Echo: The Game of Sounds™

Trademark documentation, product standards, and brand guidelines.

Owner(s): **Max Keeley**, **Nate Bachman**

Trademark (™) in use since 2017.
First published 2017; revised October 2026.

Classes of goods and services:

Class	Covers	Identification of goods and services
28	Printed card deck and box	Card games; party games
41	Web edition	Entertainment services, namely, providing online non-downloadable games

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SEC 1.1

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The web edition requires no account and does not collect personal information. Player names, settings, and game progress are stored only in the browser on the player's device and can be removed by clearing the browser's site data. Hosting providers may keep standard server logs. These terms may be updated; the current version is published at maxkeeley.com/projects/echothegameofsounds.

Licensing, standards, and contact

SEC 1.3

Licensing and contact

The custom braille typeface is free for personal and commercial use with attribution to Max Keeley. Unified English Braille is maintained by the International Council on English Braille (ICEB); its use in this game does not imply endorsement by ICEB.

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Trademark use and dates of first use

SEC 1.4

First use

Class 28, card games and party games: first use 2017; first use in commerce December 2018.

Class 41, online non-downloadable games: first use and first use in commerce October 24, 2026.

Specimens of use: Fig. 7.10 (printed edition box) and Fig. 8.10 (web edition in a browser).

Document control

SEC 1.5

Revision history

Version 1.0 (2017): first edition, prepared with the printed prototype.

Version 2.0 (October 2026): revised for the relaunch and web edition, and reorganized into current product and development history.

Record each future revision here with its date and a summary of changes. Send proposed changes to Max Keeley through maxkeeley.com.

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Credits and sources

Play online | maxkeeley.net/games/echothegameofsounds

Project page | maxkeeley.com/projects/echothegameofsounds

Additional domains | echothegameofsounds.com | echothegameofsounds.io | maxkeeley.itch.io/echothegameofsounds

Designer | maxkeeley.com

Demonstration video | youtu.be/XQMwiKHR5es

Unified English Braille (UEB), International Council on English Braille (ICEB) | iceb.org/publications/ueb/

The Rules of Unified English Braille (Third Edition, 2024) | iceb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Rules-of-Unified-English-Braille-2024.pdf

Created by | Max Keeley, with original concept and testing by Nate Bachman

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Abstract

SEC 2.1

Game abstract

Echo: The Game of Sounds™ is a party game in which players take turns reproducing the sound of a word using only their voice, while the other players attempt to identify it. Performers may not speak, gesture, move, or use props.

The game is published in two editions. The printed edition is a deck of word cards in a custom box. Each card bears its word in print and in Unified English Braille, with one rounded corner that indicates orientation by touch, and each identified card scores 1 point. The web edition is a browser-based application for a single shared mobile device. It presents each word, times each round, plays audio cues, displays braille, and keeps score, with words valued from 1 to 5 points by difficulty.

Purpose and mission

SEC 2.2

Purpose and mission

Echo: The Game of Sounds™ is designed to be played by people of every age, culture, and ability at the same table. Many party games depend on sight, reading speed, or dexterity, which can exclude players or require a separate edition. Echo relies on sound alone, uses rules that fit on a single page, and builds braille into the same cards and screens used by every player.

Product values

SEC 2.3

Product values

- One game for all players. Accessibility is part of the core design, not a separate edition.
- Simple rules, varied play. Each performer's interpretation makes the same word sound different every time.
- Made in-house. The game is designed, tested, and printed by its creators.
- Built to expand. Braille in the web edition provides a foundation for future tactile device support.

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How to play (web) SEC 3.1

Players take turns performing a word within a set time (default 30 seconds). The first player to reach the target score (default 15 points) wins. Both values may be changed in Settings.

Conduct rule: performers may not speak, gesture, or move their bodies. A performer who breaks this rule must shuffle, forfeiting 1 point and receiving a new word.

1. New game. Select New game and enter each player's name in turn order. A minimum of 2 players is required.
2. Get ready. The screen displays the next performer. Pass the device to that player, who selects Start. A three-second countdown follows.
3. Perform. The performer is shown one word and reproduces its sound. An audio cue marks the final 10 seconds.
4. Shuffle (optional). A performer with at least 1 point may spend 1 point to replace the word.
5. Score. If the word is identified in time, select Score!, then select the player who identified it. The performer receives the word's point value (1 to 5) and the guesser receives 1 point.
6. Time expires. If the word is not identified in time, no points are awarded.
7. Next round. The scorecard ranks all players. Select Next round and pass the device to the next player.
8. Winning. The first player to reach the target score wins. Players tied on the winning score at the end of the final round share the win.

How to play (printed) SEC 3.2

For 2 to 10 players of any age; larger groups may play in teams. Shuffle the deck and deal 3 cards to each player. Players may view their own cards at any time but keep them hidden from others.

1. Place the remaining cards face down as the draw pile.
2. The youngest player performs first.
3. Choose. The performer selects one card from their hand and places it face down. The selection is final.
4. Perform. The performer reproduces the word's sound without speaking, gesturing, or moving. There is no time limit; the turn continues until the word is identified or the performer concedes.
5. Score. When a player identifies the word, the performer reveals the card and keeps it as a point card. If two players answer at once, the performer decides who answered first.
6. Score the guesser. The guesser places one card from their own hand face up as a point card.
7. Draw. The performer and the guesser each draw 1 card, restoring their hands to 3.
8. Next turn. The guesser performs next.

