WORK TOWN

The Rulebook

Eight games. One town. Get a job, grow a career, beat the market.





SMILE · Money in Play · New edition, September 2026 · Grades 9 to 12

What is new in this edition

New rule

Rejection trains you

Whenever you are turned down for a job, in any game, you take **one free skill point** in your weakest skill. Getting turned down is never a wasted turn. We tested the game 1,000 times: without this rule, the first player to get a job stayed ahead every round 83% of the time and nobody ever reached Senior. With it, the first job is an advantage, not the whole game.

New place

The Career Desk is now the Mentor

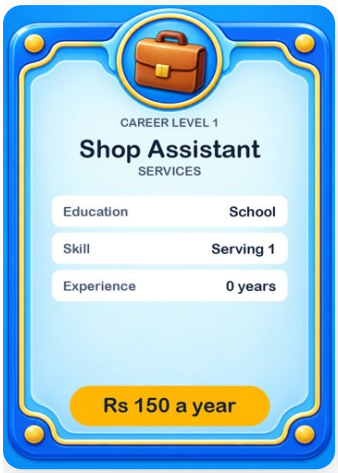
Upgrades happen by themselves, so "check your upgrade early" did nothing. The tower is now the **Mentor**: pay **Rs 250 for one extra year of experience**. Money now, or progress later. Your choice.

Clearer

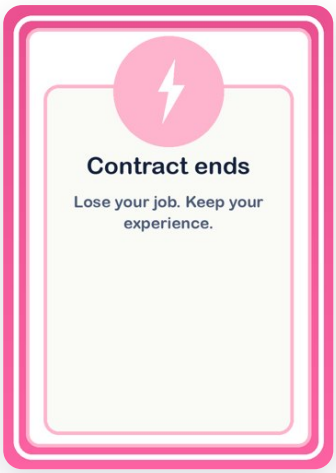
"Strongest wins" now has one exact rule

When two or more people want the same job, compare them in this order and stop at the first difference: **1. the skill the job needs, 2. years of experience, 3. education, 4. the one with less money.**

1 What is in the box









Piece	How many	What it is for
Town board	1	The eleven places. Use the labelled version to learn them.
Character cards	4	Who you are at the start: School Leaver, Apprentice, Graduate, Carer.
Job Vacancy cards (blue)	24	Every job: what it needs and what it pays. 8 at each career level.
Town News cards (orange)	16	The labour market changing.
Oops cards (pink)	12	Risk. Nine setbacks and three bits of good news.
Productivity cards (purple)	12	Great work that pays, if your skill is high enough.
Pawns, medals, money	4 colours	Three pawns each, one medal for each year of experience, notes of 50, 100 and 500.
Player sheet	1 each	Tick your education, skills, years and career level in pencil.

2 The Work Town rules every game uses

Who you are

School Leaver	School, Serving 1, 0 years
Apprentice	Certificate, Making 2, 1 year
Graduate	Diploma, Digital 1, 0 years
Carer	Certificate, Caring 2, 2 years

Everyone starts with **Rs 500**. Not everyone starts equal, and that is the point.

What things cost

One skill point	Rs 100 (max 5 in a skill)
Certificate / Diploma / Degree	Rs 150 / 300 / 500, in order
Mentor	Rs 250 for one extra year
Salaries	Entry 150 to 200, Qualified 250 to 350, Senior 450 to 550

Can I take this job?

Only if **all four** are true: your education is at least what it asks, the named skill is at least the number shown, your years of experience are at least the number shown, and your career level is at least the job's level. Three out of four is still no.

Getting paid

- A job pays its salary **every year you hold it**, and gives you **one year of experience**.
- **Productivity bonus:** Rs 50 for every skill point above what the job needs, up to Rs 150 a year.
- **The market:** Rs 50 more for every step your job's sector is above zero, Rs 50 less for every step below.

