# INTRODUCTION

*Congratulations on your candidacy in The Primary! Outwit your opponents during a presidential primary election by traveling the country, hosting rallies and fundraisers, advertising, and gaining the favor of powerful Super PACs. Regions across the country will vote during the eleven rounds of the game and you will have to predict your opponents' strategies in order to earn the most delegates and win the game!*

*Good luck, candidates!*

# GAME CONTENTS




- **A.** This Rulebook *(1)*
- **B.** Game Board *(1)*
- **C.** Pawns *(5)*
- **D.** Action Cards *(70 total - 14 per player)*
- **E.** Candidate Cards *(12)*
- **F.** News Cards *(18)*
- **G.** Influence Cubes *(150 total - 30 per player)*
- **H.** Round Tokens *(17)*
- **I.** Voting Markers *(3)*
- **J.** First Player Token *(1)*
- **K.** Bot Cards *(18) [Solo variant]*
- **L.** Custom Die *(1) [Solo variant]*

# OBJECTIVE

Your goal in The Primary is to become your political party's candidate for President of the United States, by earning the most delegates! In order to gain delegates, you must win regional elections by having the most Influence in a region at the end of the round during which its vote takes place.

Influence cubes are both gained and deployed using seven different types of Action cards. Each round, you will play four Action cards face down – committing to execute those actions in turn order. News cards provide unique events each round and Candidate cards give players powers that can change the complexion of the campaign!

*Scan this QR code to watch a how-to-play video!*

# SETUP

- Open the **game board** and place it the middle of your playing space.
- Shuffle the **News cards** and form a News card deck next to the game board.
- Each player selects 1 **pawn** and 30 **Influence cubes** of the same color.
- Deal each player 2 random **Candidate cards**. Players choose to keep 1 card and can use its power throughout the game. Candidate cards not kept by players are removed from play.

  ***IMPORTANT:*** *Candidate card powers are public information and should be shared with all players now.*

- The number on the Candidate card next to the Influence cube icon shows the amount of Influence cubes each Candidate starts with. *(See Fig. 1)*




*Figure 1 - Candidate starting cubes*

- Each player takes their starting Influence cubes from their personal bank, creating their hand of available Influence cubes.

  ***IMPORTANT:*** *Players may only spend Influence from their hand of available Influence cubes.*

  ***Note:*** *We recommend keeping your personal bank of Influence cubes in its plastic zip bag, in order to avoid confusion with your hand of available Influence cubes.*

- Give each player their 14 **Action cards** *(see Fig. 2)*




*Figure 2 – Action cards*

- Determine the starting player by who was the first person to cast a vote in a presidential election. Give the **First Player Token** to the starting player and pass it left to the next player at the end of each round.

- Place 3 **Round Tokens** in the "Non-Voting Tokens" area of the board (see Fig. 3)

  ***Note:*** *We suggest using Round Tokens 1, 5, and 9 here for your first few games, but any 3 Round Tokens can be used.*




*Figure 3 – The Non-Voting Tokens area of the board*

- Randomly place 1 of the remaining Round Tokens on each region.

  ***Note:*** *There are 2 Round Tokens numbered 4, 6, 8, and 10 and 3 Round Tokens numbered 11. Multiple regions may have Round Tokens of the same number on them.*

- Place a **Voting Marker** next to the Round Token numbered 1. The Voting Markers are used to show the current round.

  ***Note:*** *When a Voting Marker is next to a Round Token within a region, it shows that the region will vote during the current round.*

  ***Note:*** *When a Voting Marker is next to a Round Token in the Non-Voting Tokens area of the board, it shows that the Round Token does not correspond with a regional vote.*

- The starting player chooses their home region, followed by the other players in clockwise turn order. Each player places their pawn and 2 Influence cubes from the bank in their chosen home region (see Fig. 4)

  ***Note:*** *Players may choose to start in the same home region.*




*Figure 4 – Setup for a 3-player game*

# GAMEPLAY

The game lasts a total of 12 rounds, and each round contains 4 phases:
**NEWS, ACTION, VOTE,** and **ORGANIZE.**

## 1 NEWS

- Move the Voting Marker(s) to the Round Token(s) that match the current round.
- The first player draws 1 News card from the top of the News deck and reads the card to the other players.
- Resolve any effects of the News card.

  ***Note:*** *News card effects only apply to the current round, unless stated otherwise.*

  ***Note:*** *News card effects apply to all players, not just the player reading it.*

  ***Note:*** *When applicable, players execute News card effects in turn order, starting at the First Player Token.*
- Place the News card face up in a discard pile next to the News deck.