Conceding. If the word is not identified, the performer concedes, discards the card, and draws a replacement. The player to the performer's left performs next.

Rule violations. A performer who speaks, gestures, or moves forfeits the turn. The card is discarded, the performer draws a replacement, and the player to the left performs next. Point cards are never removed.

Draw pile. When the draw pile is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile to form a new draw pile.

Winning. The first player to place 10 point cards wins.

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Definitions

SEC 4.1

Terms used throughout this guide.

Definitions and terminology

Braille

A tactile writing system read by touch. This game uses Unified English Braille (UEB) in lowercase. Braille is printed over each word on the cards and accompanies headings, buttons, player names, and scores in the web edition.

Performer

The player taking the current turn, who reproduces the sound of a word using only their voice while the other players attempt to identify it.

Printed edition

The physical edition of the game. Each card bears one word in print and braille, with one rounded corner indicating orientation. Each card is worth 1 point.

Web edition

The browser-based edition of the game, played on one shared mobile device. It presents words, times rounds, plays audio cues, displays braille, and keeps score. Words are worth 1 to 5 points.

Gameplay

The mechanic common to both editions: players take turns reproducing the sound of a word while the other players attempt to identify it.

Round or turn

One performer's attempt at one word. The web edition uses "round" and the printed edition uses "turn"; the terms are equivalent.

Win

The end of a game. In the printed edition, the first player to place 10 point cards wins. In the web edition, the first player to reach the target score (default 15) wins; players tied on that score share the win.

No score

A turn in which the word is not identified. In the web edition, time expires and no points are awarded. In the printed edition, the performer concedes or breaks the conduct rule; point cards are never removed.

Word (term)

The item performed, chosen for a distinctive sound, such as a whale, a kettle, or bowling. "Word" is used in player-facing text; "term" is the internal name in the web edition's list of 106 entries.

Audience and guesser

The audience is every player other than the performer. The guesser is the first audience member to identify the word.

Points

The unit of score. Printed edition: 1 point per card. Web edition: 1 to 5 points per word for the performer and 1 point for the guesser.

Shuffle

In the web edition, replacing the current word at a cost of 1 point. Also the penalty for breaking the conduct rule.

Scorecard

The web edition screen that ranks players by score after each round.

Hardware integration

A planned web edition feature for connecting tactile signaling devices. Not currently available.

Conduct rule

The core restriction on performers: no speaking, gesturing, or moving. Breaking it costs a shuffle in the web edition and the turn in the printed edition.

Target score

The score that wins a web edition game: 15 points by default. It can be changed in Settings, along with the round time (30 seconds by default).

Point card

In the printed edition, a card kept face up to count as 1 point. Performers and guessers each gain a point card when a word is identified.

Concede

In the printed edition, the performer ends the turn without the word being identified. The card is discarded and play passes left.

Difficulty

A rating from 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest) given to each word through player testing. In the web edition, it sets the word's point value.

Wordmark

The stylized "echo" logotype with the tagline "the game of sounds," shown in Fig. 6.1. It may not be altered or recolored.

Trademark (™)

A name or logo that identifies the source of a product. The ™ symbol is used with the first prominent mention of the game's name.

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Features and accessibility

SEC 5.1

Accessibility features of each edition.

Accessibility considerations

Web edition	
Braille on screen	Headings, buttons, player names, words, and scores are accompanied by Unified English Braille, providing a foundation for future tactile hardware.
Sound cues and haptics	Each stage has an audio cue, including countdown clicks, a timer for the final 10 seconds, and distinct cues for scored and expired rounds. Supported devices vibrate when time expires.
One-device play	Pass-and-play for 2 or more players in a mobile browser. No account or download is required.
Scorecard	Rows appear in sequence and re-sort by rank, above a scrolling reel of the game's illustrations.
Light and dark themes	Light screens are used for setup and scoring; dark screens are used during performance.
Reduced motion	Animations are minimized when the device's reduced-motion setting is enabled.
Hardware integration	Planned. Settings for connecting tactile signaling devices.

Printed edition	
Braille on cards	Each word is printed with Unified English Braille, so sighted and blind players use the same card.
Box design	The box allows the deck to be located and drawn from by touch.
Rounded corner	One rounded corner on each card indicates its orientation by touch.
Word selection	Each word has a distinct, recognizable sound and was tested for fairness across skill levels.

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Brand identity

SEC 6.1

Brand identity

The Echo wordmark uses modified letterforms set with tight kerning, so the letters draw together to represent players brought closer through shared play. The bowls of the “e” and “o” are drawn as eyes, referencing sight and its absence. The wordmark is drawn in a custom typeface; supporting text uses a variable open-source typeface. Reproduce the wordmark only in black on white or white on black. Do not recolor, distort, outline, or otherwise alter it. Use the ™ symbol with the first prominent use of the name in any material.



