Space Race

Summary

In this scenario, you will play aliens competing in 'The Space Race': an intergalactic racing competition with representatives from planets across the universe. Each alien character is different from the next; with different motivations, customs and goals they wish to achieve during the competition.

The scenario combines a board game race with role-playing, and nobody plays according to the exact same rules.

Background

While we typically manage to play well together, the reasons for and ways in which we engage in play actually vary widely. The purpose of this scenario is to enable a deeper reflection on different ways in which people interact socially in game and play. The scenario also represents a range of design options and strategies that are available in game design.

The scenario is meant to be used by teams designing for games and play in museums. These will meet with a wide range of social play behaviour. It is most well-suited for projects targeting older children and adults, as children below (approximately) ten have not yet developed uniform strategies for social play.

Aims and goals:

Understand core concepts in game design

- Understand more about different player motivations
- Explore different types of social interactions in play and game
- Reflect on cheating and transgressing play
- Reflect on different ways in which players redesign their game and play activity

Roles in the scenario

Each player plays a character from a different planet.

Players: 4-8 (ideally 6). The facilitator can choose to play a character.

Total runtime: 1 hour 30 min

Preparation time: 40 min

Supplies provided:

- Character sheets
- Deck of acceleration cards (70 cards total)
 - o 10 Zero (0)
 - o 18 One (1)
 - o 18 Two (2)
 - o 12 Minus One (-1)
 - \circ 12 Minus two (-2)
- Tweak cards
- The playing board
- Board Game Rules

Supplies needed:

- Player tokens
- Optional but highly recommended: Game tokens to be used as happiness and speed tokens
- Table and chairs
- Pen and paper for each player, if you do not use happiness and speed tokens

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Preparation

Before the participants arrive (40 min)

- Print out all the necessary material
- Cut out the Tweak and Acceleration cards (print double sided or tape together)
- Find 6 different objects (i.e. buttons, rubbers, paperclips) to use as player tokens
- Optional but highly recommended: Use additional game tokens that can be used as Happiness and speed tokens
- Else, give each player a pen and a sheet of paper.

SET UP

- 1. Place the board on a table. Place the Speed cards beside the board.
- 2. The facilitator decides on a start position for each race.
- 3. Each player chooses one token to represent them and places it on the start line.
- 4. Each player is dealt five cards from the Speed pile.
- 5. All characters start with speed zero and happiness 4. Deal four happiness tokens to each player
- 6. *If you do not have tokens for Happiness and speed*, each player needs a pen and paper to keep track of their happiness and speed. Ask players to note down their starting happiness and speed if you do not use speed tokens.

The remaining Happiness and speed tokens are placed to the side of the board. Players take from this pile unless instructed to take directly from other players. There should be sufficient happiness tokens to never run out.

Introduction (20 minutes)

Present the scenario

- **Premise:** The participants play aliens competing in 'The Space Race': an intergalactic racing competition consisting of several races, and representatives from planets across the universe. The aliens are very different and have different motivations, customs, and goals they wish to achieve during the race.
- **Methods:** This scenario uses both a board game (like monopoly) and role-playing (like improvisational theatre).
- **The board game** is used to represent what happens during the races. We are not interested in playing the board game in itself. It is a tool to create the situations we want to experience and observe. Winning, or playing "well", is therefore of no relevance.
- The role-playing represents the aliens interacting with each other. We role-play to distance ourselves from the behaviour and actions we are exploring together. The characters create an alibi for this behaviour, that is not our own. No one is expected to be a fantastic actor or comedian. Like the board game, the characters are yet another tool we are using to experience and observe.
- Schedule: We will do short scenes as our characters in between races. After the play session has ended we will do a debrief where we discuss the theories underlying the scenario.
- **Time:** The whole scenario can take up to two hours.

Teach the board game

• Show the board game and explain the rules (see Board Game Rules print out).

• Play a few rounds until the players understand how it works.

Role play - How you do it

If your participants have previous experience of role-playing, this can be omitted.

- 1. They will play different roles
- 2. Their roles will have different agencies and wishes, express them as if they were your own.
- 3. You do not represent your own opinions, you express the opinions of your role.
- 4. Play your character in all scenes, also when playing the board game.
- 5. The game master will indicate clearly when the role play starts and ends.

