

# How to **CRUISE** Through the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards



First you need to create a new idea; the basis for your game. Make sure that the idea is something that you're passionate about, because it's something that you'll be focussing on for a very long time. Its important for your motivation to find a topic that piques your interest because it will make it easier for you to create a game that is fun your players.

The environment has always been something that I have held very dear, with many of my games focussing on the rehabilitation of the world's biomes and sustainable living practises. I implore you to find a topic that you are passionate about; one that you could talk about, learn about and fight for vehemently.

Something that always helps me to get started on my creative journey is the name of my game. Usually it is the first thing that comes to me after my initial concept, and after that, the ideas keep flowing!

When you feel like you're overflowing with ideas, it's always smart to make a mind map to collate all your thoughts in one place. Eventually, a plan for your game will come to fruition and you'll be off!



It's always been very important to me that all the pieces of my game are well made, so when I first have an idea for my boardgame, such as the layout for gameboards or the look of the player tokens, I always make prototypes to test my ideas.

Once you have created an outline for your game, begun to lay down the fundamentals of how gameplay works as well as the scientific backing behind it, make sure to re-examine each aspect of your game to ensure that it all works!

Sometimes it's easy to keep working on certain aspects of your game individually and forget that they must all mesh together to provide cohesive gameplay. In order to combat this, its important to make sure to re-examine how the game will work as a unit and how players move from section to section.

Furthermore, if your game involves a complex storyline, like my 2019 game, 'Once Upon a Crime' did, its important to periodically revisit this storyline as you edit other aspect of gameplay, to make sure that the story still flows.



It's incredibly important that throughout your journey in creating a game for the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards, that you engage in a lot of research into the topic you have chosen for your game to cover. In order to convey the knowledge, you have gained from your research in your game, then you must have a thorough understanding of such.

It is imperative for a SASTA Oliphant Science Awards game to incorporate scientific content into the gameplay, so that those who engage with it learn something.

One of my favourite ways that I have ensured that my players engage in the scientific side of my game, is through the challenge of asking them to create a presentation at the end of one of my games, that shows their understanding of the topic and their ideas to enact change in order to better the environment. I decided to make this game a teaching tool that would be presented similarly to games such as 'Footprints' – something that could be whipped out in a school environment to teach children about the environment in an engaging and interesting way. I even called it a 'classroom edition'.

An easy way to ensure that your game is providing a learning opportunity for your players is to include Q & A cards that players pick up throughout their journey, with questions that relate to the topic you've chosen to cover in-game.



The best part about making your own boardgame is that you can create the game you've always wanted to play! Innovate! I've always loved creating new types of board games each year that combine different sections of my favourite games and new ones that I think of myself.

It was always fun to try and challenge myself with a new type of game, such as a game played with cards, such as in 'Once Upon a Crime'.

Speaking of 'Once Upon a Crime', that was my final game for the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards, as it was my graduating year. In year 12 I decided to take Design, which was a fun challenge which allowed me to innovate in different ways than I had been able to in previous years. Due to the facilities at my school, University Senior College, I was able to 3D print my game pieces, and as I was completing the game as part of my Folio, every aspect had to be designed 100% by myself, including the font, the logos, the builds for the game tokens and the symbols on the decks of cards! This was a challenge, but it was also very rewarding for the last game I completed as part of this competition, especially as due to the requirements of my Folio I was able to document my progress throughout the year.

So, innovate! It will always be a rewarding experience, and if you fail; document it, learn from it, move on and grow. The result will be so much better



At a certain point, the amount of time and effort you're putting in can wear you down. If you get anything from reading this, I just want you to know that being overwhelmed is ok; just acknowledge your emotion, give yourself a set amount of time to deal with it, move on and smile.

Never be afraid to let someone know that you're getting stressed out. By doing the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards, you're taking on an extra project, which is already an amazing thing to be doing during the school year! The fact that you're reading this right now means that your dedication to extending yourself and that you want to achieve your greatest potential.

No one wants to see you fail, so call a friend, talk to a teacher, cuddle a pet, go for a walk, do something to clear your head, then get right back to work. Set small goals for yourself so that you feel satisfied more often and you don't feel disappointed for not being able to reach unrealistic expectations! You're not a superhuman!

When everything is over and you've submitted anything, know that there is nothing more that can be done. Worrying about tomorrow just takes away from today, it doesn't change whatever is to come, so make sure to smile.

Oh, and my final piece of advice...

Go. To. Bed. At. A. Reasonable. Hour.



The SASTA Oliphant Science Awards Games Category is all about presenting scientific content entertainingly, making it more accessible. At times, when you're trying to ensure that there's lots of information jam-packed into your game, it's easy to lose the game's playability.

I've been making games since I was in the third grade with *Tree Frog Trouble*, all about habitat destruction. *Hurry Home Animals* had a similar theme, then *Windspells* explored environmental phenomenon, and *Earthwise* and *G.R.O.W* fixated on positively affect the world's biome. *Moonphase* then explored the effects of the moon on Earth, and *Coastal Crisis* focused energy on the devastation of coastal environments. *Race to Save the Planet* was back to my roots, then in senior school I focused on my passion for forensic science and created *Chem-Mystery* and *Once Upon a Crime*.

I have poured my heart and soul into every game during its creation; however, I feel most confident when I take the time to playtest it prior to sending it for judging. I can make small changes that improve the entertainment quality immensely; making the educational content more palatable.

Although this is a science competition and your scientific content will be judged first and foremost, from personal experience, I would try to take the time to work out any operational kinks that make the game less fun or less playable before sending it off.



### *Who am I?*

My name is Amber Washington, and I am currently studying a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (Cognitive Neuroscience) at the University of South Australia. I intend to complete this degree, then take a year for myself to save up before I move to Sydney to study a Master of Forensic Psychology at the University of New South Wales. I aim to work to rehabilitate young offenders and victims of crimes, so that they can re-enter society as psychologically sound, virtuous members of society. Furthermore, with a background in cognitive neuroscience, I want to not only help these people psychologically, but also neurologically. I want to combine psychology and neuroscience to help people understand their behaviour, i.e. if someone has a brain tumour that is making them aggressive, I want to aid them in psychologically and medically managing their affliction to keep from engaging in violent acts.

### *My SASTA Oliphant Science Awards Journey:*

The first time I entered the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards Games Category, I entered with a game called 'Tree Frog Trouble' that I had created the year before as part of a school project. It was the first time I had ever made a board game, and it was inspired by my pet frog, Buddy and his breed's plight for survival against industrialisation and natural

predators. This game; the homework assignment I adored in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, was the first in a long line of fun projects that I would enter the Awards with each year.

### *The Oliphant Trophy:*

I won the Oliphant Trophy in 2017 for my game 'Race to Save the Planet', which aimed to teach participants about sustainability and how to protect the world we live in. This is still one of the biggest accomplishments of my life, and meeting Monica Oliphant was a life goal that I am amazed to have achieved.



### *Sir Pablo Oliphant:*

In my first (winning) year of the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards, I used my prize money to buy a seven-week-old bunny rabbit. In my approximately 8-year-old wisdom, I decided to name him, 'Sir Pablo Oliphant'. He was named for my adoration for the man who made the SASTA Oliphant Science Awards possible, and the grey spot on his nose, that resembled a fresh paint splotch. This splotch would eventually grow to cover most of his nose as if he had dipped his entire face into a paint can as he got older. Pablo eventually became famous, joining me in my photo for the Advertiser when I won the Oliphant Trophy; held close to my chest.

*I MISS YOU PABS.*