ROCKETMEN

Martin Wallace

Fast-paced deck-building tabletop game of modern space exploration.

Immerse yourself in a fast-paced race to the final frontier – space. A deck-building confrontation of swift decision-making and tactical choices – Rocketmen gives you the feel of taking a front seat in a technologically wonderful spectacle of space exploration. It's up to your predictive abilities and resource management skills to determine what kind of endeavor will be most suitable for paving the way to Earth's celestial neighbors.

Players gain Victory Points by successfully launching various space missions with main objectives to explore three celestial destinations: Earth Orbit, the Moon and Mars. The game ends when one of the players scores a certain number of Victory Points, or all 12 space missions have been completed, or if a player chooses to end the game by placing their fifth or sixth token resulting in each destination having at least one mission completed. Every successful mission gives players considerable perks: additional rocket points, extra cash, increased hand size, and supplementary resources. These, in turn, help them prepare more easily for their future missions.

COMPONENTS

Boards

Rocketmen includes the following components:

- 1 game board
- 4 player boards in 4 different colors (blue, red, white and yellow)

Pieces

- 24 player tokens in 4 different colors (6 per player)



- 4 victory points tokens



- 12 two-sided rocket point tokens (Achievements) in 4 different colors (3 per player)



- 24 two-sided benefit tokens (Achievements) in 4 different colors (6 per player)





- 1st Player token
- Rocket token
- Moon token
- Mars token

Cards

- Action cards:



  - 48 Mission cards in 4 different colors (12 per player)
  - 23 Asset (teal) and 20 Asset (pink) cards
  - 15 Engine cards (5 of each type)
  - 12 Threat! cards (4 of each type)



- 18 Mission Success cards



- 12 Personal Goal cards
- 9 Game Variant cards





SETUP

For players who are new to deck building games, we recommend playing a simplified variant of the game which is called **The Battle for Earth**. The rules for this variant are on **page 5**.









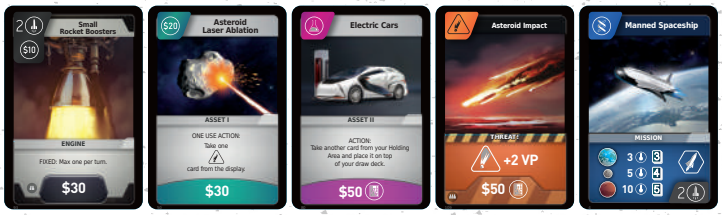








1 Place the game board in the middle of the table.
2 Place the Mission Success cards on the board, face down.
3 Separate the Action cards into the following decks:



Engine — Asset — Threat! — Mission

4 Sort the Engine cards by type into 3 piles, then put them face up in their designated places on the board.
5 Divide the Asset cards into two decks, teal and pink. Put one Asteroid Impact Threat! card, one Pandemic Threat! card and one Climate Change Threat! card into the teal deck and put the rest into the pink deck. Shuffle both decks. Place the teal deck on top of the pink deck on the board, face down.
6 Draw the top six cards from this deck and place them onto the display.
7 Place the Moon token onto the Moon symbol and 8 the Mars token onto the Mars symbol.
9 Each player: select a set of Mission cards, 10 player tokens, 11 Achievement tokens and a 12 player board in one of the four colors (red, blue, white or yellow).
13 Shuffle your twelve starting cards and place them on the 14 HQ space on your player board, face down. 15 Draw six cards to form your starting hand.
16 Place your Victory token on the '0' position of the victory track on the main game board.
17 Shuffle Personal Goal cards and give each player two cards, without showing them to other players. 18 Put the remaining cards in the box without examining them; they will not be used during this game.
19 Randomly determine the starting player, and give the First Player token to that person. The starting player does not change during the game and has no special role.
20 Place the Rocket token on 0 space of the Mission Success Track.

Now you are ready to start the race to the stars!

Game for 3 Players: During setup use only cards with 1, 2 and 3.
Game for 2 Players: During setup use only cards with 1 and 2.


