Create a tiny app or game

No coding or computer required. Complete this alone or with a friend.

A. THE IDEA

Who is it for? What do they want or need?

Example: A student wants a calm reminder to study for five minutes.

What will the person DO? What means success?

Example: Tap Start, finish one task, and see a clear result.

B. FIVE INGREDIENTS

INPUT	What action can someone take?	
RULE	What happens when they do it?	
STATE	What does the app/game remember?	
OUTPUT	What changes on screen or paper?	
FEEDBACK	How will they know what happened?	

You do not need a perfect idea. You need a clear first version that another person can understand.

Make a three-screen paper prototype

Draw boxes, words, buttons, and arrows. Artistic skill is not required.

A. THREE SCREENS

START

What is the goal?

[button]

ACTION

What can I do?

[button]

RESULT

What changed?

[button]

B. RULE + BEFORE / AFTER

When a person chooses _____, then _____.

BEFORE

AFTER

Test it and improve one thing

Expected and observed are different columns. Record what happens, not what you hoped.

A. TWO QUICK TESTS

TEST 1 — NORMAL PATH

ACTION _____

EXPECTED _____

OBSERVED _____

TEST 2 — UNEXPECTED ACTION

ACTION _____

EXPECTED _____

OBSERVED _____

B. ONE IMPROVEMENT

I will change...

Example: Make the score larger so first-time players can see it.

_____

_____

C. REFLECT

What did someone understand? What confused them? What would you investigate next?

Worked answer + go deeper

Signal Sprint is one fictional example, not the only correct idea.

A. RULES FOR SIGNAL SPRINT

Three turns. Cards appear in this fixed order: STAR, CLOUD, STAR. Start at score 0. On each turn choose COLLECT or SKIP. Collecting a STAR adds 1, collecting a CLOUD subtracts 1, and SKIP leaves the score unchanged. A final score of 2 or more is SUCCESS.

B. WORKED PLAYTHROUGH

TURN	CARD	CHOICE	SCORE	WHY
START	-	-	0	Begin
1	STAR	COLLECT	1	+1
2	CLOUD	SKIP	1	No change
3	STAR	COLLECT	2	+1

Final score = 2. Three turns complete. The outcome is SUCCESS.

C. A SECOND TEST (EDGE CASE)

Try COLLECT on STAR, COLLECT on CLOUD, and COLLECT on STAR: 0 -> 1 -> 0 -> 1. Result: TRY AGAIN. What should happen if a user taps twice? The designer must set a rule and test it.

D. CHOOSE AN EXTENSION

EXPLORER	Explain rules in your own words.
BUILDER	Change one rule; retest it.
ENGINEER	Define one invariant and a failing test.

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