FIG. 6.1
Primary wordmark lockup



FIG. 6.2
Clear space: 12 pt on all sides of the wordmark

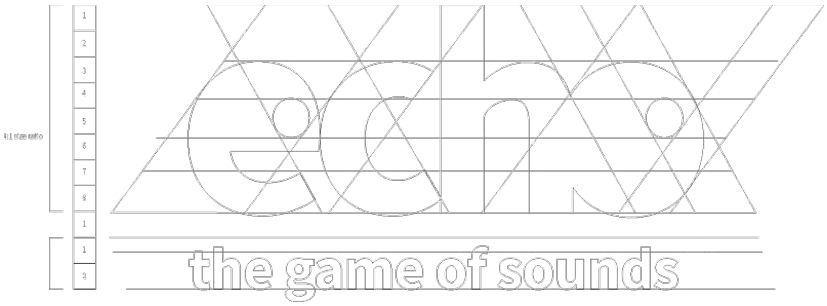

FIG. 6.3
Wordmark measurements and clear space

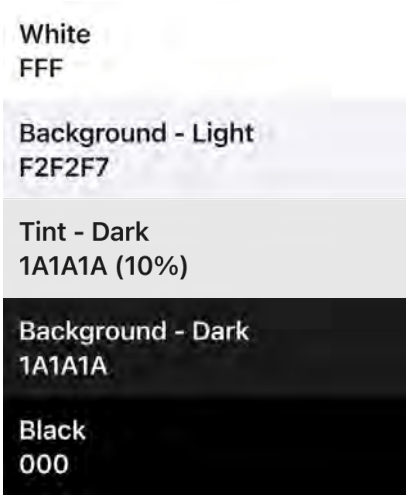

FIG. 6.4
Brand and web edition colors

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Box design

SEC 7.1

Box design

The custom box is designed for use without sight. It includes an access slit for locating and drawing cards, a rear push hole for sliding out the inner tray, and assembly instructions integrated into the printed design.

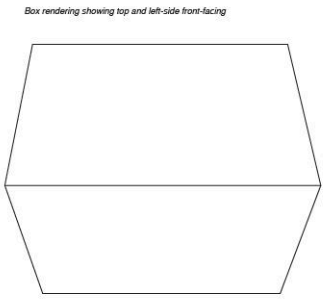

FIG. 7.1
Box rendering, front and top view

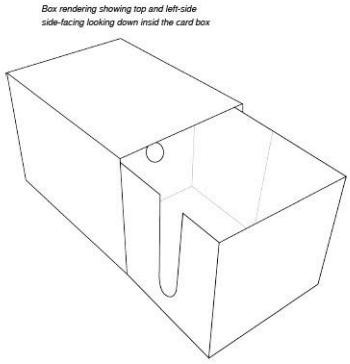

FIG. 7.2
Box rendering, side view looking into the card tray

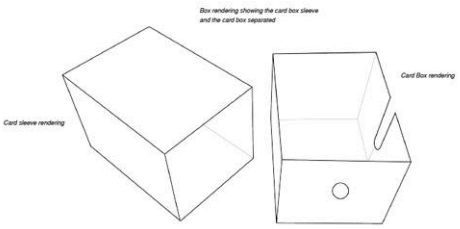

FIG. 7.3
Box rendering, tray and sleeve separated

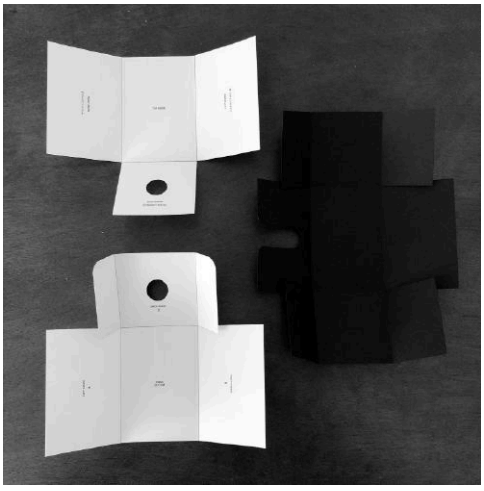

FIG. 7.4
Prototype templates, separated and folded

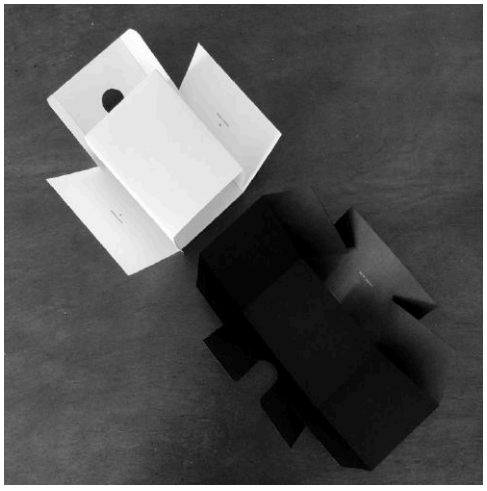

FIG. 7.5
Prototype templates, top view

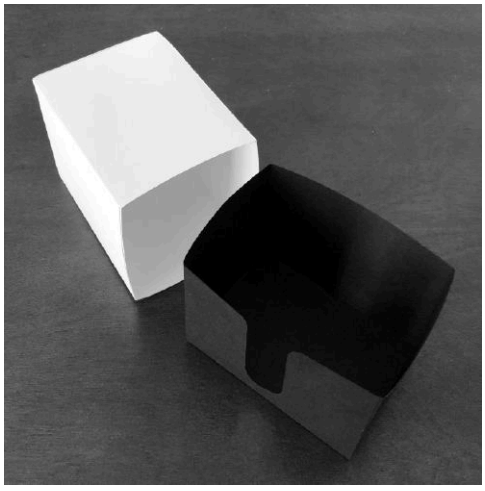

FIG. 7.6
Prototype, top view with the tray removed from the sleeve

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Card design

SEC 7.2

Card design

The production card for the printed edition. Each card is 2.5 in tall on 1 mm stock. One face shows the word and the other the Echo wordmark, both with raised braille. A single rounded corner indicates orientation by touch, and all black surfaces carry a semi-abrasive texture developed in-house. Magenta marks tactile areas and is not a printed color. The final card may differ slightly from these drawings.

