

"Hark, hark, paupers and baronets,
hawks and cravens!
Our good King tells me to declare open
the great... COMBO PARTY!"
Michel the messenger, herald to His Majesty

Summary and goal of the game



In Castle Combo, each player recruits 9 characters and places them in their 3 x 3 cards tableau.

All 78 **Character** cards come from 2 places: the **Castle** and the **Village**, and the **Messenger** pawn's position indicates the location one can recruit characters from.

Each character grants you an immediate ability and, at the end of the game, scores points depending on their card's conditions.

After everyone has played 9 turns (i.e., everyone has 9 characters in front of them), the player with the most points in their tableau wins the game.



Components

39 Castle cards
with a gray back



39 Village cards
with a brown back



1 Messenger pawn

Anatomy of a card



Gold cost

Messenger Icon
(should you move the pawn)

Name of the character + banner

Castle or Village

Ability
(triggered when bought)

Scoring scroll
(at the end of the game)

Shield

There are 6 shield types

Nobility | Faith | Scholarship

(mostly found in the Castle)

Military | Crafts-manship | Peasantry

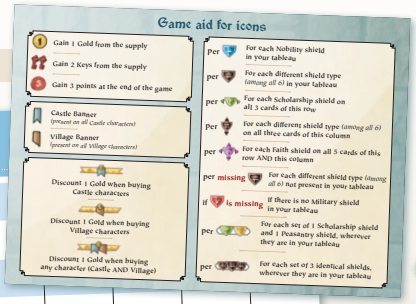
(mostly found in the Village)

52 Gold tokens
(40 with value 1 and 12 with value 5)

44 Key tokens
(36 with value 1 and 8 with value 3)

Gold and Keys are not meant to be limited. In the rare case you do not have enough, use any replacement you find suitable to track these resources.

1 double-sided game aid



1 score pad

This rulebook



Setup

A Shuffle the **Castle** cards (with a gray back) **into a deck**. Place that deck in the center of the table. **Reveal the top 3 cards** in a row besides the deck.

B Do the **same with the Village deck**. Place it, along with the 3 revealed Village cards, below the Castle cards as shown.

C Place the **Messenger pawn** besides the revealed **Village** cards.

D Each player takes **2 Keys and 15 Gold**. Put all remaining Keys and Gold within reach of all players: this is the supply.

E Randomly select a first player.
The game can begin!



Game flow

Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, everyone plays their turn until everyone has 9 cards in front of them.

ON YOUR TURN

When it is your turn to play, take the following steps in this order:

1. **Spend a Key** *(optional)*
2. **Buy a card** *(mandatory)*
3. **Apply the card's ability** *(mandatory)*
4. **Move the Messenger pawn and fill the display for both locations** *(mandatory)*

Once all 4 of these steps are completed, the player to the left of the current active player takes their turn.



1 Spend a Key *(optional)*



You may spend **1 (and only one) of your Keys** to take **one of the following two actions**.

◆ **Move the Messenger pawn** to the other location (Castle or Village).



◆ **Discard all 3 cards** in the location where the Messenger is **and reveal 3 new cards** from the corresponding deck.



Discarding cards

Discarded cards are placed to the left of their deck as a visible pile.
Discarded cards are public information.
If a deck is empty when cards should be revealed from it, shuffle the corresponding discard pile into a new deck.

2 Buy a card *(mandatory)*

You **must** take one of the 3 face-up cards **in the location the Messenger occupies**. Pay the cost of the card in Gold, as shown in the top left corner of the card. Then place the card **in your tableau**.

> Discounts



Some card abilities grant a **permanent** discount when **purchasing** cards of a specific location (Castle, Village, or both).
This is shown with a golden line.
Make sure to add up all of the applicable discounts in your tableau!

A card cannot cost less than 0 Gold; you do not gain gold if you have more discounts than the cost of the card.

Important: if the card you purchase has a discount ability, its own discount ability only applies for your next purchases, and not this one.