Moving up

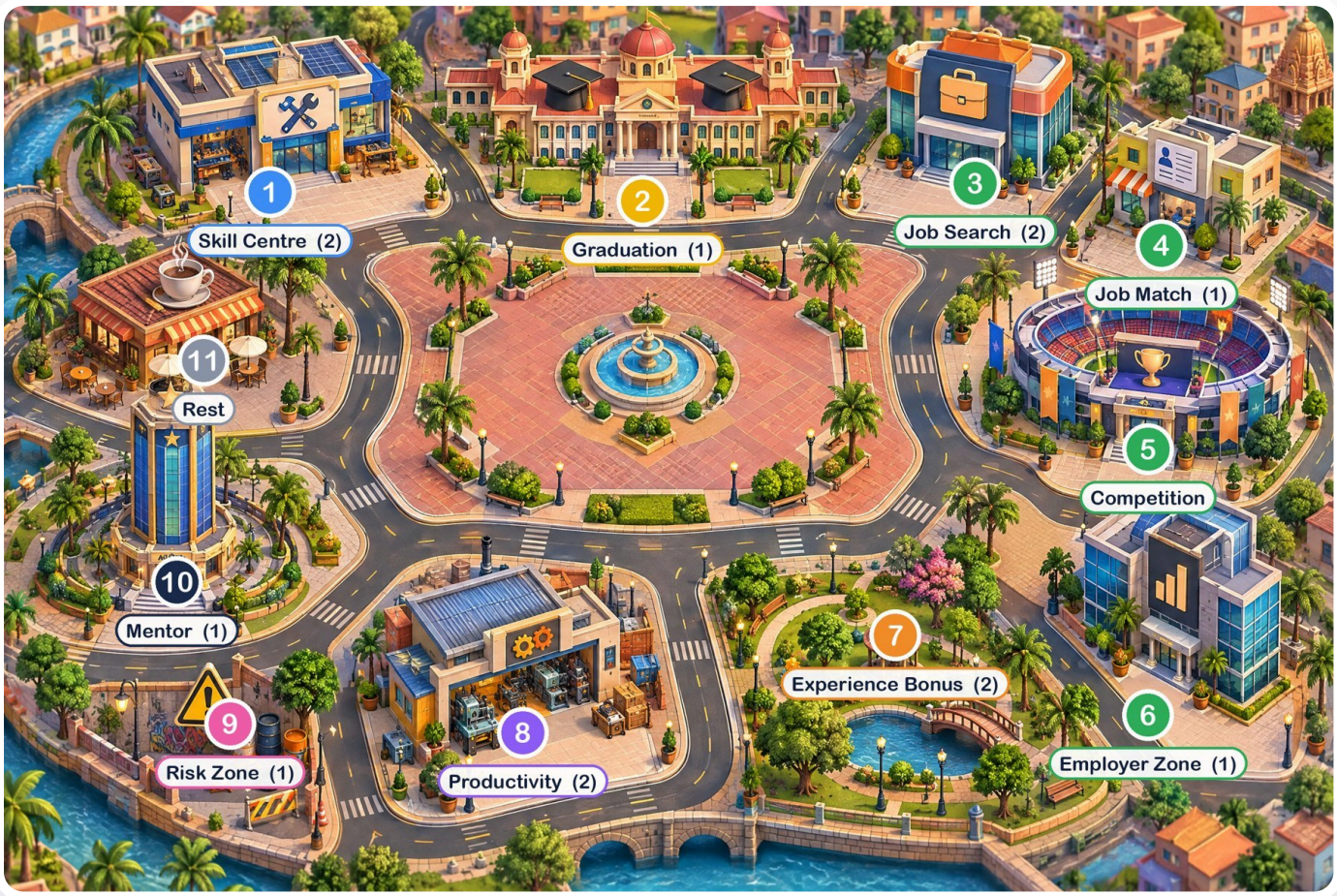
- **Entry to Qualified:** 3 skill points and 3 years.
- **Qualified to Senior:** 5 skill points and 5 years.
- Check at the end of every year. It happens by itself, nobody has to land anywhere. Say it out loud with the reason.

Two rules that settle every argument

Competition: skill the job needs, then years, then education, then less money. Stop at the first difference.

Rejection trains you: anyone turned down takes one free skill point in their weakest skill.

3 The town: which building is which



#	Place	Room for	What you do there
1	**Skill Centre**	2	Buy one skill point for Rs 100.
2	**Graduation**	1	Buy your next education level.
3	**Job Search**	2	Draw one vacancy. Take it if you qualify. If not, you train instead.
4	**Job Match**	1	Draw two vacancies. Take the better one you qualify for. If neither, you train instead.
5	**Competition**	everyone	One vacancy. Everyone here competes. The competition rule picks the winner. Everyone else trains.
6	**Employer Zone**	1	You are HR. Hire another player who qualifies, and take Rs 100.
7	**Experience Bonus**	2	Take one year of experience.
8	**Productivity**	2	Only if you already have a job. Draw a Productivity card. If your skill is high enough, it pays.
9	**Risk Zone**	1	Draw an Oops card, then take Rs 200.
10	**Mentor**	1	Pay Rs 250 for one extra year of experience.
11	**Rest**	everyone	Take Rs 100 and do nothing.

4 Get Hired

"I was qualified. Somebody else got it."