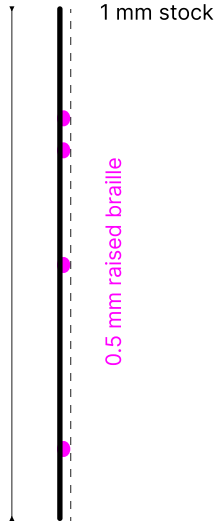

FIG. 7.7
Card design, side view

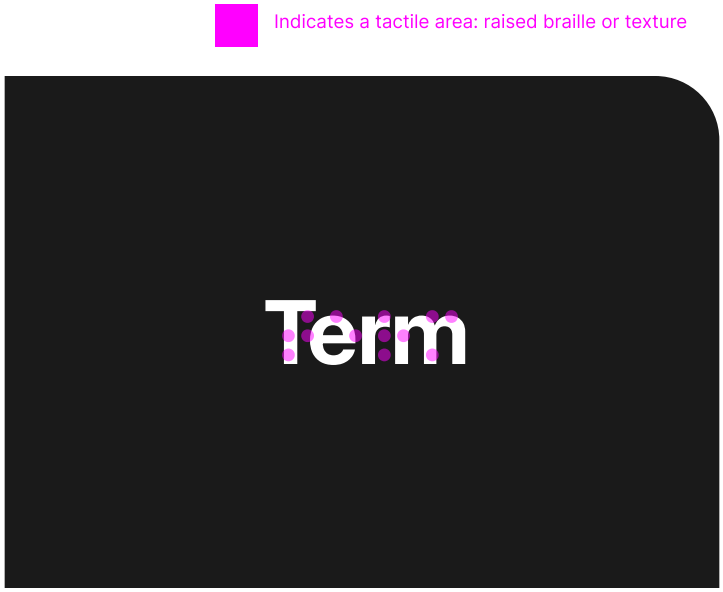

FIG. 7.8
Card design, view of term or word



FIG. 7.9
Card design, view of the branded face

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Final product (version 2.0, 2019–2020)

SEC 7.3

Final product

The production design of the printed edition: the custom box and the word cards, each printed with braille.



FIG. 7.10
Box held at an angle, showing the wordmark and cards



FIG. 7.11
Box open, showing the cards and access slit



FIG. 7.12
Cards removed from the fully opened box



FIG. 7.13
Detail of braille on a card



FIG. 7.14
Box shown from all sides

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Web edition

SEC 8.1

Web edition

A browser-based, pass-and-play edition for one shared mobile device. Player names, settings, and progress are stored only on the device. Figures show the main screens in order of play; other screens, such as Settings and How to play, are not shown.



FIG. 8.1
Main menu

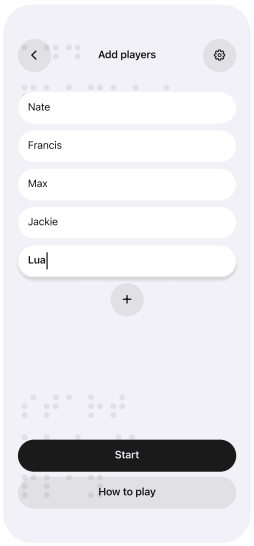

FIG. 8.2
Add players

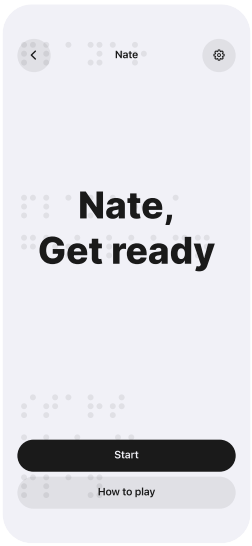

FIG. 8.3
Get ready



FIG. 8.4
Countdown

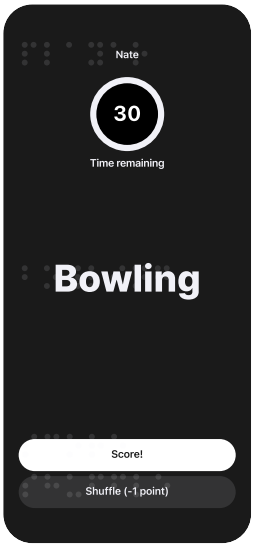

FIG. 8.5
Performance

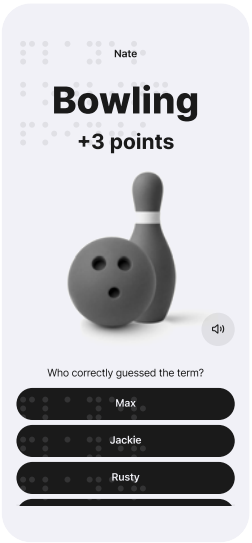

FIG. 8.6
Score

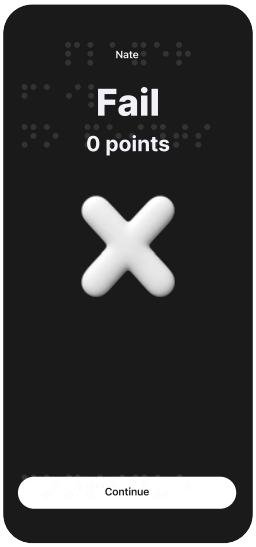

FIG. 8.7
Time expired (no score)

