

Kangaroo Rat Race

The kangaroo rat is a mammal common to our southwestern U.S. deserts as well as other deserts around the world. The life of a kangaroo rat is never easy, but they have many adaptations that allow them to live in the harsh environments where they are found. They get all the water they need from the seeds that they eat, hide in their cool burrows during the hot day, and to avoid predators: leap, kick up sand, and thump their feet. For this game, we will be living the life of a kangaroo rat. Let's see if you can hop to victory!



Vocabulary

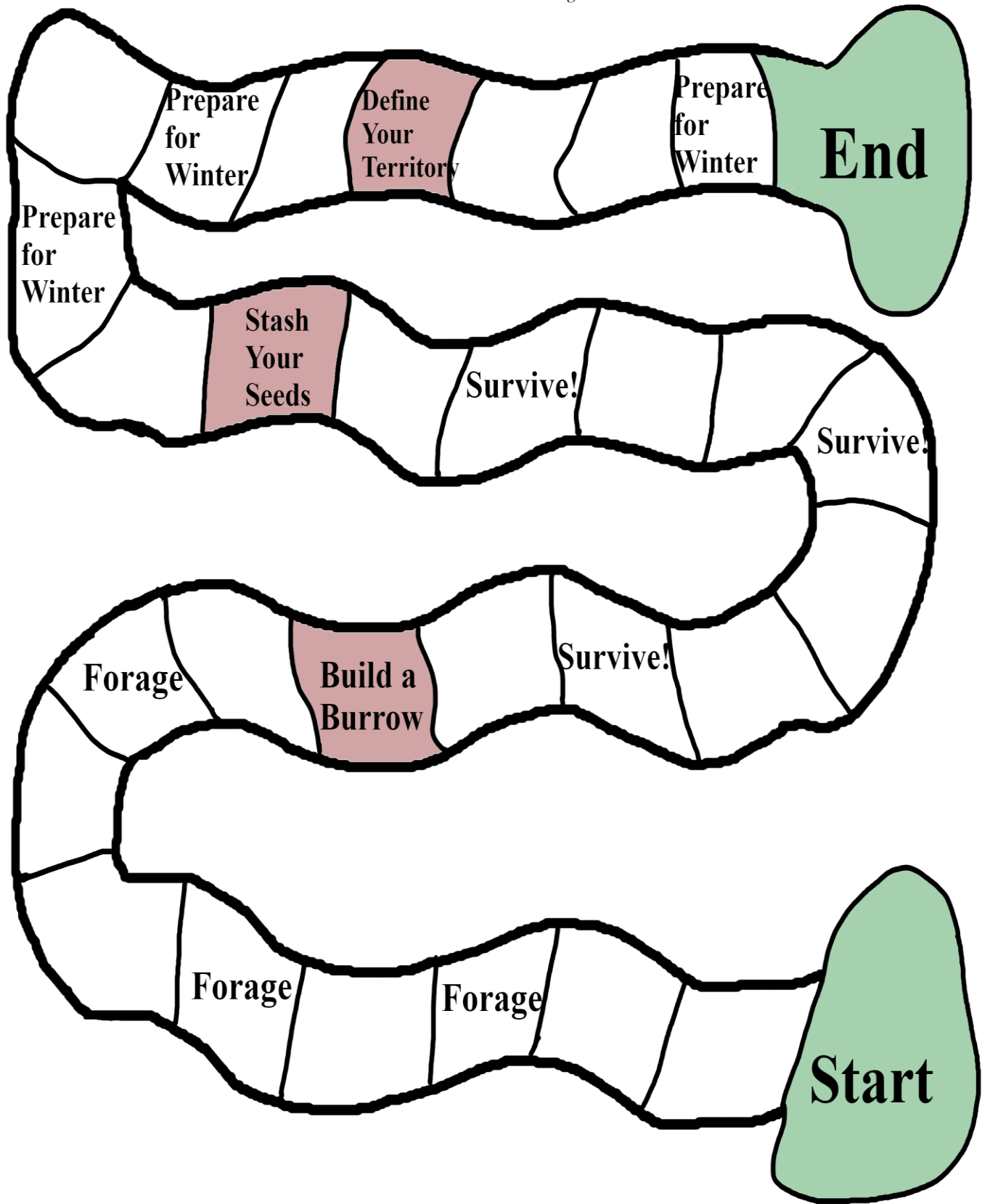
- Cache: a stash of seeds that the kangaroo rat stores in its burrow or in shallow holes that it digs
- Burrow: a hole that is dug out by the kangaroo rat, burrows often contain multiple “rooms” for sleeping, storing seeds, etc.
- Forage: to search for food

Time Needed: 15-30 minutes

What You'll Need:

