Dollars and Decisions

A Financial Literacy Board Game

Objective:

The object of Dollars and Decisions is to accumulate the most money by the end of the game or be the last player standing when the timer goes off without running out of money. Players will learn about managing income, taxes, savings, and expenses through engaging gameplay.

Game Setup:

- Board: Place the board in the center of the playing area.
- Cards: Separate and shuffle the Job Cards, House Cards, Transportation Cards, Money Mayhem Cards, and Life Happens Cards into distinct decks. The board includes spaces in the middle for Money Mayhem Cards, and Life Happens Cards. Place them in the corresponding spots on the board, and you can set the House, Job, and Transportation Cards off to the side.
- Banker: One person will be assigned to be the banker. They can hold all the money and keep it organized for the group.
- Tax Return: The center of the board is where players will pay their taxes on each payday. This money will grow until someone lands on the Tax Return spot on the board. In this case, that player takes all the money in the pile!
- Dice: Each player will use both die to move around the board. Rolling two die at a time.

Player Setup:

- Determine Turn Order: All players roll one die. The highest roll goes first, followed by the next highest, and so on.
- Assign Jobs, Houses, and Cars:
  - Each player draws a Job Card, a House Card, and a Car Card.
  - Players will receive one initial paycheck to get started according to their Job Card's salary. Make sure to pay your taxes!
  - Initial Savings: Players must set aside the required savings from their first paycheck as indicated on their Job Card.
- Tokens: Each player starts the game with 8 tokens, which represent the starting point of an 800 credit score. We will provide more explanations on how to use tokens in later instructions.

Gameplay

- Starting the Game: Each player starts at the Pay Day! space on the board. Players roll the die and move their piece clockwise around the board.
- Pay Day: Every time players pass or land on the Pay Day! space, they receive their salary but must pay taxes and add to their savings. Taxes go into the Money Pool in the middle of the board and savings are set aside not to be touched!
- Savings: Players can save additional money on Pay Day if they wish. Savings are doubled at the end of the game but cannot be used during gameplay.
- Spaces on the Board:
  - Money Mayhem: Draw a Money Mayhem Card and follow its instructions. These cards may cause players to change jobs, houses, cars, or savings, or they may have other directions to follow.
  - Life Happens: Draw a Life Happens Card and follow its instructions. These cards introduce unexpected expenses or windfalls that mimic real-life events.
  - This or That: Players must decide between two options, each with different financial outcomes.
  - General Spaces: These may include earning small bonuses or paying minor expenses.

Cards

- Job Cards: Detail the player's salary, tax rate, and required savings per paycheck.
- House Cards: Include payments and property taxes that must be made throughout the game.
- Car Cards: Include payments and insurance costs that will be made during the game.

Tokens

- Usage: Tokens can be used to cover a cost if a player runs out of cash and cannot pay. Each token represents 100 points on an 800 credit score.
- Endgame Value: Tokens can be cashed out for $1000 each at the end of the game. This is a reward for maintaining a high credit score throughout the game by not using your tokens, AKA “credit.”
- Irrecoverability: Once a token is used, it cannot be regained.

Endgame and Winning

- End of the Game: The game ends when the set timer (e.g., 30 minutes) runs out or when all other players run out of money and one person is left standing.
- Calculating Savings: Double the amount in each player's savings account.
- Token Cash Out: Each remaining token is cashed out for $1000.
- Determine Winner: The player with the most money at the end of the game wins. If only one player remains financially solvent, they are declared the winner.

Additional Rules

- Running Out of Money: If players cannot afford an expense, they are out of the game unless they use a token to cover the bill.
- Borrowing: Players may borrow money from the Money Pool at a high interest rate but must pay it back with interest of $100 on the next Pay Day. For example, if a player borrows $100 from the money pool. Once they reach the Pay Day! Space, they must pay $200 back to the Money Pool.
- Trading: Players can trade Job, House, and Car Cards with each other, but both parties must agree upon all trades. This is a form of bartering, and it can happen at the beginning of a player's turn who is involved in the trade.

Tips for Success

- Balance Spending and Saving: While saving money is beneficial, players must have enough cash to cover expenses throughout the game. So don't put too much in savings because you can't get to it until the end of the game!
- Adapt to Changes: Be prepared to adjust your strategy, as Money Mayhem and Life Happens cards can significantly impact your financial situation.
- Plan Ahead: Consider future expenses and potential income changes when making financial decisions.
- Token Management: Use tokens wisely to avoid running out of cash, but try to keep as many as possible for the endgame bonus.

Enjoy playing Dollars and Decisions and learning valuable financial skills along the way!