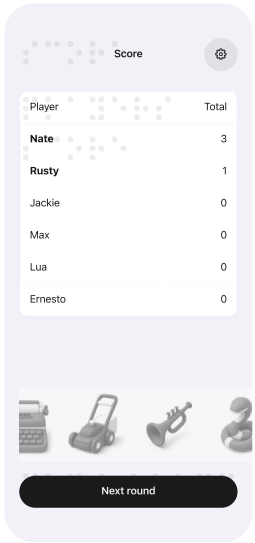

FIG. 8.8
Scorecard

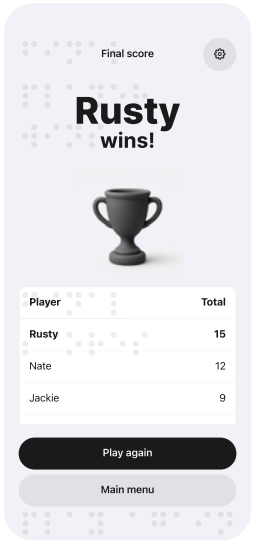

FIG. 8.9
Final results



FIG. 8.10
Live browser rendering of the web edition, showing the mark in use (October 2026)

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Imagery

SEC 8.2

Visual style

The web edition uses 108 illustrations: one for each of the 106 words, plus a trophy and a fail symbol for results. The style is minimal and high in contrast: soft, sculpted forms in black, white, and grey on an off-white field, with no brand color, so each image reads clearly at small sizes and for players with low vision. All imagery is designed, drawn, animated, and/or generated in-house. Figures show a representative selection.



FIG. 8.11
Imagery for bowling



FIG. 8.12
Imagery for bass



FIG. 8.13
Imagery for boiling



FIG. 8.14
Imagery for billiards



FIG. 8.15
Imagery for balloon



FIG. 8.16
Imagery for baby

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Audio

SEC 8.3

Audio

The web edition uses 113 audio files: a sound for each of the 106 words and 7 interface cues (button, confirm, click, countdown timer, round scored, round failed, and game won). Each sound is created, recorded, and/or generated, then produced in-house. Production often layers several recordings of one scene to add context, giving each performer a richer reference and adding replay value. A rewarding cue plays after every scored round, and supported devices vibrate when time expires.

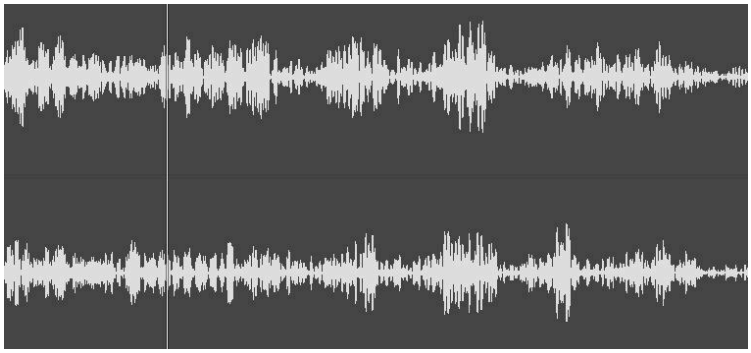

FIG. 8.17
Waveform of a sound clip, zoomed for precise editing (October 2026)

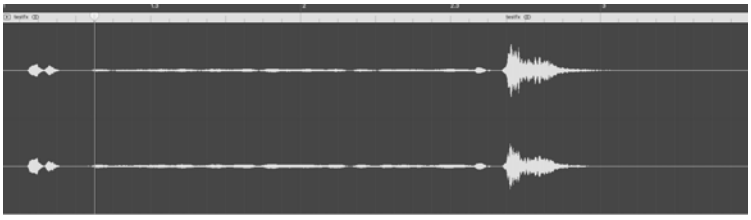

FIG. 8.18
Waveform of a complete sound clip (October 2026)

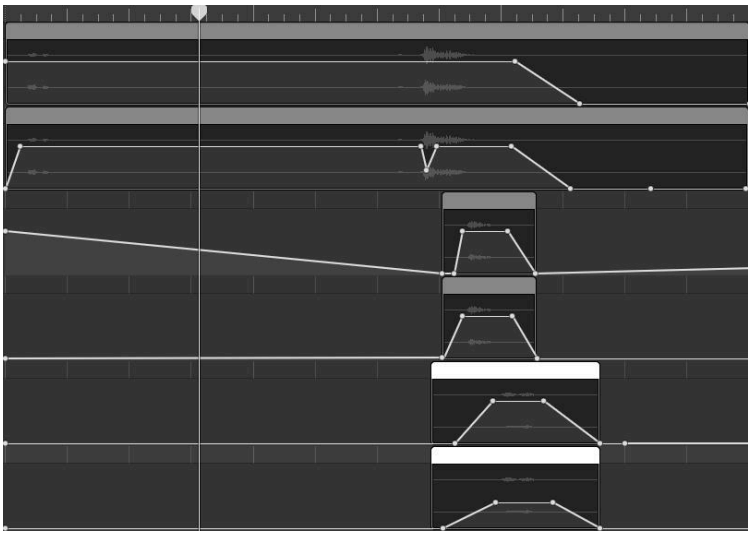

FIG. 8.19
Layered recordings combined into one sound (October 2026)

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Word list

SEC 9.1

Word list and difficulty

The game contains 106 words, each selected and tested for recognizability and balanced difficulty. Difficulty values from 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest) set point values in the web edition; in the printed edition, every word is worth 1 point.

