question kicker is useless ... or at least it would be if we didn't have this awesome rule:

If you are the guesser, you can choose to use your tough-question kicker before the answer is revealed. The asker must also make a guess. You get 2 points if the asker's guess is wrong. The asker doesn't get any points from his or her guess, not even if it's correct.

Play your kicker face up and ask the asker, "What would be *your* guess?"

## Three-Squirrel Scamper

With three players, only half the colors are actually in the game. That's a shame. Here's a variant that uses all the colors to make a 3-player game shorter and more action packed. Use the rules for a 3-player game plus these two modifications:

Each player has two kickers of each type.

Take the kickers from an unused color. The rules for using them are unchanged. So you still play at most one, and when the rules say you get one back, you get only one.

Squirrels boosted by extra kickers don't need as many questions to climb the mountain:

Instead of using 24 cards in the draw pile, use only 18.

## With 2 Players

Um ... we're stumped. This really is not a 2-player game. But you can still take turns asking each other questions. That's called conversation.

# Guidelines for Answering

The question is always about you. It's about your opinion and how you feel about the two possible answers. Sometimes you will see a logical answer. Other times, you just know your answer in your heart. Because the question is about you, your answer is always right. Just be sure to answer the question honestly.

Well, okay, if someone asks, "Whom do you consider worse, someone who steals a small amount of money from work or someone who forgets their spouse's birthday?" then you might answer differently depending on whether you're playing with your boss or your spouse. But except for that, you should answer honestly.

When you are asked a question, you are the one who decides how it should be interpreted. Usually, the meaning of the question is fairly clear, but if it seems ambiguous to you, then you are the one who

must decide what the question means. You should probably keep quiet about your interpretation until the answer and guesses are revealed.

In general, you should not do anything that would give away your answer. You should answer honestly, but it is okay to act as though you are thinking about a question when you actually knew your answer immediately.

If you are really, really not sure how to answer a particular question, just choose one of your two cards at random. Wait! Don't play it! Just look at it. When you look at your randomly chosen card, you will either say, "Ah, yes! I knew it all along," or, "No! I want to choose the other one!" At which point, you know your answer.

Actually, this works for decisions in real life, too. (Disclaimer: This rulebook and its affiliated squirrels are not responsible for the results of random decisions you make in real life.)

## Quick Tips for Interpreting the Questions

Yeah, this one is all about you, including how you choose to interpret the options.

Imagine the thing disappears and the world adapts to that somehow. But you still remember what the world was like before that thing went away.

Sometimes both options are really harsh. But remember, you aren't being forced to do one of these two things. Just think about which seems worse when someone else does it.

### A Game by Vlaada Chvátil

**Illustration:** Sören Meding

**Graphic Design:** Michaela Zaoralová, Filip Murmak, and Radim Pech

**Writing:** Jason Holt

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