Present the characters

- **How to play:** Each character represents only one aspect of a real person's many different motivations. They are archetypes and not well-rounded individuals. Play your character as silly and over the top as you like.
- **Hand out characters:** Always use Bib Bopbop and Gess Gumber. The other can be arbitrarily chosen. Hand the characters out randomly; if a player is unhappy with their character they choose a new one.
- **(Optional) Change your clothing or add an accessory** that you will wear as your character. Small changes help; like putting your hair up.
- **Character introductions:** Do a second round of introductions, introducing your characters. Try speaking and acting as your character when you do this.

Scene 1 (5 min)

- 1. Ask the participants to re-read their character's personal goal.
- 2. Read the introduction text out loud.

"Close your eyes and imagine your character in the following situation.

You have come from all over the galaxy to participate in this intergalactic space race. Each of you is a proud representative of your home planet. This is the first time you'll meet the other competitors. For most of you it's the first time you meet any of these strange alien creatures with customs and ways so different from your own. The guide from the intergalactic space station leads you into a large glass dome and points you in the direction of the other racers.

The scene will end when you hear me knock three times."

- 3. Give a warning 1 minute before ending the scene.
- 4. End the scene after 5 minutes.

Race 1

- 1. Ask the players to re-read their special rules for the race.
- 2. Tell the players to keep track of their speed and happiness scores.
- 3. Tell the players to continue playing their characters, reflecting their happiness scores.
- 4. Knock 3 times to end the game after 15 min, regardless of how far the participants have come in the race.
- 5. When the race is cut, the first 3 characters closest to the finish line are now 1st, 2nd and 3rd are now leading the race. This order now represents the final outcome after several weeks of racing. (This does not affect the happiness scores.)

Scene 2

- 1. Remind the players about the characters' personal goals. Most will still be pursuing them (if they haven't changed their mind).
- 2. Remind players to play on their happiness scores.
- 3. Read the scenes opening text out loud.

"Close your eyes and imagine your character in the following situation.

You have all gathered in the VIP lounge of the intergalactic space station. Weeks of racing are drawing to an end; tomorrow is the big finale. It has been a more intense experience than any of you had expected. As public interest rose, pressure mounted. Across the galaxy injustices, prejudices and conflicts, both old and ongoing, have surfaced. Regardless of personal feelings it is clear to you all that this is no longer an average race, with average stakes. And tomorrow, with the whole universe watching, the ultimate victor will be decided.

The scene will end when you hear me knock three times."

- 4. Give a warning 1 minute before ending the scene.
- 5. End the scene after 5 minutes, or earlier if all the participants have completed their goals.

Race 2

- 1. Instruct the players to play all acceleration cards *face down* in this round.
- 2. Add one more rule that applies to all.
- 3. Hand out the Tweak cards by letting people choose from the back side.
- 4. Knock 3 times to begin the race.
- 5. End the game after 15 min, with this text

"At the height of the race, a number of audience space-ships just happen do drift a bit too close to a moon. NN and NN (randomly chose one or two of the characters who are in a curve) detect them to late when rounding the moon. They manage a narrow escape through a space jump, but the gravity well sucks the audience ships into an inescapable fall. 300 aliens from two planets crash into the surface of the moon. The race is immediately aborted. There will be no winner this time."

Scene 3

1. Continue immediately by reading the following:

"You gather in the hotel after the aborted race. The race has taken lives - and not those of the daring drivers, but innocent bystanders. You realise that the races have gone too far... You all agree to petition for a rule change, but can you agree on what that change should be?

The scene will end when you hear me knock three times again."

- 2. Give a warning 1 minute before ending the scene.
- 3. End the scene after 5 minutes, or earlier if the characters have agreed on a rule change.

Debrief (30 min)

- 1. Remind participants that gaining most Happiness was the real goal for each character, and not winning!
- 2. (If desired by the players) Explain some of the core concepts underlying the design.
 - Collaborative and Competitive play
 - Race versus Battle
 - Core mechanics
 - Role play and characters
 - o Sandbox play, Competition, vs Railroaded narrative
- 3. Present Nick Yee's study of player motivations and the characteristics that Yee describes.