Difficulty	Words (106 total)
1	35
2	24
3	29
4	12
5	6

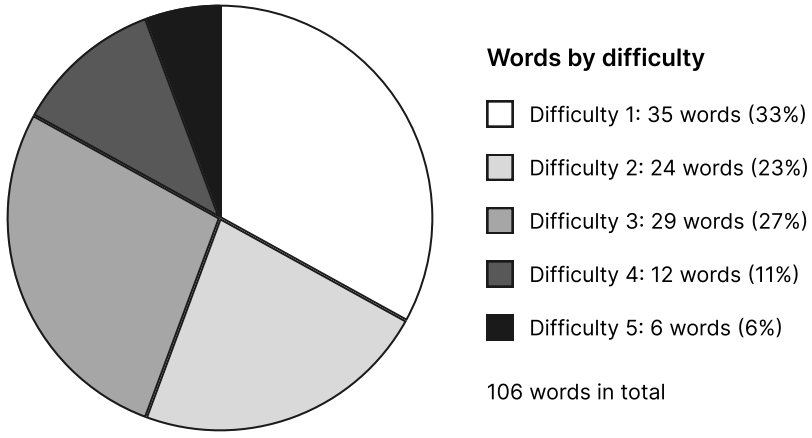

FIG. 9.1
Distribution of the 106 words by difficulty

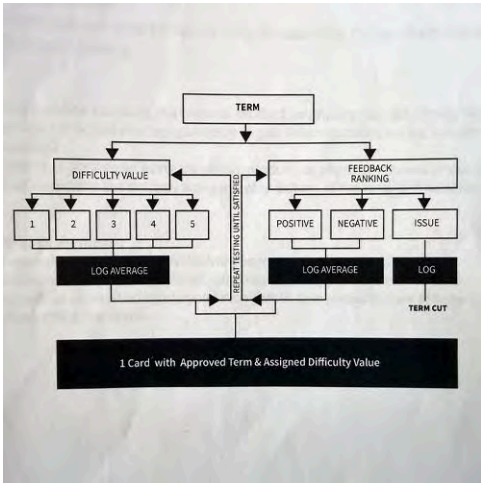

FIG. 9.2
Feedback loop for term ratings and testing

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Historical direction and discovery*

**The following pages record the research, prototypes, and testing that preceded the final product. They document development history and do not represent the current product.*

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Braille research and application

SEC 10.1

Braille research

Max Keeley designed this custom braille typeface for the game in 2017. Research covered dot spacing, scale, and pairing braille with printed letterforms so both read clearly on the same card. The typeface is free for personal and commercial use with attribution.

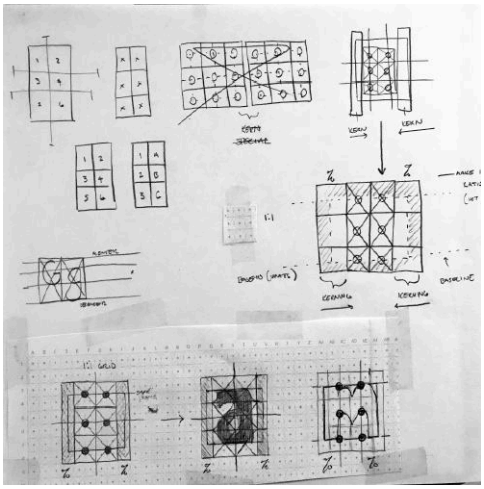

FIG. 10.1
Initial sketches of dot spacing and proximity for six-dot Grade 1 braille (2017)

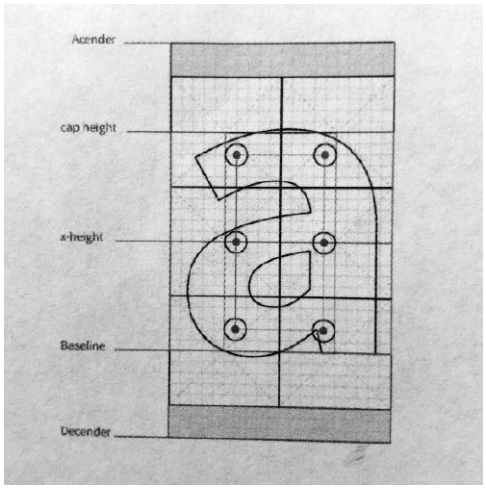

FIG. 10.2
Scale reference comparing six-dot Grade 1 braille with English letterforms

