

# The Fate Game

## Overview

Life is a finite continuum intersected by discrete events. Lifespan follows the normal distribution. At birth until the age of five years there are fewer events, the two major events being the ability to speak and to walk. As you increase in age there is an increase in life events. The number of events peaks generally around middle age and then begins decreasing as you approach old age and end of life.

Life and the interactions that lead to the human experience is complex. To model or simulate life to a high degree of accuracy would require thousands of variables. Perhaps one day there will be sufficient computer power to model every aspect of life. Even with such a model each individual life cannot be modeled because one cannot know the future. Seemingly irrelevant and unimportant events and decisions can drastically change the outcome of an individual life.

Fate is the element of chance in the affairs of life. The unforeseen and unpredictable conditions considered as a force, which shapes the events and fortunes of humans, and are generally considered to be opposing circumstances, against which it is useless to struggle.

The central premise of The Fate Game is if you are an ethical person, work hard, get an education, and make good decisions, you can lead a happy and prosperous life. But, there is always a chance that fate can deal you a bad hand.

The Fate Game is not meant to be a life simulator, but instead a learning tool. It allows you to see what the consequences of events and decisions can be. The events themselves are mainly based on real world probabilities. For example, you are most likely to be born in the most populous state, that being California. When you are born, you don't have a choice of where you were born, who your parents are, what your gender is, your genome, or your family structure. Although you cannot control your initial circumstances, they can and typically do have a large impact on your future.

The object of the game is to get the highest point total. Points are based on a combination of starting circumstances and expected outcomes, and decisions and events, which lead to the highest level of happiness, prosperity, and longevity.

## Getting Started

To get started with The Fate Game you need to register so that you have a login name. This login name is tied to a User ID which in turn is used to track your events and decisions. To register, click on Login on the Fate Game home page. If you have already registered you can login and start a new game or review your previous game. If you have not registered, click on the [click here to register](#) link.

Enter your First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Login Name and Password and click on Next to continue. This information is used to insure that each user is unique and for customer support purposes only and is not sold to third party marketers.

The Fate Game relies on cookies and pop-up windows for its functionality so cookies and pop-up windows must be enabled on your browser for the game to function properly. Again, these are used solely to enable game functionality, not for advertising or advertisement tracking.

Once you have created an account you are ready to login and start a new game. This can be accomplished by either clicking on Login on the home page, or by clicking on the Start a New Game link on the homepage. If you have not logged in and you click on Start a New Game you will be taken to the login webpage.

Upon login you will be redirected to the Player Panel webpage. If this is your first game, the Player Panel will display:

**No profile found! Please click on start a new game to get your starting player profile.**

### Start New Game

If you have a player profile from an existing game and click on Start a New Game you will get the following message:

**Are you sure you want to start a new game?  
All previous game records will be deleted!**

If you click Continue, your player profile and current game events and decisions will be deleted. This will not delete your user account.

After clicking Continue you will be prompted to select your gender. Once you select your gender and click on Submit you will be directed to your starting profile webpage. Your starting profile webpage will display your starting profile and your initial score as shown in the example below:

Here is your starting profile:

You were born in Georgia

Your gender is male

Your family structure is Mother and father

Your mother's occupation is Sales Representative

Your father's occupation is Insulation Worker

Score

Your family structure points are 25

Your mother's occupation points are 38

Your father's occupation points are 36

Your total points are 99

Once you have a starting profile, life events and decisions can begin. To get you first event click Continue. Your first event will be displayed as well as an updated score based on the event. Each time you click Continue you get a new event. As you proceed with each new event you will be faced with decisions. Once a decision is displayed and a response has been submitted, the decision pop-up will close. Click on Continue, the next webpage will display your decision points as well as your cumulative score. Continue clicking through the remaining event webpage's until you reach the final webpage. Once you have started the process of getting your events and decisions, please do not use the back or refresh functions of your browser. Due to the random nature of your events and decisions this will cause unpredictable results and result in an inaccurate score. The final event webpage will display the following message:

**To review your final score and event and decision details or to print your results click Continue.**

This will take you to the Player Panel where you can review or print your results.