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CARDS and ACTIONS

Action cards

Each Action card has three pieces of information near the top: item 1, card name 2, and card type 3. Items are used to pay for new cards and to boost your rocket attempts.



Asset, Engine and Threat! cards have two additional pieces of information near the bottom: card cost 4 and effect 5.

A card's cost indicates money and items that must be spent to buy the card from the display.

An **Asset card's** effect may describe various possible actions:

- DISCARD: Either play this card as an item or money, or play it to use its ability. Either way, play it as part of a *Discard cards* action.
- LAUNCH PAD: When you put this card on your Launch Pad, you can use its ability. In other situations, you can play this card as an item or money.
- WHEN USED TO PAY: You can use this card's ability when you use it to pay to buy a new card (as part of a *Buy cards from the display* action) or to place a card on your Launch Pad or Mission Site (as a part of a *Place cards on the launch pad* action).

Each **Engine card** has a text reminder that you can buy ONLY ONE Engine card per turn.

Threat!

A Threat! Card's price rises during the game, for each player individually, as shown by a player's current location on the score track.



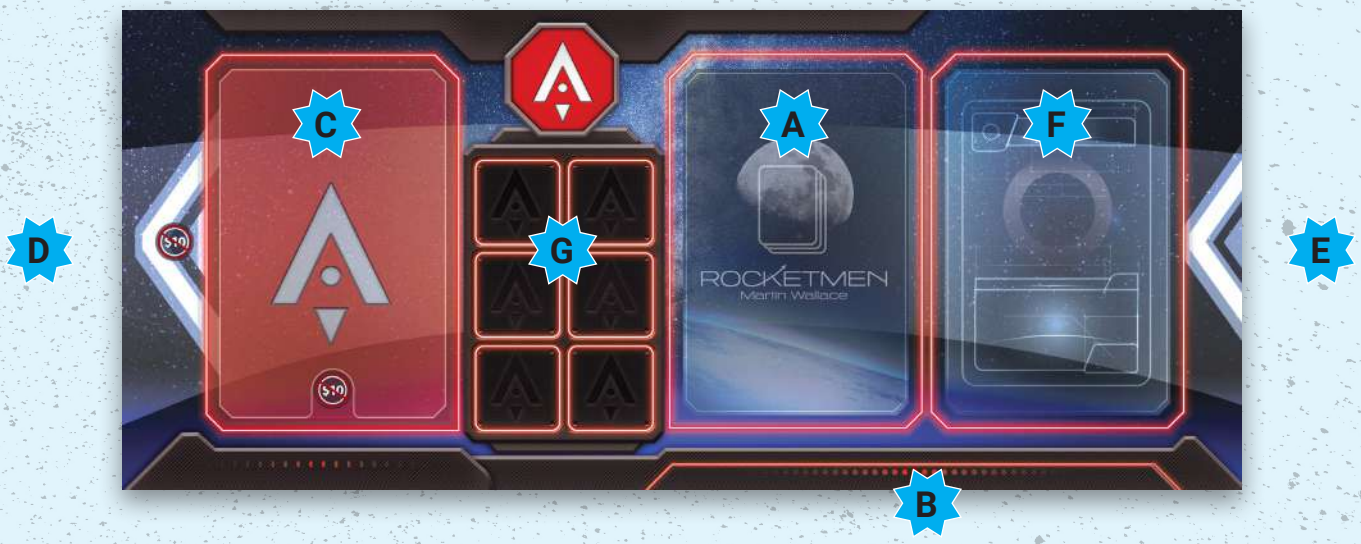
Example: If any player reaches 11 VP, cost of all Threat! card increases by $10.

If the text on any card directly conflicts with the rules in this book, the card text takes precedence.

Game Variant cards

Once you are familiar with the game, you can use these cards to add some variety.
These modify the game rules in various ways. If you wish to use them, shuffle them, draw two cards and place them on their location on the game board (2 blank areas between Moon and Mars).

Player board



Your player board is your main area of play. It has several locations:

A **HQ** – Draw cards from here. Cards here are kept face down.

B **Hand** – This is your hand of cards. You begin the game with a maximum hand size of six cards, but it can be modified during the game.