## 2 ACTION

The Action cards and their quantities in each player's hand are listed below:




**BUS (1x):**
Move your pawn to any region adjacent to its current region.

***Note:*** *You must travel to a new region.*




**POSITIVE AD (1x):**
Place 1 Influence cube **from your hand** onto any region.




**PLANE (1x):**
**Pay 1 Influence cube from your hand** to the bank and move your pawn to any region.

***Note:*** *You must travel to a new region.*




**NEGATIVE AD (1x):**
Remove any 1 Influence cube from any region and return it into the bank.




**RALLY (3x):**
Place 2 Influence cubes **from your hand** into your current region.

***Note:*** *If you play a Rally card and only have 1 Influence cube, you must still place it in your current region.*




**SUPER PAC (4x):**
The player with the most **SUPER PAC** cards played at the end of the round gains 4 Influence cubes from the bank and places them into their hand.

***IMPORTANT:*** *If there is a tie between players with 1 or more **SUPER PAC** cards played, all tied players gain 2 Influence cubes from the bank and place them into their hands.*




**FUNDRAISER (3x):**
Gain 1 Influence cube from the bank and place it into your hand.

- From their hand of 14 Action cards, each player simultaneously selects and commits 4 Action cards face down in their desired order of execution from left to right, forming a queue.
- Starting at the First Player Token and proceeding in clockwise order, each player executes the action of the leftmost un-executed Action card in their queue.

  ***IMPORTANT:*** *Players must execute each of the Action cards they commit to their queue. Action cards may not be skipped or forfeited.*
- Each player continues to execute their leftmost Action card in turn order, until all 4 Action cards in each player's queue are executed *(see Fig. 5).*
- Determine who played the most Super PAC cards during the round. That player gains 4 Influence cubes from the bank into their hand.

  ***Note:*** *If there is a tie between players who played 1 or more Super PAC cards, all tied players gain 2 Influence cubes from the bank into their hands.*




*Figure 5 - It is player B's turn to execute an Action card*

## 3 VOTE

If 1 or more regions are voting, follow the below instructions:

### WINNER-TAKES-ALL REGION

- These regions only have a 1st place delegate award *(see Fig. 6)*
- The delegates from these regions are awarded to the player with the most Influence in the region.

  ***Note:*** *If there is a tie, the delegates are evenly split between all tied players, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*




*Figure 6 - A winner-takes-all region with one delegate award*

### PROPORTIONAL REGION

- These regions have both 1st and 2nd place delegate awards *(see Fig. 7)*
- The larger delegate award is given to the player with the most Influence in the region.

  ***Note:*** *If there is a tie for the most Influence, the total number of delegates (both 1st and 2nd place delegate awards) is evenly split between all tied players, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*

  ***Note:*** *If there is only 1 player with Influence in the region, they win both delegate awards*
- The smaller delegate award is given to the player with the second most Influence in the region.

  ***Note:*** *If there is a tie for the second most Influence, the 2nd place delegate award is evenly split between all tied players, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*

  ***IMPORTANT:*** *A player's pawn counts as 1 Influence in the region where it is located.*
- Add the number of delegates won to each of the corresponding player's total, using 1 of their Influence cubes on the scoring track around the perimeter of the game board.




| PLAYER | INFLUENCE CUBES | PAWNS | TOTAL INFLUENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blue | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Red | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| White | 1 | 0 | 1 |

*Figure 7 - A tied vote in a proportional voting region*

## 4 ORGANIZE

- Remove all the Influence cubes from each region that voted and return them to the bank.
- Flip over the Round Token(s) for the completed round to show the checkmark.
- Move the Voting Marker(s) next to the Round Token(s) corresponding to the next round.
- Return all played Action cards back into their owners' hands. All Action cards are available for use every round, unless specified by a News card.
- Pass the First Player Token one player to the left.
- Begin the next round, starting with the News phase.

## ENDING THE GAME

After the final region votes in round 11, the player with the most delegates wins the game!

***Note:*** *In the case of players tied with the most delegates at the end of the game, the tied player with the most Influence cubes in their hand wins!*

***Note:*** *If there is still a tie, hold a runoff vote between the tied players and play another game of The Primary.*



# GAMEPLAY VARIANTS

## SOLO VARIANT

In this variant, you play against an incumbent "Bot" candidate whose actions are determined by a random **Bot card** played each round. The rules below are used in addition to the standard rules.

### SETUP

- Decide the level of difficulty for your game and begin with the corresponding number of starting Bot Influence cubes:

  ***Extreme*** *– 28 Bot Influence cubes*

  ***Hard*** *– 24 Bot Influence cubes*

  ***Normal*** *– 21 Bot Influence cubes*

  ***Easy*** *– 18 Bot Influence cubes*

- Starting with the region worth the most total delegates, roll the custom die. Place Bot Influence cubes in the region equal to the number rolled. Continue this process for each region until you place all the initial Bot Influence cubes (see Fig. 8)




*Figure 8 - A 2 was rolled and 2 Bot Influence cubes were placed in the region*

- If you have extra initial Bot Influence cubes remaining after rolling for all the regions, re-roll and add more Bot Influence cubes, starting with the region that has the least Bot Influence cubes in it.
- Place the Bot's pawn in the region worth the most total delegates.
  ***Note:*** *The Bot does not get 2 extra Influence cubes in its home region.*
- Shuffle the Bot cards and form a Bot card deck next to the game board.