## Game Functionality

### Birthplace

When you start a new game you get a new user profile. For the first release of The Fate Game you will get a state in which you were born, a gender, which you select when you start a new game, a family structure, and depending on your family structure your parent's occupations. A sample profile is given below:

You were born in: Maryland

Your gender is: male

Your family structure is: Mother and father

Your mother's occupation is: Mechanical Engineering Technician

Your father's occupation is: Information and Record Clerk

No points are allocated based on gender. No points are allocated for being born in a particular state. Since all countries are not created equal the international version of The Fate Game will allocate points based on the country where you are born.

### Family Structure

For the United States version of the game you are given initial points based on your family structure and the occupation of your parents. The family structure points are allocated as follows:

Mother and father - 25 points

Single parent – mother – 10 points

Single parent – father – 10 points

With a relative – 5 points

No living relatives – 5 points

The family structure points are assigned based on the statistical outcomes of being born in varying family structures. For example, being born in a family structure of single parent mother reduces you probabilities of success in several key areas.

In 1994, Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, using evidence from four nationally representative data sets, compared the outcomes of children growing up with both biological parents, with single parents, and with step-parents.<sup>1</sup> The study found that children who did not live with both biological parents were roughly twice as likely to be poor, to have a birth outside of marriage, to have behavioral and psychological problems, and to not graduate

from high school. Other studies have reported associations between family structure and child health outcomes. For example, one study found children living in single-parent homes were more likely to experience health problems, such as accidents, injuries, and poisonings.<sup>2</sup>

McLanahan and Sandefur found little difference in outcomes for children according to whether the single-parent families were a result of non-marital births or divorce. Before they reach adulthood, nearly 4 out of 10 children will experience the divorce of their parents, and roughly one million children experience their parents' divorce every year.<sup>3</sup>

Children of divorced parents are disadvantaged compared to children of married-parent families in the area of educational achievement.<sup>4</sup> Children of divorce are more than twice as likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems as children of intact families—25 percent versus 10 percent.<sup>4</sup> Roughly 69 percent of children of never-married mothers are poor, compared to 45 percent of children brought up by divorced single mothers.<sup>5</sup>

## **Parental Occupations**

The parental occupation points are based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment and Wages from Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) average salaries for the respective occupation. The 10 largest occupations accounted for 21 percent of total employment. The U.S.-all occupations mean wage in May 2013 was \$22.33 per hour or \$46,440 annually.

For the sample profile above, the average salary for the occupation of Mechanical Engineering Technician is 54,000 per year. So the occupation points would be 54. The Fate Game has over 900 different occupations.

The occupation odds are based on the percent of the population that work in a particular occupation. The top ten occupations by population are as follows:

- Office Administrator
- Sales Representative
- Food Worker
- Transport Worker
- Production Worker
- Retail Salesperson
- Education and Training Worker
- Healthcare Practitioner
- Food and Beverage Server
- Business and Financial Operations Worker

Parents at different occupational levels hold different expectations for their children. Parental expectations tend to be adopted by children, and children's expectations affect the occupation they eventually choose.

Sean Reardon a Stanford University sociologist, is the author of a study that found that the gap in standardized test scores between affluent and low-income students had grown by about 40 percent since the 1960s, and is now double the testing gap between blacks and whites.<sup>8</sup>

In another study, by researchers from the University of Michigan, the imbalance between rich and poor children in college completion — the single most important predictor of success in the work force — has grown by about 50 percent since the late 1980s.<sup>9</sup>

One reason for the growing gap in achievement, researchers say, could be that wealthy parents invest more time and money than ever before in their children (in weekend sports, ballet, music lessons, math tutors, and in overall involvement in their children's schools), while lower-income families, which are now more likely than ever to be headed by a single parent, are increasingly stretched for time and resources. This has been particularly true as more parents try to position their children for college, which has become ever more essential for success in today's economy.

Studies have shown that by the age of three, children born into low-income families heard roughly 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers. Fifty years of research has revealed the sad truth that the children of lower-income, less-educated parents typically enter school with poorer language skills than their more educated higher income counterparts. By some measures, 5-year-old children of lower socioeconomic status score more than two years behind on standardized language development tests by the time they enter school.