C **Mission Site** – This is the place for one of your Mission cards. Pay $10 to place a card here. Cards here are face up.

D **Launch Pad** – This is where you construct your rocket. Pay $10 to place a card here. Cards here are face up.

E **Playing Area** – Your played and discarded cards go here. When you play a card from your Hand it immediately goes to your Playing Area. When you discard a card from your Hand, Launch Pad, Mission Site or any other place, it always goes to your Playing Area. Cards here are face up. At the end of your turn, move all cards from your Playing Area to your Warehouse.

F **Warehouse** – Your used and discarded cards are stored here. You may look through your Warehouse at any time. Cards here are face up.

G **Achievements** (tokens) – Your items are stored here. You gain items from successful missions, as indicated on the bottom right corner of mission cards. These values and symbols provide ongoing benefits. Rocket points are cumulative. and can be used once per turn (after use, a token must be flipped face down).

Game Variant - The Battle for Earth

Set up the game as usual, except:

- Remove [moon] and [mars] tokens from the game.
- Separate the Asset cards into two decks, teal and pink. Remove the pink deck from the game.
- Remove Personal Goal cards from the game.
- Randomly draw one Threat! card per player and shuffle them into the teal deck.

In this variant, each player can fulfill only four missions during the game, and those missions can be sent only to the Earth orbit.

The game ends when any of the players puts their fourth mission token on the board.
The round is completed, through the last player's turn, and then the game ends.

The other rules are the same as in the standard game.

PLAYING THE GAME

Players take turns in clockwise order around the table. The active player may do as many actions as they wish, in any order.

Available actions are:

- Buy cards from the display
- Place cards on the launch pad
- Discard cards
- Launch a mission

End of a player's turn
If you finish your actions, move all cards from your Playing Area to your Warehouse. Draw cards from your HQ to refill your Hand back to your hand limit (which starts at six, but can be increased). If you have more cards than your hand size, then discard excess cards to your Warehouse.

If there are not enough cards in your HQ, then draw as many as you can, and then shuffle your Warehouse to form a new face-down HQ deck, and draw the rest of the cards to your hand limit. If there are still not enough cards, you don't draw any additional ones.

Flip all your used tokens back to their color side. Slide all replacement cards on the display upward, so the display cards are all aligned.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends if:
- A player has achieved the score marked on the board (18 for 4 players, 22 for 2 players and 27 for 2 players).
- There are players tokens on all twelve mission spaces.
- If a player places their fifth or sixth token on the board, resulting in at least one token in each location (Earth, Moon and Mars - it doesn't have to be that player's token), that player may choose to end the game.
- If all players place their all tokens on mission spaces.

This round is played to completion, i.e. until the player just before the player with the First Player marker finishes their turn, and then the game ends.

At the end of the game add additional VPs from any:
- Bought cards that give you VPs, e.g. Threat! - each is worth 2 VPs. If you removed a Threat! card from the game you still gain its VPs at the end of the game.
-  and  tokens (one VP for each token).
- One of your Personal Goals. You can score VPs from only one of your Personal Goal cards; choose one and forfeit the other one.

★ Variant Cards (as stated on each particular card).

The player with the highest score is the winner.

If there is a tie, the tying player whose mission is the farthest wins (Mars Base > Orbital Mining > Mars Crewed Spaceship > Moon Base > and so on). If there is still a tie, the one who completed more missions wins.



Buying cards from the display

Select one or more cards from the display to purchase 1. Pay the indicated total cost with items listed on cards from your Hand 2 and tokens you have on your Player Board. If you use tokens, flip them face down, so you can't use them in this round anymore (don't discard them).

Place your newly purchased cards along with cards you used as payment into your Playing Area 3.

If a card has more than one item on it, then both items can be used together to buy cards. If you buy more than one card, you can pay their total price with a combination of cards from your Hand and tokens. You do not receive change for overspending.

If you buy cards using a card with the text 'WHEN USED TO PAY', you don't have to use the card's effect immediately; you can resolve the card's effect at any time before you end your turn. Using the effect is optional. Place this card prominently in your Playing Area as a reminder.