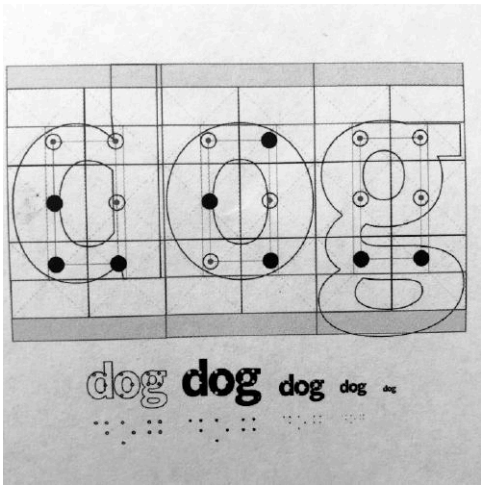

FIG. 10.3
Kerning study pairing six-dot Grade 1 braille with English letterforms for legibility

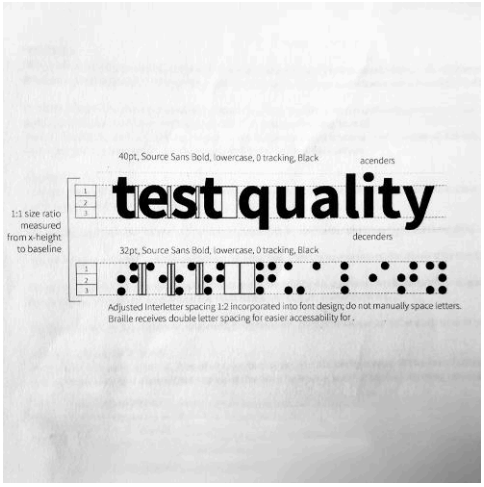

FIG. 10.4
Early handpunched braille on a card (November 28, 2017)

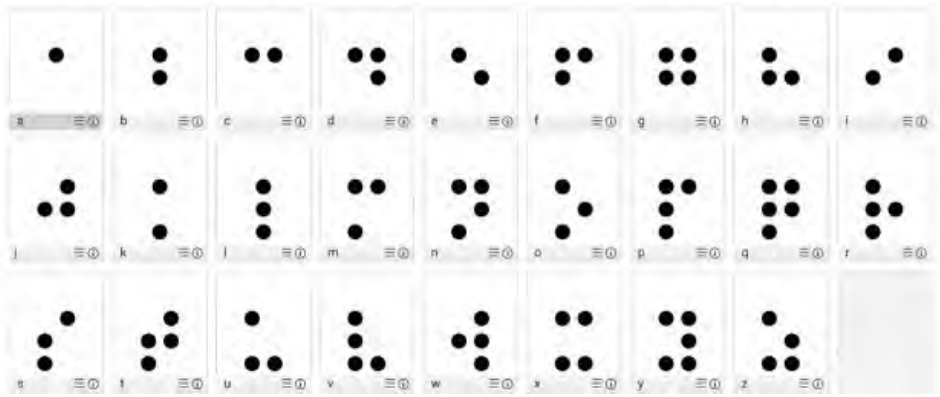

FIG. 10.5
Custom braille typeface developed in BirdFont (2017)

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Version 1.3 (testing, 2019)

SEC 10.2

Version 1.3 was used to test gameplay, the word list, and the box design. Its cards lay flat and displayed a clue or category, which was removed from the final product.

Development version



FIG. 10.6
Side view, card tray inside the sleeve



FIG. 10.7
Card tray sliding out of the sleeve

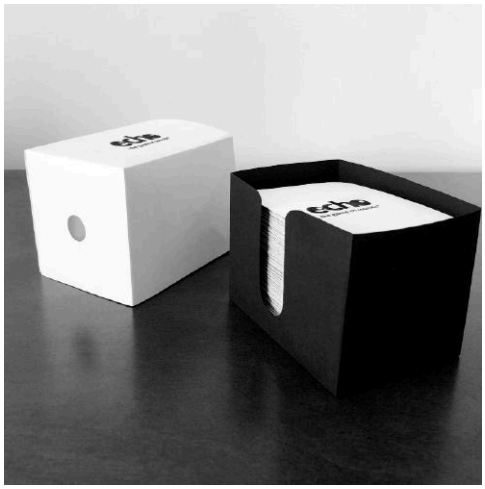

FIG. 10.8
Card tray separated from the sleeve



FIG. 10.9
Cards outside the tray, with the sleeve in the background

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Version 1.2 (exploration, 2018)

SEC 10.3

Development version

Version 1.2 was used to develop strategy and refine the word list. It explored a less prominent accessibility design, included more words than the final product, and displayed point values during each turn.