Bopbop – Community Gumbers – Competition Megamets – Power Addimp – Completion Bricors – Design Repper – Discovery Belli – Strategy Atio – Challenge Sienis – Story Ficturs – Fantasy Teritus – Destruction

Conmo - Excitement

4. Explain the theories on cheating and transgressive play related to the Tweak cards.

Discussion

Suggestions for discussion topics:

- How do you feel about your character? How do you feel about the other characters?
- Can you recognize these motivations from everyday life? When do you meet people who are driven by them?
- What do you think was the driving force behind the Tweak card? Can you recognise this attitude in yourself or others?
- Under what circumstances do people accept transgressive play? When should it be designed for and when against?
- What happened in the final scene? How can people with different personal goals agree on rules?

Do you want to know more?

This scenario is based on studies of social play in games. The studies underlying the scenario have primarily focussed on adults and on their engagement with computer games, but these forms of engagement can be observed in a wide range of play activities. Children learn to master social play in games around the age of eleven - twelve.

The characters are based on a player characterisation framework for on-line roleplaying games, that was developed by Nick Yee. The preferences expressed by the different characters match broad categories of players in online multiplayer role-playing games: their reasons for playing and their different playstyles. Yee emphasised that the different motivations are not mutually exclusive: for example, the same player may very well be motivated both by competition and socialising. On-line role-playing games offer a very varied range of engagements, why we can expect these to match most (but not all) motivations to play in a range of gaming situations, however, not all of them may work in one and the same game.

There is also a much older and more well-known player typology developed by Richard Bartle (Players who suit mud), but Yee has showed that it is not entirely consistent with empirical data. Don't fall for it!

The perspectives on cheating that are introduced in the second round come from a variety of sources. The distinction between 'cheaters' and 'spoilsports' was originally proposed by Bernard Suits. Where the 'cheater' tries to win, the 'spoilsport' doesn't care about the rules OR about winning. But Suits did not take into account that players do not just break rules to win; quite a lot of cheating constitutes ways to make the game more playable or more interesting. Such forms of transgressive play have been studied by Mia Consalvo. Creating open-ended and more playful designs is one way to allow players to co-create their game through negotiating what constitutes a cheat, and what is a change of rules.

A couple of good introductions books to game design exist, most of them focus on computer games. In the context of designing games for museums, we recommend Tracy Fullerton's "Game design workshop" book as it is based on iterative and empirical methods that are fairly straightforward to apply to a range of design contexts. The book 'Larp Design' edited by Johanna Koljonen is a good resource for designing role-playing games, but it is unfortunately very hard to come by.

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BOARD GAME RULES

The person who had their birthday most recently starts the first round. Someone else starts the second round. Rounds go clock-wise around the table.

BASIC RULES

- 1. On your turn, you can play as many acceleration cards as you want from your hand EXCEPT you cannot play plus and minus cards at the same time.
- 2. Keep track of your speed (use play tokens or note it down). Your new speed is your old speed plus the sum of the cards played.
- 3. Move your token as many steps as your speed, forwards for positive and backwards for negative speed.
- 4. Place the used cards in a joint discard pile. Re-shuffle the discard pile if the speed card pile runs empty.
- 5. End your turn by drawing so you have a full hand (5 cards).

CRASHING

If a character passes through or lands on a curve with a speed restriction, their speed must not be higher than the restriction. If their speed is too high, they crash.

If a character crashes, they lose their hand and their speed is set to zero. Depending on their special rules, they may also lose happiness. They do not draw a new hand at the end of their turn. In their next turn, they must stay in place but they can use their special rules if they apply. They end that turn by drawing a new hand.

CHARACTER-SPECIFIC RULES

Each character has special abilities that both affect how they move, and when they gain or lose happiness. Rules can trigger both during the character's turn and during other's turns. When a rule triggers, the player should state this clearly by uttering their 'catch phrase' (or some inspired variation of it).

When the order matters, special rules triggers *after* the character has moved. The current players' special rules trigger before those of other players.

TWEAK CARDS

Are used in a second round. Tweak card rules trigger in the same way as special rules.

In this round, acceleration cards are played *face down*. If a character wants to call another out for cheating, they turn those cards up.

- If the player was cheating, they are thrown out of the race and lose 5 happiness.
- If there was no cheat, the character that called out the cheat loses 2 happiness.