For each card you buy from the display, immediately draw a new card to replace it; place this new card where the old card was, but slide it downward one centimeter, to indicate that it is a replacement. You can buy replacement cards during the same turn in which they appeared, but doing so immediately ends your turn.

You can buy only one Fixed Engine card (regardless of type) during your turn.

You can't divide the money from a card or token between buying cards and placing cards on your Launch Pad. Buying cards and placing cards on your Launch pad are separate actions.



Example:
Red player decides to buy Super computer. The card requires $30 (paid with Space Station and Orbital Shipyard cards) and biology (paid with Spaceship). All cards are put into playing area and new Asset card is revealed and placed on the display.

Discarding cards

You can discard one or more cards to your Playing Area. You can discard from your Hand and from your Launch Pad. You can also discard your Mission Card from your Mission Site, but then you must also discard all cards from your Launch Pad.

Mission cards

Each player has twelve Mission Cards in their player color.



Each Mission card has information where you can send this particular mission 1, how many rocket points 2 you'll need to launch this mission, and how many Mission Success cards you can draw during a launch attempt 3. Each card has its own symbol 4 with a matching symbol on the board. The bottom right corner has a symbol 5 showing an ongoing benefit, received after a successful mission.

Placing cards on the Mission Site and/or Launch Pad

You can place one Mission Card onto the Mission Site 1 on your player board. Only then you can place cards on your Launch Pad 2.

The cost to put a card on your Mission Site or Launch Pad is **$10** per card.
Cards with a monetary value can pay for themselves and for other cards.
You can pay for multiple placements with a single card or token if necessary (including the initial Mission card).
When you place a Mission card you do not need to state its intended destination.
You can have only one active mission at a time.

If you have a Mission Card on your Mission Site, you can place cards on the Launch Pad to meet the mission requirements. Cards on your Launch Pad with an icon matching the destination 3 give you a boost during the start of your rocket.

There is no upper limit to the number of cards that can be placed on your Launch Pad.

There are some cards which you cannot place on your Launch Pad:

- No more than one copy (by title) of Asset cards.
- Threat! Cards.
- Cards that only have a monetary value.

The card on your Mission Site does not contribute its item to the booster value; only cards on your Launch Pad can.



Launching a mission

To launch a mission from your Mission Site you need the minimum amount of Rocket Points indicated by the intended destination on your Mission Card.



Example:
Spaceship needs 3 engines to reach Earth orbit, 5 engines to reach Moon and 10 engines to reach Mars.

Count the Rocket Points from cards on your Launch Pad plus Rocket Points from your tokens. The sum must be equal to or greater than the value of Rocket Points needed to send a specific mission; otherwise the mission cannot be launched at all. Choose your destination and place your player token on that destination on the Mission Success Track (Earth/Moon/Mars). Your mission cards shows how many cards you can draw during the mission attempt [8]. The track shows how many points you need to fulfill the mission.

You can send only one mission to each location in space. E.g. if you already have a player token on Earth's orbit on a Satellite slot, you can't send another Satellite Mission there.
Before each attempt, shuffle the Mission Success deck.

During the lift-off, move the Rocket token a number of spaces equal to the number of your symbols (matching your mission destination) on your Launch Pad cards and Player Board items.

You cannot play cards from your hand during launch; you can only use cards which are on your Launch Pad. You can use both the symbol and the text effect of a card. A card's effect can only be used once per turn.



During the launch attempt, draw Mission Success cards one at a time and move the Rocket token forward as many spaces as each drawn card indicates 1.

There are 18 Mission Success cards in the deck, and their composition is as follows: (0×2, 1×5, 2×6, 3×4, 4×1)

Depending on your destination, you draw a different number of Mission Success cards:



Earth



Moon



Mars

After drawing each Mission Success card, but before drawing the last card, you can abort the mission. If you do so, then discard cards from your Launch Pad equal to the number of Mission Success cards you have drawn minus one. (E.g. if you fly to Earth's orbit and you've already drawn two cards, but you abort the Mission, then you discard one card from your Launch Pad.)

