

# Channel A

The Anime Pitch Card Game  
Alpha Prototype Version (Revision 2)  
By Ewen Cluney (©2012)

## Specs

**# of Players:** 3-6

**Playing Time:** 30-90 Minutes

**Materials:** 180 Title Cards, 80 Premise Cards, Rules

Recommended for anime fans of ages 12+

## Printing

Just like Cards Against Humanity (<http://cardsagainsthumanity.com/>), the simplest way to get a deck made is to go to Staples or another print shop and have them print from this PDF on heavy cardstock (80+ pound) and cut them out. On the other hand I was able to just run lighter cardstock through my laser printer at home and cut the cards out by hand, so there's that. If you want a box to keep the cards in, you can get one at places like The Container Store or Tap Plastics.

## Credits

**Designed by** Ewen Cluney

**Playtesters:** Andrew Bodenhammer, Michael Bom, Chris Camareno, Dave Empey, Elton Sanchez, Aaron Smith, Dave Taue. If you try the game out and have any feedback, send it my way and I'll add you to this list.

# Basic Rules

## 0. The Concept

A station called “Channel A” needs to come up with an anime series for the new season, so they’re having a bunch of those creative types come in to give pitches. The station’s producer has a general idea what kind of show he or she wants this time around, so they have to cater to that.

## 1. Getting Started

First, each player draws a hand of 10 Title Cards. At the end of each round players with less than 10 draw back up to 10 cards.

You play the game in a series of rounds. Each round one player is the Producer, who if you care about the “story” of this card game is someone who needs to pick an anime series for the station to buy. Whoever’s been watching anime the longest (heavily edited stuff like *Robotech* doesn’t count) gets to be the Producer first. Or you can use a less contrived method, like having each player draw a Title Card and letting whoever’s card comes first alphabetically go first.

## 2. The Premise

The Producer draws 5 Premise Cards, picks any 2 he or she likes, and reads them to the other players.

## 3. Make Titles

The other players each assemble a set of up to 4 Title Cards to form the title of an original anime that fits the Producer’s premise cards. You can add simple articles (“a,” “the,” “of,” etc.) and change singular words into plural or vice versa, but otherwise you have to use what’s on the cards.

### Redraw

If you don’t like your hand of Title Cards, you can discard it and draw a new hand of 10 cards. You can only do this once per round.

## 4. Pitches

The players take turns giving brief pitches as to what the series with that titles they’ve created are about, which needs to fit the premise. If you want to make it quick and easy, keep the pitches to a couple sentences, just enough to explain your idea. If you have buckets of time to kill, you can take as long as you want making an elaborate pitch.

## 5. Pick a Show

The Producer picks the one he or she likes best. There’s no particular criterion for this, so the outcome depends a lot on the Producer’s whims. This is on purpose.

The player whose pitch gets chosen gets a Point. You can let them keep a Premise Card to represent the Point, or use poker chips or glass beads or whatever if you have those handy.

## 6. And at the End...

If you care about winning, whoever has the most Points at the end is the winner.

## Tips

- This game should fine work whether you play it with deeply involved anime fans or just people who like making fun of anime weirdness, or anything in between. If you don't know what something is you could ask, but it's usually funnier to just make something up and run with it.
- If you're having trouble coming up with a suitable title using the cards you have, try coming at the premise from a different angle, the weirder the better.
- There are several Title Cards with things like A, Z, R, Plus, etc. usually used as a suffix for a subsequent season of an existing anime title. If you use one of these, feel free to pretend there was a season or two before and you're pitching a continuation. Also, the series creators usually think of the letter as standing for something.
- You don't have to use the full four Title Cards all the time. Short titles can be really effective, especially if you go for something serious and poignant.
- The Title Cards make it possible to recreate actual anime titles, sometimes even by accident. What effect this has depends *entirely* on the Producer.
- Consider setting up a recorder to capture the nifty ideas this game can produce. If you want to be really ambitious, turn it into an Actual Play podcast or a replay.
- In anime, pretty much anything can be about cute girls fighting stuff. That makes a good fallback if you can't think of anything else.

## Variants

### Anime by Committee

Get some tokens of some kind (glass beads, poker chips, pennies, playing cards, etc.) to represent Points. There is no Producer; everyone does a pitch each round, based on two random Premise Cards. Each player gives one token to one other player whose pitch they liked best. At the end of the game the player with the most tokens (Points) is the winner.

#### Blind Voting

A variant of the Anime by Committee variant. Instead of handing over tokens, use a set of Voting Cards. (Or if you have a *The Big Idea* set you can use the Vote cards from that.) There's a PDF on my website, but this is basically a set of cards, 10 with an O and 30 with an X.\* Each player takes a total number of Voting Cards equal to the number of other players, one O card and the rest X cards. At the end of the round you give a Voting Card to each player face-down, with the O card being the player whose pitch you liked best. Whoever has the most O cards wins the round and gets one Point.

### Freestyle Pitches

Don't bother with the Premise cards. The players just make up whatever they want with their Title Cards, and the Producer picks whichever he or she likes best.

### Freestyle Producer

Instead of drawing cards, the Producer simply picks to Premise Card type elements for the pitches to be about.

### Reverse Channel

The Producer makes a title, and the other players draw Premise Cards and try to give a pitch that fits the title from that.

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\* In Japan a circle means "yes" or "correct" and an X means "no" or "wrong."

## Other Media

So what if instead of anime you're pitching other stuff?

- **A+ Computer Entertainment:** You're pitching video games for ACE, an eccentric Japanese video game development house.
- **A Magazine:** You're pitching manga to go into a manga magazine. You might go as far as to agree on what kind of magazine it is: shoujo, shounen, seinen, josei, etc.
- **A-Soft:** Pretend you're pitching adult visual novels for a company called A-Soft. This works basically the same as for anime, except that every title needs to have a male protagonist and several female characters he can hook up with (or vice versa if it's an otome game).

## Title Scramble

Don't use Premise Cards; draw 4 cards, arrange them into a title, and make a pitch about whatever you want.

## Solitaire/Writing Exercise

If you don't have any friends (around at the moment), you can mess around with this game by yourself. Draw 2 Premise Cards, draw a hand of Title Cards, and make a title. Rather than saying your pitch out loud, write it down or post it online.

## Social Media Challenge

Post the contents of 2 Premise Cards and 10 Title Cards somewhere online, and challenge your followers/fellow posters/whatever to come up with a title and pitch.

## Games in a Blender

Here are some other games you can combine with *Channel A* to make some kind of freakish hybrid.

### Apples to Animes/Anime Against Humanity/etc.

Mix in white cards from *Cards Against Humanity* or any cards from *Apples to Apples* in with the Premise Cards. This will get really, really weird. You can do this with cards from *Once Upon a Time* or *The Big Idea* too for that matter.

### And then Story Cubes/Story Dice

Do a round of Anime by Committee, with the aim of coming up with one single pitch that's the most popular with the group. Then use Rory's Story Cubes (possibly with Daniel Solis' Story Dice) to tell a cooperative story based on the winning anime series pitch.

### The Big Anime

Take the rules of the old edition of *The Big Idea* (<http://www.cheapass.com/article4>) and play that, but use *Channel A*'s Title Cards and pitch anime series instead of inventions.