Tweak cards

I don't care about the race or who is winning.	Sometimes the game is just too hard. Can't we just all agree to make it easier?	I've had a streak of bad luck. I need to even out my chances.
THE SPOILSPORT	TWEAKING THE GAME	COMPENSATE FOR BAD LUCK
Tweak: Your happiness points are not affected by your position in the game, or if you crash. Suspecting somebody else cheating: You don't care, so you don't call it out.	Tweak: When you or somebody else is in a tight spot, suggest a new rule that would help. If accepted, everyone gets to do the same the rest of the game.	Tweak: When not in lead or second, you will lie about the value of your cards to optimise your play. Suspecting somebody else cheating: Call it out.
	Suspecting somebody else cheating: Invent a new rule that would make this play	

It's no fun when somebody is so far behind that they have no chance of winning.	I think NN should win the race.	I play according to the rules.
CHEATING AS A HANDICAP SYSTEM	KINGMAKING	FAIR PLAY
Tweak: If you or anyone else is far behind the others, try to create a distraction, and move that player token forwards when nobody notices. Suspecting somebody else cheating: You will call it out if they are ahead of other players.	Tweak: Find reasons move NN forward or pass cards to them, openly or secretly. If your character has suitable abilities, use them in favour of NN. Suspecting somebody else cheating: You will always call it out if they are ahead of NN.	Tweaking: You play with the same rules as in the previous race. You never lie about the value of your cards. Suspecting somebody else cheating: You will always call it out.

I cheat as much as I need in order to win.	Rules are important, but sometimes the game needs just a little bit of a spice.	l play fair as long as everyone else does, but l'm not stupid.
CHEATER	MAKE THE GAME MORE INTERESTING	CHEATING BECAUSE OTHERS ARE CHEATING
Tweaking: You will use any cheat to win! Lie about card values, try to pick up extra cards, ignore rules about crashing, accidentally move an extra space Suspecting somebody else cheating: Call it out when you think it will give you an	Cheating: Try to move your own token, or others, to create more interesting situations. Suspecting somebody else cheating: Call it out only if it makes the game boring.	Tweaking: You play according to the rules. But if you suspect that somebody else is cheating, you will also start to cheat (to get even). If that person is thrown out of the game, you play according to the rules again. Suspecting somebody else
advantage.		cheating: You do not call it out.

Bib Bopbop

"There's not a word yet for old friends who've just met."

Description:

The Bopbops enjoy socializing and collaborating with others. They live in large collectives and communicate both telepathically and vocally.

Bopbops can easily get depressed when left alone, even for a short period of time. They like chatting and grouping up with others when doing any task, any task at all.

Scenario goal: "Wanna be friends?"

Try to become friends with the other racers. Make note of those who are friendly and those who are not. These are now your Friends and Foes.

Catchphrase: "Wanna join up?"

Special rule: During your turn you can invite a character that is on the same square as you to join you. If they accept you both move to the same square together. (They retain their current speed.)

You can also ask to join another character in the same way on their turn.

You gain happiness

- Whenever you get to move with someone else (+2 for friend, 0 for foe).
- Whenever you or any of your friends are in the lead.

- If somebody says no to move together (-2 for friend, 0 for foe).
- When cards are taken from your hand (-1)
- When you crash (-1)
- When you are driving backwards (-2)

Gess Gumber

"If you're a true warrior, competition doesn't scare you. It makes you better."

Description:

The Gumbers are a highly competitive race. They begin competing at an early age and enjoy competition in many forms: duels, matches, even team vs team. However, it's not only strength that is valued in the Gumbers culture. Whenever there are competitors for the title, being the best at anything is an admirable achievement.

Scenario goal: Find out about the other racer's strengths and weaknesses.

Catchphrase: *"I bet you I'm better than you at …"*

Special rule: During your turn, declare yourself better at something (anything at all) than another player of your choice. Turn over the top card in the pile. If the number is above zero you are right and the losing player moves back two squares. If the number is below zero you are wrong and you go back two squares instead. A zero means it is a tie and both stay put.

You gain happiness

- For winning a bet (+2)
- For being in the lead at the end of your turn (+1)

- For losing a bet (-2) and for a tie (-1)
- When cards are taken from your hand (-1)
- When you crash (-1)
- When you are driving backwards (-2)

Bri Bricor

"The world always seems brighter when you've just made something that wasn't there before."