YOUR TURN ENDS IMMEDIATELY. Return the Rocket token to the 0 space on the Mission Success Track. Refill your hand.

If you draw all Mission Success cards and fail, then you must discard all cards from your Launch Pad to your Warehouse. You can leave your Mission Card on the Mission Site if you wish or discard it as well.

YOUR TURN ENDS IMMEDIATELY. Return the Rocket token to the 0 space on the Mission Success Track. Refill your hand.

If you reach the target number of points, the Mission is successful. Remove the Mission Card from the game and gain the bonus indicated on the bottom right corner of the Mission Card. Place the bonus token on the Achievement area of your Player Board. Discard all cards from your Launch Pad to your Warehouse. Put your player token on the corresponding mission space on the board and add your VPs on the victory track. Note that whoever fulfils a mission first gets the most VPs.

In addition, whoever fulfills a mission first at a given location (Moon or Mars) will take the Moon or Mars token from the board; these tokens each give 1 VP at the end of the game.

YOUR TURN ENDS IMMEDIATELY. Refill your hand. Return the Rocket token to the 0 space on the Mission Success Track.

Red launches her mission - Orbital Shipyard. With two computer science item cards on Launchpad, Rocket token advances two spaces on Mission Success Track. Next, the first Mission Success card drawn is 3 - the Rocket advances 3 spaces.



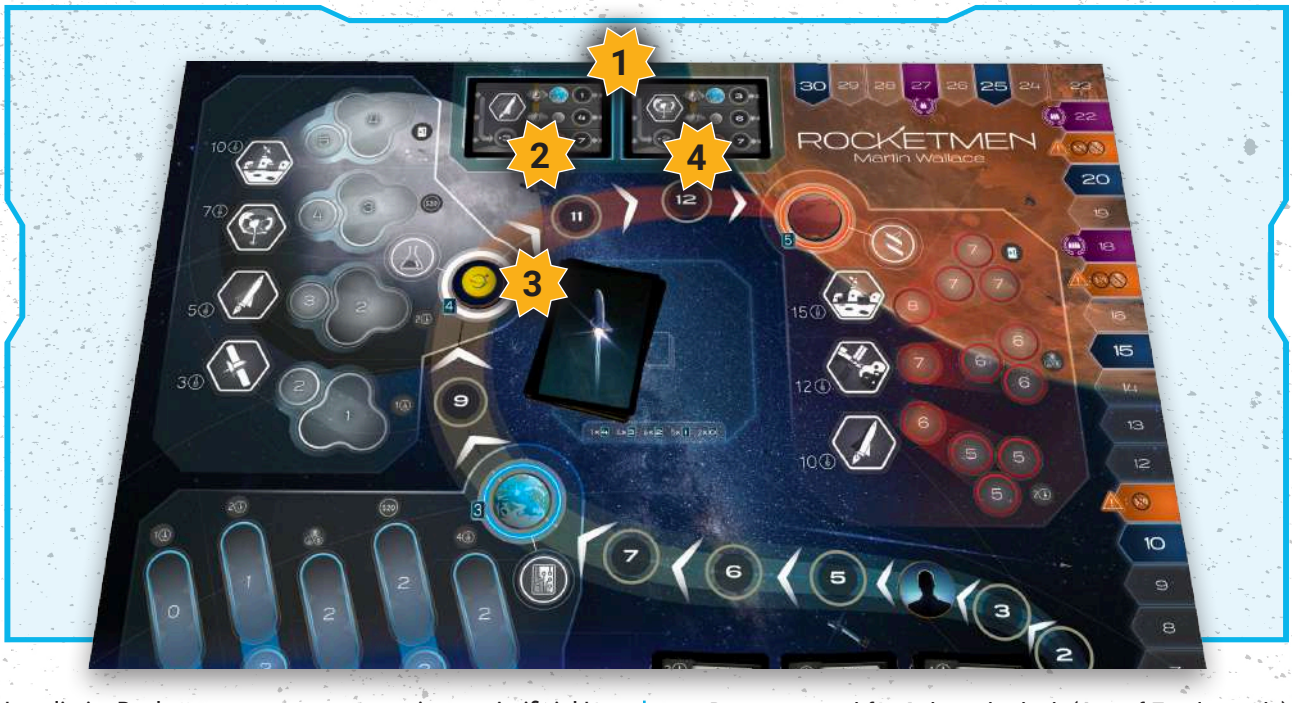


With only 3 spaces needed to reach the orbit, Red decided to continue the mission and draws another Mission Success card. Unfortunately it is 0 - Rocket marker stays in position.