Stanford researchers have now found that these socioeconomic status (SES) differences begin to emerge much earlier in life: By 18 months of age, toddlers from lower SES families are already several months behind higher SES children in language proficiency.<sup>10</sup>

The lesson being, talk and read to your kids and start at an early age. Parental influence at an early age, regardless of socioeconomic status, is the main factor in the positive development of children.

## Death Odds

The Fate Game ends when you have finished all of your life events and decisions or when you encounter a death event. The leading causes of death for all ages are as follows: <sup>7</sup>

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Respiratory disease

Suicide  
 Motor vehicle accident  
 Poisoning  
 Death due to a fall  
 Firearm assault  
 Car accident  
 Pedestrian accident  
 Motorcycle accident  
 Drowning  
 Fire and smoke  
 Choking on food

According to the Gompertz (1825) “law,” the number of individuals alive in a human population decreases exponentially with age at an exponentially increasing rate. As Gompertz and many others have pointed out, that model serves well only for persons between about 25 and 85 years of age. The Gompertz model implies a doubling of mortality every 8 years.

The average expectation of life by age for the year 2010 is as follows<sup>11</sup>:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Years</b>
0	78.7
1	78.1
5	74.2
10	69.3
15	64.3
20	59.5
25	54.7
30	50.0
35	45.2
40	40.5
45	35.9
50	31.4
55	27.2
60	23.1
65	19.1
70	15.5
75	12.1
80	9.1
85	6.5
90	4.6
95	3.2
100	2.3

What this means is that if you are 60 years old and fate doesn't deal you a bad hand, you can expect to live an additional 23.1 years.

Congratulations! If you are reading this then you are not one of the 437,000 people whose lives ended as statistics in a grisly report on murder published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. The unfortunate half-million were all those around the world who were slain in 2012. The average person thus had roughly a 1 in 16,000 chance of being bumped off that year.

As a wise philosopher once said, "life is but a mere second in time", so enjoy yourself, its later than you think.

## **Events**

Events are categorized by age and include most of the major events that people encounter at different stages in their lives. Events can be good or bad and can be the result of previous events or decisions, as a result of fate, or they can be completely random. Event points are based on whether the event is negative or positive. The events points are displayed as you progress through life, while the final event points can be viewed in the Player Panel when the game is over.

## **Decisions**

Life is all about choices and The Fate Game is no different. The decisions you make will determine your quality of life. If you make bad decisions you get negative points. If you make good decisions you get positive points. The decision points are displayed as you progress through life, while the final decision points can be viewed in the Player Panel when the game is over.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994), *Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Dawson, D. (1991, June), *Family Structure and Children's Health: United States, 1988*. Series 10: Data from the National Health Survey No. 178. Washington, DC: Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>3</sup> Amato, P. (2000), *The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children*, *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62(4), 1269-1287.

<sup>4</sup> Jeynes, W. (2002), *Divorce, Family Structure, and the Academic Success of Children*, New York: The Haworth Press; and Zill, N., & Schoenborn, C. (1990). *Developmental, Learning, and Emotional Problems; Health of Our Nation's Children, United States, 1988*, Vital and Health Statistics, Advance Data No. 190, Washington, DC: National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>5</sup> Heatherington, E.M. (2002), *For Better or For Worse: Divorce Reconsidered*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, (1997, September), *Children with Single Parents – How They Fare*, Census Brief, Washington, DC: Available at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

<sup>7</sup> National Safety Council, *Injury Facts®*, 2014 Edition, Itasca, IL

<sup>8</sup> The Widening Academic Achievement Gap between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations, Sean F. Reardon, July 2011

<sup>9</sup> Gains and Gaps: Changing Inequality in US College Entry and Completion, Martha J. Bailey, Susan M. Dynarski, National Bureau of Economic Research

<sup>10</sup> Fernald, A., Marchman, V. A. and Weisleder, A. (2013), SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months. *Developmental Science*, 16: 234–248. doi: 10.1111/desc.12019

<sup>11</sup> National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 63, No. 7, November 6, 2014