- A game board – you can use the print-out version available below, you can draw your own with paper and markers, or you can make a life-size version by using materials you have at home like chalk and pavement, mats, rugs, or pillows.
- Pieces for the board – if you are using a paper board, find or make something to represent your piece on the board. Pieces of candy, borrowed pieces from another game, cut-out drawings, and other small objects work great. If playing on a life-sized board, you can represent your own piece and hop from space to space.
- Seeds for – find or make something to represent your seeds. You can use paper, marbles, coins, beads, silverware, candy or anything that is distinct and can also be hidden easily. Each player needs 3 of their own seeds, and after that you should have an additional 10 seeds for gameplay.
- A six-sided die, spinner, or random number generator phone app
- Roll Cards, included at the end of the instructions

The board is looking a little plain. Can you fill it in with drawings of your kangaroo rat's adventure?



Getting Started:

- Lay out your board and roll cards, then position your pieces (or yourself) on the start square
- Make sure each player has 3 seeds, place them where all players can see them
- Determine the first player by rolling a die, or you can get more creative by having a hopping race, or any other method you choose.

How to play:

1. The first player rolls the die and moves the number of spaces indicated.
2. If a player lands on a blank space, that is the end of their turn and the player to their right begins their turn.
3. If a player lands on a **Forage, Survive!**, or **Prepare for Winter** space, roll a die and find the same number on the matching roll card for that section, then follow the instructions next to the number you rolled.
4. All players must stop at the **Build a Burrow, Stash your Seeds, and Define Your Territory** spaces and complete special tasks:
 - A. **Build a Burrow:** you have 5 minutes to build a burrow using household items like pillows and blankets that is big enough to fit you to fit inside. The more creative the better.
 - B. **Stash Your Seeds:** you have 2 minutes to hide your seeds while all other players cover their eyes. You can hide them in separate hiding spots (seed caches) or in a single spot. Make sure to hide your seeds in a place other players can access (for example, you should not put them out of reach or in your pockets). If necessary, write down your hiding spots so you don't forget where you stashed all your seeds.
 - C. **Define Your Territory:** you have 30 seconds to search for hidden seeds in the area to collect as many as possible, followed by another 30 seconds to hide any seeds you've found while all other players cover their eyes.
5. The first player to the end space is from then on protected from other players' **Forage, Survive, and Define Territory** actions. Other seeds can be won and lost in the course of the game through the specialty spaces.
6. Once all players have reached the end space, the player with the most seeds wins the game.

Take it Further

If you are looking to increase the challenge or learning opportunities for this game. Modify or create your own version of the game.

- Change the various action spaces to different activities.
- Use your internet connection to learn more about your local subspecies, and adjust the game according to what you learn.
- Act out the various actions you roll on each table

If you are not able to print the board or would like to set it up in another medium, follow the pattern below to easily draw out a board.

				End
	Build a Burrow			Prepare for Winter
Forage		Survive!		
Forage		Survive!		Define Your Territory
Forage				Prepare for Winter
		Survive!		Prepare for Winter
			Stash Your Seeds	
Start				

Forage Rolls

1. Another kangaroo rat has stolen some of your seed cache. Move back two spaces and give one seed to a player of your choice.
2. A violent rainstorm has washed away some of your seeds. Lose one seed.
3. You have an uneventful night foraging for seeds. Nothing happens.
4. You find a new source of creosote seeds. Move ahead one space and gain one seed.
5. You discover a seed cache from a previous season. Move ahead one space and gain two seeds.
6. You manage to dig up another kangaroo rat's seed cache. Move ahead two spaces and choose another player to take one see from and add to your own.

Survive! Rolls

1. You hear an owl swooping in and leap to avoid it, and dash back to your burrow. Another kangaroo rat uses this chance to gather seeds in your territory. Give 1 seed to a player of your choice.
2. You wait for a coyote to leave before venturing outside. Nothing happens.
3. You stamp your rear feet and kick sand to scare off a snake, but now you have to repair your burrow, move back one space.
4. Your nine-foot leaps scare away a young bobcat. Move ahead one space.
5. You find some yard trimmings to hide in and gather from. Move ahead two spaces and gain one seed.
6. Plant blooms provide more food and hiding places. Move ahead three spaces and gain two seeds.

Prepare for Winter Rolls

1. Autumn winds have unearthed and blown away some of your seed cache. Lose two seeds.
2. An early drop in temperatures has stunted plant growth, making you work harder to find seeds. Move back 1 space.
3. Your nightly foraging takes longer as colder weather sets in. Nothing happens.
4. A mesquite tree near a dry riverbed drops lots of seed pods. Gain one seed.
5. The colder weather has slowed the local snake population, making it slightly safer to move about. Move ahead 1 space.
6. A lucky find has made the coming winter much easier. Gain two seeds and move ahead one space.