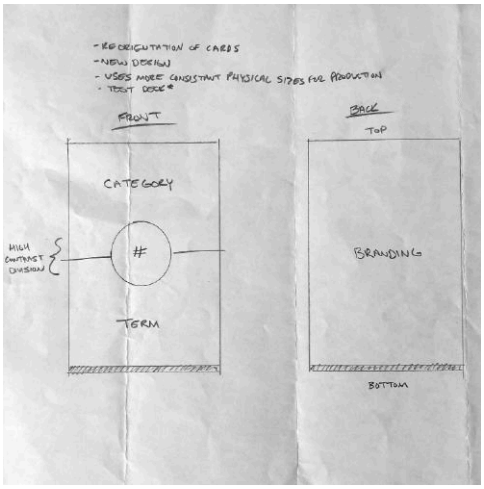

FIG. 10.10
Concept sketches for the version 1.2 card design (January 10, 2018)



FIG. 10.11
Version 1.2 card design with braille (March 16, 2018)

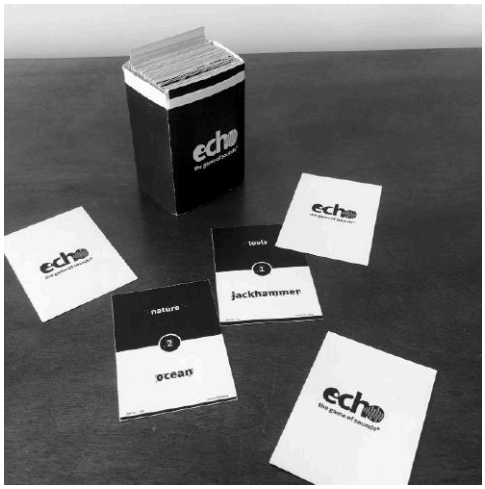

FIG. 10.12
Version 1.2 test deck laid out (March 16, 2018)



FIG. 10.13
Version 1.2 cards used for gameplay testing (March 16, 2018)



FIG. 10.14
Version 1.2 box with cards, front view (March 16, 2018)

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Version 1.1 (first prototype, 2017)

SEC 10.4

Version 1.1 was the first physical prototype. It established the testing process, word list, gameplay, and core values, and was handmade and printed in-house to explore practical braille and tactile techniques.

Development version

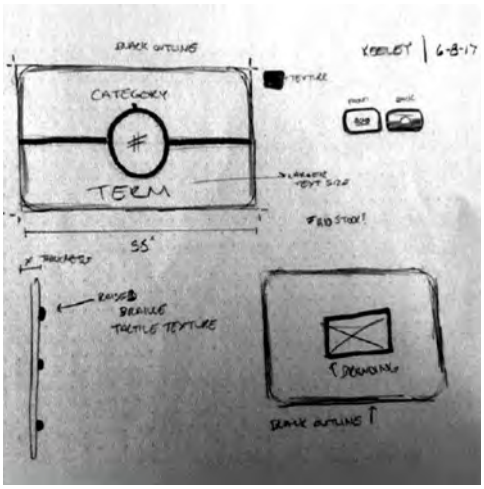

FIG. 10.15
Concept sketches of the card layout (June 8, 2017)

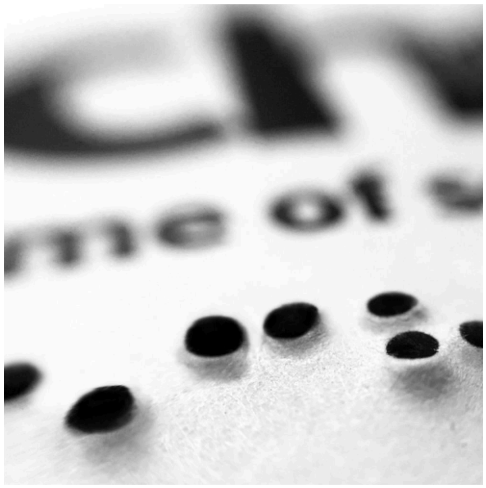

FIG. 10.16
Early handpunched braille on a card (November 28, 2017)



FIG. 10.17
First box design (November 28, 2017)



FIG. 10.18
First box design with the first card design (November 28, 2017)



FIG. 10.19
First card design, brand facing (November 28, 2017)

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Development timeline

SEC 10.5

Dates and timelines

Key dates in the development of the game:

- Phase 1 – Data collection (February 24, 2017)
  - Compiled the master word list.
  - Explored word categories.
  - Beta-tested the ranking and grading tools.

- Phase 2 – Soft testing (April 16 – May 28, 2017)
  - Made the first cuts to the word list and proposed new categories.
  - Completed the ranking tool and applied it to the word list.
  - April 22, 2017: received about 150 rankings, made a second cut, finalized categories, and recorded score changes.
  - May 28, 2017: received about 300 rankings, recorded score changes, and concluded soft testing.
  - Added all data to the physical test design (about 200 further rankings).

- Phase 3 – Hard testing (June 1, 2017)
  - Received about 100 hard-test rankings.
  - Revised words based on feedback and concluded hard testing.
  - Added all hard-test data to the production design (July 20, 2017).

- Phase 4 – Production (from July 30, 2017)
  - Completed production, material inspection, and sign-off.
  - Finalized all data and held a soft launch.
  - Scoped translations into French, Spanish, German, Chinese, and Hindi (Devanagari braille) based on market research.
  - Distributed the physical product to game testers and early collaborators.

- Phase 5 – Testing, first sales, and version 2.0 (2018–2020)
  - Tested version 1.2 to develop strategy and refine the word list (2018).
  - Began selling the printed edition; first use of the mark in commerce (December 2018).
  - Tested version 1.3 for gameplay, the word list, and the box design (2019).
  - Produced version 2.0, the final printed edition (2019–2020).

- Phase 6 – Relaunch (October 24, 2026)
  - Finalized the word list, rules, and strategy.
  - Launched the web edition at maxkeeley.net/games/echothegameofsounds.
  - Updated all trademark and product information and finalized these standards and definitions.

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