Description:

Bricors want to actively express their individuality in any world they find themselves in. They are builders, artists and creators. Everything they do is part of their self-expression and they will spend the time it takes to create their vision.

Scenario goal: Talk about your art to everyone who is willing to listen, and maybe also to those who are not.

Catchphrase: *"I can make space a more beautiful place!"* **Special rule:** Space is a wondrous place, but it needs decoration. Whenever you land on a square, find a way to make it and the space around it more beautiful and interesting (you may draw on the board).

Every time another character lands on a square you have decorated, they must congratulate you for your artwork.

You gain happiness:

- Every time you get a chance to decorate a new square (+1)
- When somebody compliments your artwork (+2)

You lose happiness:

• When cards are taken from your hand (-1)

Met Megamet

"Power can be taken, but not given. The process of the taking is empowerment in itself."

Description:

The Megamets feed on acquiring power and status. They infiltrate other planets and set about becoming as powerful as possible. At each new planet, they first figure out how this can be achieved, and then patiently seek out the tools and equipment needed to amass power and dominate everyone else on the planet.

Once absolute power has been achieved some Megamets grow comfortable, while others soon tire and move on to the challenges of a new planet.

Scenario goal: Figure out how to best use the race to wiggle your way into dominating other characters and through them, their planets.

Catchphrase: "Thank you for your offering"

Special rule: Whenever you pass another player on the board they must give you a card from their hand. They cannot draw up a new card until the end of their next turn. You can choose to add this card to your hand or discard it. They lose an (additional) 1 happiness if you discard it.

You gain happiness:

- Whenever you get a card (+2)
- Whenever you are in the lead (+1)

- When cards are taken from your hand (-2)
- When you crash (-1)
- When you are driving backwards (-1)

Addi Adimp

"But 'almost done' is not done!"

Description:

The Adimps are often called obsessive perfectionists, something they take as a compliment. An Adimp will always complete any task or mission set before them. Whether it be collecting every last precious Snorkel in the Delta Mines or exploring every uncharted star in the 34th galactic quadrant, their meticulous attention to detail and infinite patience make them excellent bounty hunters as well as renowned explorers and collectors.

Scenario goal: Figure out what planets the other contestants come from. Obviously, you want to visit all of them – try to find out as much as you can about them!

Catchphrase: "There is more to see here!" Special rule:

You get +1 happiness for *every new square* you manage to land on at the game board.

You lose happiness

• When cards are taken from your hand (-2)

Bid Belli

"The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do."

Description:

The Belli have a very small population, on a home planet covered in highly sought after resources in a galaxy. As such they have developed an uncanny ability for careful decision-making and planning, forging strategic alliances and building their own defences. They like to think through their options and likely outcomes before taking action. Whether it's decisions regarding balancing resources and competing goals or managing foreign diplomacy. The Belli search for the optimal long-term strategies.

Scenario goal: Form strategic alliances (but don't team up with the weakest), and figure out who is the biggest threat in the race.

Catchphrase: *"The essence of strategy is choosing what to not do."* **Special rule:** Before playing, you can discard any number of cards to draw new ones (up to a hand of five cards). When you play, you must always play all cards in your hand. If that is not possible, you get to draw an extra card but must pass the turn.

You gain happiness:

- When you get to play your turn (+2)
- When you are in the lead (+1)

- When cards are taken from your hand (-2)
- When you are driving backwards (-1)

Red Repper

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

Description:

Reppers are the curious explorers and tinkerers of the universe. They are driven on by an internal force to constantly ask the question: "What if?" Viewing everything they encounter as a fascinating new contraption to open up and tinker with. They follow their own logic and rules, often to the bafflement of other aliens. Their unique ability to regenerate themselves completely make them fearless risk takers.

Scenario goal: You are curious about your fellow racers and would like to know more about them and the worlds they come from.

Catchphrase: "Look at this!"

Special rule:

- You can choose to pass a turn to instead draw two extra cards.
- For each two (2) you draw, show it to the other players and say 'Look at this!'

You gain happiness

- Whenever you show your fellow players a two (+3).

- If you draw two negative cards when passing on a turn (-2)
- When cards are taken from your hand (-1)

Atti Atio

"Try, try and try again. By your fourth try you'll already be three times better."