Flip a card face down

*You may always take a card **without paying its cost**, and place it **face down in your tableau**. Doing so, you ignore its **ability**, its end game **points** and **any other information printed on it**, but you immediately gain **6 Gold and 2 Keys as a compensation**, as shown on the back of the cards.*



Placement rules

Immediately place the card you took in your tableau.
For this, you must comply with **2 rules**:

- Each card after the first must be placed **adjacent** (orthogonally) to at least one other card in your tableau.
- At the end of the game, your tableau must be a grid of **3 x 3 cards.** You may never add a fourth card to a column or a row.





Important: some cards award points depending on where they are in the grid. Their position is consolidated over the course of the game, and is only fixed as your rows and columns fill up.



Example: starting your tableau like this sets the column for each card: left for the Royal guard, center for the Spy and right for the Militiaman.

However, at this stage of the game, only the future cards will determine whether this row is the top, middle, or bottom row.

3 Apply the card's ability *(mandatory)*

The ability of a card is applied **just after** the card has been placed into your tableau. The card takes itself into account for the resolution of its ability (except if that ability is a discount).

Unless mentioned otherwise on the card, an ability is always a **gain for you** and scales solely **on what is in your tableau**. Take the gained elements (Keys and/or Gold) from the supply.



Example: with this ability YOU gain 1 Key for each Village Banner in YOUR tableau (counting the card that triggers this ability).

- Whenever an ability mentions your opponents, it concerns all other players.
- Whenever an ability mentions a neighbor, you choose either the player directly to your left's tableau, or the player to your right's.

The game aid explains all card abilities.

4 Move the Messenger pawn and fill the display for both locations *(mandatory)*

If a **Messenger icon** is printed in the banner of the character that has been bought, **move the Messenger pawn** in the shown location (gray/up = Castle; brown/down = Village).



If there is no such icon, or if the card has been taken to be placed face down, the Messenger does not move.

Then reveal cards to **complete each display** with less than 3 visible cards. Take cards from the Castle deck for the Castle display and from the Village deck for the Village display.

Empty location

*If, after shuffling the discard of a location, it is **still impossible to complete its display** to 3 cards, remove from the game all cards from that location and place the Messenger pawn near the remaining display. Messenger icons on the cards that are bought or spending a Key do not move the Messenger anymore. Spending a Key still allows you to refresh all 3 cards of this remaining location.*

TURN END

Once all four of these steps are completed,
the next player in clockwise order takes their turn.

End of the game

The game ends once all players have built their **9-cards** tableaus.

Cards with "Purse scoring"



When the game ends, players place their leftover gold on cards with Purse scoring in their tableau. Each purse may hold as much gold as printed in black on it (in this case, 4 Gold).



- Using the score pad, count the points on **each scoring scroll** shown on your cards. Each scoring scroll always refers only to the elements in YOUR OWN tableau for scoring. Face-down cards are worth no points.
- **Each Key** you have is worth **1 point**.
- Gold that is not stored on purses is worth no points. However, keep it to break any ties that might occur.

FINAL SCORE

Add up **the score of each of your cards and keys** to obtain your final score. The player with the most points wins the game. In case of a tie, the tied player with the most leftover Gold wins. If the tie persists, the tied players win together.



Scoring example



	LOUISON
3 x 3 points, for 3 sets (3 and 5) the card flipped face down gives no banner	9
2 x 6 points, as and are missing	12
11 x 1 point, for keeping 11 Keys	11
3 x 3 points, for 3 shields on this row	9
2 x 2 points, for 2 Gold stored on this card	4
5 points, as this card is on one of its required spaces	5
6 points, as there are 2 Gold on the Sculptor and 4 Gold on the Miraculously cured	6
0 points as a face-down card is worth nothing	0
4 x 2 points, for 4 Gold stored on this card. This is the maximum this card could store.	8
11 x 1 point, for keeping 11 Keys	11
The player's score is the sum of all the previous rows	Σ 75

GAME TURN

1. **Spend a Key** *(optional)*
2. **Buy a card** *(mandatory)*
3. **Apply the card's ability** *(mandatory)*
4. **Move the Messenger pawn and fill the display for both locations** *(mandatory)*



SHIELD DISTRIBUTION

CASTLE	14	12	11	8	7	0
VILLAGE	1	5	6	10	11	20
Σ	15	17	17	18	18	20



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