4 players | 40 minutes | 6 years | Grades 9 to 12 | The main game

Setup

1. Each player picks a character card, takes Rs 500, a player sheet and **three pawns** of one colour.
2. Shuffle the Job Vacancy, Town News, Oops and Productivity decks separately.

Every year

1. **Place.** Take turns placing one pawn at a time on a place, until everyone's three pawns are out. A place that is full cannot be chosen.
2. **Resolve** the places in number order, 1 to 11 (see the town map).
3. **Pay day.** Everyone with a job takes their salary, plus productivity bonus, plus or minus the market.
4. **Year end.** Everyone with a job takes one year of experience. Everyone checks for a promotion.
5. **Town News.** Flip one Town News card and do what it says. Read out whose job or pay it changes.
6. The first player passes to the left.

Winning

After six years: highest career level wins. If tied, most money, then most years. Money alone never wins: a player who saved Rs 2,000 and never trained should lose to one who spent it all and reached Senior.

Think about it: Who started strongest? Did they finish first? When you were turned down, which exact number were you short of?

Play it on your phone

worktown-game.worktown-games.workers.dev · the 3D version, against three computer players

4b On paper: one full year, step by step

In the app, the end of the year happens by itself. On the table, **one player is the Banker** (or the teacher). The Banker holds the money and the four decks, and reads out each step. **Everyone keeps their player sheet face up, and the Job Ladder sits in the middle of the table**, so every player can see their own chances and everyone else's at any time. Every year goes like this.

The four steps

1. **Place.** Take turns putting one pawn at a time on a place. Three pawns each.
2. **The places, in number order.** The Banker calls 1 to 11. Whoever has a pawn there does that place.
3. **Pay day and year end.** Everyone with a job: salary, plus skill bonus, plus or minus market. Take one year. Check promotion.
4. **Town News.** Flip one card, read it out, and say whose job or pay it changes.

Then the first player passes to the left. Six years and the game ends.

The pay day sum

Salary	printed on your job card
+ Skill bonus	Rs 50 for each point your skill is above what the job needs, most Rs 150
+ or - Market	Rs 50 for each step your job's sector is above or below zero
= Total	the Banker pays this

Then everyone with a job takes **one year**. Anyone with 3 skill points and 3 years becomes Qualified; 5 and 5 becomes Senior.

A worked example: Priya and Arjun, year 1

Step	What happens
Start	**Priya** is the Carer: Certificate, Caring 2, 2 years, Rs 500. **Arjun** is the Apprentice: Certificate, Making 2, 1 year, Rs 500.
1. Place	Priya puts pawns on **Skill Centre, Job Search, Rest**. Arjun puts his on **Competition, Experience Bonus, Rest**. (He has no job yet, so he cannot use Productivity.)
2. Place 1, Skill Centre	Priya pays Rs 100 and ticks Caring up to 3. She has Rs 400.
Place 3, Job Search	Priya draws **Ward Helper** (School, Caring 1, 0 years, Rs 150). She meets all four needs, so she takes it.
Place 5, Competition	The Banker reveals **Site Trainee** (Certificate, Making 2, 1 year, Rs 200). Only Arjun is there and he qualifies, so he is hired. (If he had not qualified, he would take a free skill point.)
Place 7, Experience Bonus	Arjun takes one year. He now has 2.
Place 11, Rest	Priya takes Rs 100. She has Rs 500. Arjun takes Rs 100 too. He has Rs 600.
3. Pay day	**Priya:** Rs 150 salary + Rs 100 skill bonus (Caring 3 is 2 above the 1 needed) + Rs 0 market = **Rs 250**. She has Rs 750 and takes a year: 3 years. **Arjun:** Rs 200 salary + Rs 0 bonus (Making 2 is exactly what was needed) + Rs 0 market = **Rs 200**. He has Rs 800 and takes a year: 3 years.
Promotion check	**Priya:** 3 skill points and 3 years, so she becomes **Qualified**. Say it out loud with the reason. **Arjun:** 2 skill points and 3 years. One skill point short. Not yet.
4. Town News	The Banker flips **Automation**: Manufacturing falls two steps, and anyone in Manufacturing with Making 2 or less loses their job. Arjun is a Site Trainee with Making 2, so **Arjun loses his job**. Priya's job is in Care, so she is fine.
Talk about it	Arjun earned more this year, but Priya was promoted and Arjun lost his job. Why? What should Arjun do in year 2?

5 What Am I Worth?

"Why does that job pay more than this one?"