### GAMEPLAY

During the Action Phase, follow this order:

- Commit 4 Action cards, in the left to right order of how they will be executed.
- Execute your first 2 Action cards.
- Draw a Bot card and resolve its effects. (see Fig. 10)




*Figure 9 - Play 2 Action Cards, 1 Bot Card, and then 2 Action Cards*

- Move the Bot's pawn according to the numbered criteria. If criterion #1 isn't sufficient to determine the Bot's new region, continue to criterion #2 (while still applying criterion #1)
- If criteria #1 and #2 aren't sufficient to determine the Bot's new region, continue to criterion #3 (while still applying criteria #1 and #2)

  ***Note:*** *There may be a scenario where the Bot does not move due to the numbered criteria*
- Place Bot Influence cubes according to the middle text box (see Fig. 10)
- Roll the custom die and compare it to the Super PAC dice values on the bottom of the Bot card, in order to determine how many Super PAC cards are "played" by the Bot (see Fig. 10)

  ***Note:*** *The Bot does not gain Bot Influence cubes by winning or tying the Super PAC - it only prevents you from gaining Influence cubes.Execute your remaining 2 Action cards (see Fig. 9)*




*Figure 10 - A 1 was rolled and 1 Bot Influence cube was placed in the region*

## TWO-PLAYER VARIANT

When setting up a two-player game, you may choose to use the custom die to place Influence cubes for an incumbent "Bot" candidate. In order to win a delegate award in a region, either player must have more Influence than their opponent and the Bot, as if there were 3 players.

To set up, roll the custom die for each region. Place Bot Influence cubes in the region equal to the number rolled *(see Fig. 10)*

Rally and Positive Ad cards may place either your Influence cubes or Bot Influence cubes, depending on your strategy.

## TEAM VARIANT

In this variant, 4 players are divided between 2 teams. During the Vote phase, each team's Influence in a voting region is added together in order to determine who wins the delegate award(s) from that region *(see Fig. 11)*

| TEAM | PLAYER | INFLUENCE CUBES | PAWNS | TOTAL INFLUENCE | TEAM TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Blue | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| A | Green | 2 | 0 | 2 | |
| B | Red | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| B | Yellow | 0 | 1 | 1 | |




*Figure 11 - Team B has the most Influence and wins 11 delegates. Team A wins 5 delegates*

## BASIC VARIANT

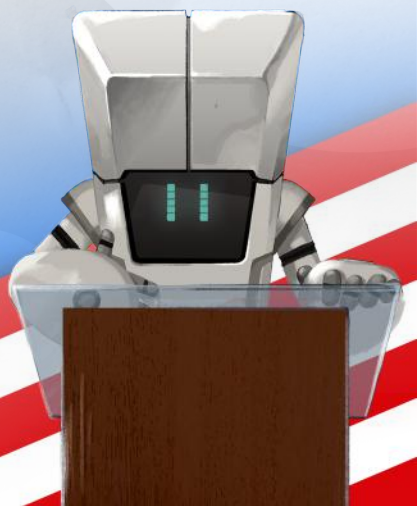
For simpler gameplay, you may choose to play without the News cards and Candidate cards.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For more rule clarifications and frequently asked questions, please visit the following website:
**www.mountaintop.games/games/the-primary/faq**

**Q: What should I do if I run out of Bot Influence cubes in the solo variant?**
**A:** You can use a secondary color for the Bot, if all the Bot Influence cubes are in use.

**Q: On the solo variant Bot cards, does the "smallest margin of victory" include regions that are tied, or have no Influence cubes in them?**
**A:** Yes, a tie (whether 0 – 0 or 3 – 3, etc) counts as the smallest margin of victory.



# RULES SUMMARY

## NEWS

- At the beginning of every round, the first player draws a News card and all players resolve its effect.

## ACTION

- Each player commits 4 Action cards face down - in the left to right order they will be executed.
- Players take turns flipping over their leftmost Action card face up and executing its action.
- The player with the most Super PAC cards each round gains 4 Influence cubes. If there is a tie of more than 1 Super PAC card, each tied player gains 2 Influence cubes.

## VOTING

- The player(s) with the most Influence cubes (pawns count as 1 Influence cube) in a region voting at the end of the round wins the delegate award(s).

  If there is a tie, the delegates are split evenly, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

## ORGANIZE

- Remove all Influence cubes from any regions that voted.
- Move the Voting Marker(s) to the Round Token(s) for the next round.
- Pass the First Player Token one player to the left.

## ENDING THE GAME

- The player with the most delegates at the end of 11 rounds wins the game!
  If there is a tie, the player with the most remaining Influence cubes in their hand wins the game.
  If there is still a tie, hold a runoff vote between the tied players and play another game of The Primary!

# CREDITS

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