Description:

The Atio spend much of their life underground where they are meticulously trained in handling the harsh environment of their surface world. They are persistent and take the time to practice and hone everything they are taught so that they can take on the most difficult missions and monsters that their world has to offer. They are not afraid of failure, they learn from it, and constantly seek out new challenges.

Scenario goal: You may be one of the best, but there are still are a lot or excellent drivers here. Try to figure out their best tips about racing and equipment.

Catchphrase: "I am the best at this. I'll show you."

Special rule: Try to take each curve at the maximum speed. If you crash, you go back 3 steps to get another try at the curve.

You gain happiness

- Whenever you take a curve at maximum speed (+2)
- Whenever you are in the lead (+1)

- When you crash (-1)
- When you are driving backwards (-2)

Syn Sienis

"Fantasy is escapist, and that is its glory. If a soldier is imprisoned by the enemy, don't we consider it his duty to escape?"

Description:

Sienis are storytellers. They immensely enjoy fantastic tales from the past, the future and the present, real or fictive, with elaborate storylines and fascinating people. They create stories, tell stories, and listen to stories.

Scenario goal: Tell stories, the more fantastic the better. Listen to stories, get people listening to stories, retell other's stories but embellish them.

Catchphrase: *"Let me tell you a story about yourself."* **Special rule:**

Whenever you end up at the same square as another character, tell a story about them.

You gain happiness:

- If the character accepts the story as their own (true or not) (+2)
- If any other character wants it (+1)

- If nobody wants your story (-3)
- When cards are taken from your hand (-1)

Fid Fictur

"The best way of successfully acting a part is to be it."

Description:

Ficturs come from a highly technological world where the population live their lives cocooned in incubators from birth. Their consciousness is uploaded to a virtual world allowing them to become someone else, somewhere else at the blink of an eye. Ficturs enjoy the sense of being immersed in an alter ego in a believable alternate world and enjoy exploring these new worlds just for the sake of exploring. Like right now.

Scenario goal: Try to learn as much as possible about the other characters, their goals and motivations. You may attempt to mimic them.

Catchphrase: "It's time to take a look in the mirror"

Special rule: Whenever you land up at the same square as another character, read their character sheet. If you want to, continue playing as that characters (including using their character description and special rules). This rule still applies. You can swap back to playing as yourself only if you crash.

You gain happiness:

- When you go back to playing as yourself (+1)

Terr Teritus

"All destruction, by violent revolution or however it be, is but new creation."

Description:

Teritus are agents of chaos and destruction. They love having many tools at their disposal to blow things up and cause relentless mayhem. Teritus are a warrior race and have long since abandoned their own home planet to wreak destruction throughout the universe. They gravitate to situations where guns and explosives are required and are often hired as mercenaries by warring planets.

Scenario goal: Casual socialising is for wimps. You enjoy telling people uncomfortable truths about themselves, trigger conflicts, and perhaps make them a bit scared of you.

Catchphrase: *"Let's spice things up a bit"* **Special rule:**

If you land on a square where there are other characters, you have the choice to make there everyone crash including yourself. To do so, draw a card. If the card is +1 or +2, everyone crashes. If you draw a -2, you are the only one who crashes. If the card is 0, nobody crashes.

You gain happiness:

- If everyone crashes (+2)

You lose happiness:

- If you are the only one who crashes (-2)

Cid Conmo

"Dangerous, yes yes I heard you, but can it go faster?"

Description:

The Conmo have an extremely short life span and appear to live their lives at twice the speed of everyone else. They seek out adventures that are fast-paced, intense and provide a constant adrenaline rush. The Conmo love surprises and want every day to be full of action and thrills. They pride themselves on having rapid reaction times and seek out challenges were this skill is rewarded. They are born racers.

Scenario goal: Challenge the others to go as fast as possible in the upcoming race. Maybe an internal speed competition

Catchphrase: "Whee!"

Special rule: You want to be moving faster than everyone else on the board, and accelerate with more than 2.

You gain happiness

- if you are moving faster than everyone else on the board at the end of your turn (+1)
- if you accelerate with more than 2 (+2)

- When cards are taken from your hand (-1)
- When standing still or moving backwards (-2) (including when you crash)