4 players **40 minutes** **8 rounds** **Grades 11 to 12**

1. **One player is the Employer** each round. It passes to the left, so everyone employs twice.
2. The Employer reveals a vacancy. The **budget** is its printed salary plus Rs 200.
3. Everyone else who qualifies **writes down** the lowest salary they would accept. Never say it out loud. If you do not qualify, say which requirement you are missing.
4. **Reveal together.** The Employer must hire the lowest, unless they pay Rs 100 of their own money to choose someone else. Nobody asking more than the budget can be hired.
5. The hired player earns that salary **every round** until someone hires them away. The Employer keeps whatever budget is left as profit.
6. Everyone may buy one skill point or education level. Then pay day, years and promotions as usual.

Winning: most money earned over the whole game, salaries and Employer profit together.

Think about it: Who asked for the most and still got hired? When only one person qualified, what happened to the price?

6 The Job Market

"I trained for this. Is it still worth anything?"

4 players **40 minutes** **8 years** **Grades 10 to 12**

Lay out four tracks: **Manufacturing, Services, Technology, Care**, each from -2 to +2, all starting at 0. A job pays Rs 50 more for every step its sector is above zero, and Rs 50 less for every step below.

1. **Flip two Town News cards** and move the tracks. Read out whose job or pay changed.
2. **Reveal three vacancies.**
3. Each player takes **one** action: take a revealed job you qualify for, buy a skill point, study, **retrain** (Rs 200 to move one point from one skill to another), or wait.
4. Pay day with the market, years, promotions.

Winning: career level first, then money. There is no safe sector.

Think about it: Which sector was best in year one, and which at the end? Did retraining pay back in time?

7 Career Builder

"I did not get lucky. I built this."

2 to 4 players **40 minutes** **10 years** **Grades 9 to 12**

Every year, each player does **one Build**, then **one Work**.

Build	Buy a skill point (Rs 100), or study, or do an **apprenticeship**: one year of experience and Rs 50.
Work	**Apply:** look at two jobs at your level and take one if you qualify. **Perform:** draw a Productivity card (you need a job). **Rest:** take Rs 100.

Then pay day and years. Announce every promotion with its reason. Flip a Town News card every second year.

Winning: the first player to reach Senior **and** hold a Senior job wins on the spot. Otherwise, after ten years: highest level, then most years, then money. Experience beats cash in a tie on purpose.

Think about it: What did you buy in year two, and was it still useful in year nine?

8 The Employer

"Highest score does not win. Best fit wins."

4 players **40 minutes** **8 rounds** **Grades 9 to 12**

Every vacancy hides a **Need**: Ready today (highest skill), Will stay (fewest jobs held), Has seen it before (most years), Cheapest to run (lowest salary asked), or Room to grow (skill 3 or more with the fewest years).

1. One player is the Employer. It passes to the left.
2. The other players each say the salary they would ask, then get **one sentence** to say why they fit. No lying: sheets are open.
3. The Employer hires one player who qualifies and says why.
4. **Reveal the Need.** Hired the best fit: 3 points. Hired anyone else: 1 point. Hired nobody when someone qualified: 0.
5. Everyone may train once. Pay day, years, promotions.

Winning: two winners. Most Employer points is the best recruiter. Highest career level is the best candidate. They are often not the same person.

9 The three quick games

Blind Application · 15 minutes · 6 rounds · the best demo

"Three of us went for the same job."

1. Reveal four vacancies. Early rounds use Entry jobs, later rounds open up bigger ones.
2. Everyone secretly chooses one, then all reveal together.
3. One applicant: hired if they qualify. More than one: the competition rule picks the winner.
4. The winner earns the salary and a year. **Everyone else takes Rs 50 and one free skill point.**
5. Everyone may buy one skill point or education level. Most salary earned after six rounds wins.

Skill Draft · 15 minutes · 3 rounds

"Build now, for jobs you cannot see yet."

1. Make a deck of 10 cards of each skill plus 8 education cards. Deal seven to each player.
2. Keep one card, pass the rest to your left. Repeat until the hands are empty. Each card is one point or one education level.
3. **Only then** reveal four vacancies. In turn order, each player claims the best-paying job they qualify for. In Skill Draft only education and skill count.
4. Three rounds. Add up the salaries of every job you claimed.

Overtime · 10 minutes · 5 rounds · Grades 6 to 12

"One more, or stop?"

1. Shuffle the 12 Productivity cards and the 12 Oops cards together.
2. On your turn, draw one card at a time. A Productivity card you have the skill for pays into your pile. One you cannot do is put aside.
3. Stop whenever you like and **bank** your pile.
4. Draw an Oops card and you **lose this turn's pile**. Its money effect still happens.
5. Most banked after five rounds wins.

Every game is also on the app

worktown-game.worktown-games.workers.dev · phone, tablet or laptop, no sign up