Now it's hard decision for Red to be made. If the mission is aborted, only one card from the Launchpad will be moved to the Warehouse and redo the mission next turn. But Red decides to take the risk and draws the final card. Fortunately, it is 4, so the mission is completed. Red token is placed on 3 area near Orbital Sipyard and 3 VP are awarded on the VP Track.



SOLITAIRE RULES



In solitaire Rocketmen, you compete against an Artificial Intelligence. Select a player color for your AI opponent (take six player tokens and one VP marker of that color). Set up the game for 2 players, with the following exceptions:

- Shuffle Threat! cards with ① into the pink deck.
- Shuffle all Personal Goal cards with and randomly draw one card from them. This is your mandatory goal for this game. If you don't fulfill all the tasks from the card drawn, you'll lose the game. (You do not get any additional VPs from this card.)
- Remove Variant cards from the game.
- Remove and tokens from the game.
- Shuffle all Solo cards and place them near the game board.
- Choose a difficulty level - Easy , Normal , Hard . You can't change the difficulty level during the game. Difficulty level is indicated on solo cards.

Play the game as usual, except for these new rules:

- At the beginning of your turn, if the AI doesn't have an active mission do these steps:
- Draw one card from the solo deck (one of 7 solo cards) and place it on the left side of the Variant card spot on the game board 1. The line with the difficulty level 2 tells the AI's destination (Earth orbit, Moon, Mars).
- If the AI already has its player tokens on all locations at this destination (e.g. the card says Mars, but the AI already has tokens on Mars Crewed Spaceship, Mars Asteroid Mining, and Mars Base, then discard this card and draw a new card, until you get a valid AI destination.
- 3 Place an AI player token on this location (at Earth, Moon, or Mars) to remember where the AI is going.
- Place the 1st Player marker (representing the AI Rocket) on the Mission Track. The card's line with the difficulty level 2 tells on which numbered space (E.g. on Easy, place the AI Rocket on space 1 on the Mission Track.
- Draw another card from the solo deck and place it to the right of the first card - this tells which type of mission type the AI will fulfill 4.
- if the mission is not valid (the destination does not have that type of mission, or the AI already fulfilled that mission at the destination), then discard this card and draw a new card, until you get a valid mission type.

- Advance the AI Rocket by the number indicated on the bottom of this card 4.
- If you need to draw a solo card but the solo deck is empty, shuffle all discarded solo cards to make a new solo deck.

- Play your turn as usual.
- At the end of your turn, advance the AI Rocket one space toward its destination, unless there is a Threat! card on the display - in that case, don't advance the AI Rocket, but move the leftmost Threat! card from the display to the left of the board, which is where the AI keeps its VP cards.
- If the AI Rocket reaches its destination, move the AI player token from the destination 3 to the indicated location and add the earned mission VPs to the AI on the Victory Track.
- If the AI took a Threat! card, then the display has at least one empty space. If the AI did not take a Threat! Card, then remove the leftmost card from the display and place it into the AI scoring area. In both cases, then slide all cards left (so no card has space on its left side), then draw cards to refill the display. (If the deck runs out, you no longer draw.)
- Once per turn, you can remove any one card from the display (place it in AI scoring area), but you must then advance the AI Rocket one space toward its destination on the Mission Track.
- The game ends if there are no cards on the display, or if there are player tokens on all twelve mission spaces, or if a player places their sixth token on the board and there is at least one token (regardless of player color) in each location (Earth, Moon and Mars). Complete the turn, and then the game ends.
- If the player and AI have equal scores, then the player wins.

Credits

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