CISC 3667 - Game Design and Development
Homework 1: What is a Game?

Objective: The purpose of this assignment is to critically examine what counts as a "game" through the lens of different game design theorists.

Submit a 1-2 page response to the following:

1. Choose and play a game! You may select any activity you personally consider a game. Examples include:
   - **Board Game** (e.g., Chess, Monopoly, Candy Land)
   - **Card Game** (e.g., Poker, Uno, Solitaire)
   - **Video Game** (e.g., Minecraft, Fortnite, Celeste)
   - **Sport** (e.g., Soccer, Basketball)
   - **Children's Game** (e.g., Hide and Seek, Tag)

   Briefly describe how the game is played (enough so that someone unfamiliar could understand it).

2. For your chosen game, evaluate whether it qualifies as a "game" based on the following theorists' definitions:
   - **Maroney** – "*A game is a form of play with goals and structure.*"
   - **McGonigal** – "*Games are activities with goals, rules, feedback, and voluntary participation.*"
   - **Schell** – "*A game is a problem-solving activity approached with a playful attitude.*"
   - **Crawford** – Defines a game as "*an interactive, goal-oriented activity, with active agents to play against, in which players (including active agents) can interfere with each other.*"

   For each definition:

   - Explain whether your chosen activity fits or does not fit.
   - Provide evidence/examples from the game to justify your reasoning.

3. Based on your analysis, which definition do you personally find most convincing or useful? Why? Does your chosen activity feel more or less like a "game" after doing this analysis?

Grading Criteria: ✅ Total = 100 points

- **Game Description (10 pts):**
  - Clear explanation of how the game is played, enough detail for someone unfamiliar to understand.
- **Definitions Applied (20 pts):**
  - All four theorists (Maroney, McGonigal, Schell, and Crawford) are addressed with examples and reasoning.
- **Reflection Section Included (10 pts):**
  - The student includes reflection and answers guiding questions.
- **Clarity & Organization (20 pts):**
  - Writing is structured logically and easy to follow.
  - Game description and analysis are concise but thorough.
- **Critical Thinking (20 pts):**
  - Shows understanding of similarities and differences between the definitions.
  - Goes beyond surface-level yes/no answers to provide thoughtful comparisons.
- **Reflection Quality (20 pts):**
  - Provides personal insight and connection to theory.
  - Demonstrates engagement with the big question: "What counts as a game?"