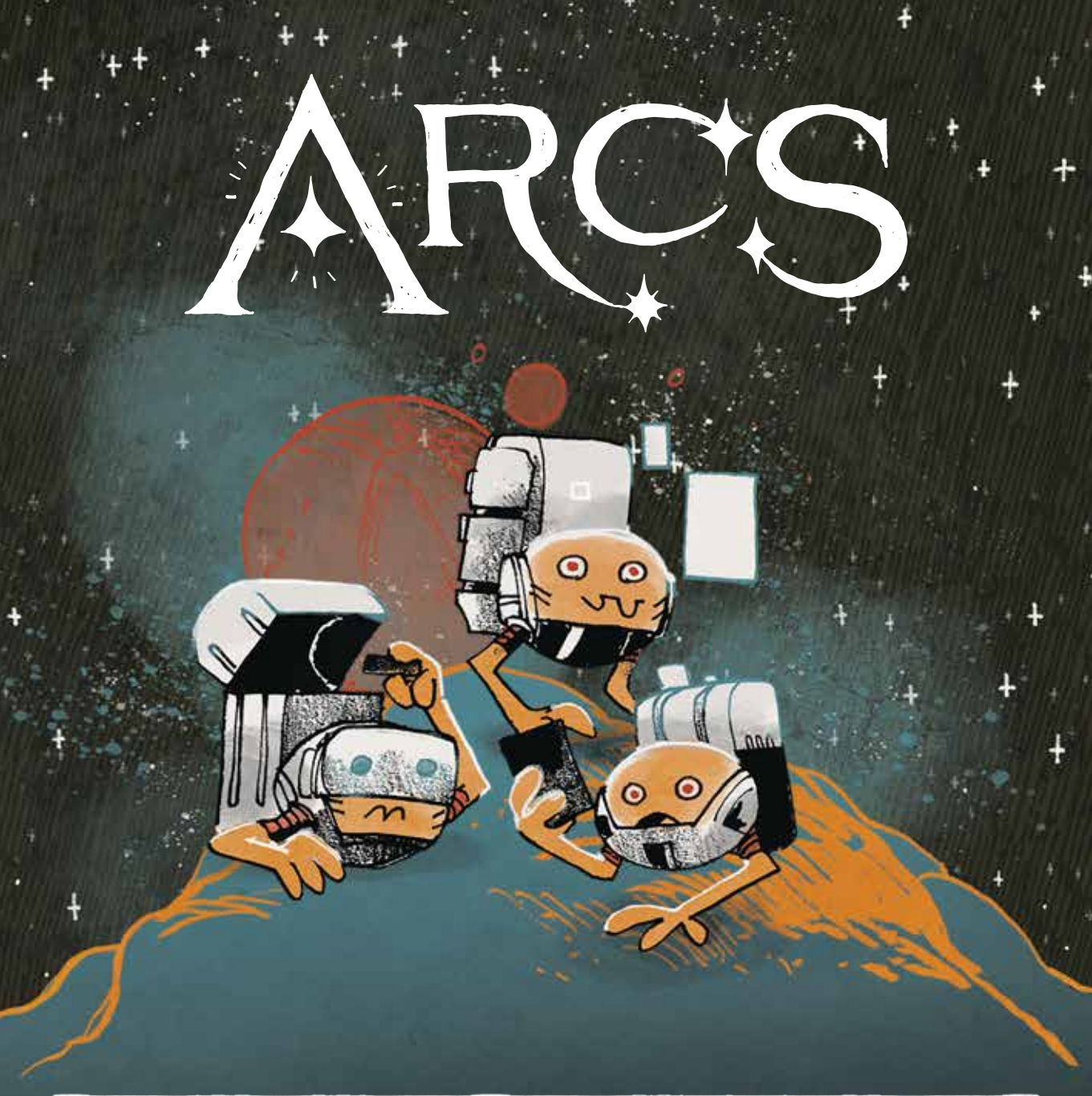
ARCS



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April 11, 2024

Introduction

In *Arcs*, you lead a spacefaring society through an epic saga, as you try to survive in the harsh and dangerous Reach at the galaxy's edge. A game of *Arcs* lasts until someone has enough **Power**—essentially points. In games with 4 players, someone needs to have at least **27 Power**. With 3 players, **30 Power**. With 2 players, **33 Power**. When the game ends, the player with the most Power wins.

You gain Power by completing **ambitions**, which are objectives that you declare in play. These are scored at the end of the **chapter**, when everyone runs out of action cards. The game lasts a varying number of chapters, usually three to five.

Your first game of *Arcs* will take about 45 minutes per player. After you play a few times, a game should take about 30 minutes per player.

If you want to learn Arcs by watching a video, you'll find a link on the back cover of this rulebook!

What's in the Box

Map



The map of the Reach is where the action happens. You can move your ships around it, battle Rivals for control over its systems, and tax resources from the cities you build on its planets.

Player Pieces

Each player has the following pieces. The box contains pieces for 4 players.



PLAYER BOARD

This board holds resources, your unbuilt cities, and Rival pieces you take as Trophies and Captives.



STARPORTS (5)

Starports are built on planets and are used to build ships.



CITIES (5)

Cities are built on planets and can be taxed to gain resource tokens onto your player board.



SHIPS (15)

Ships can move around the map and engage in battles.



AGENTS (10)

Agents are placed on cards in the Court, a card row next to the map. Once you have the most agents on a card in the Court, you can take it.



POWER MARKER (2)

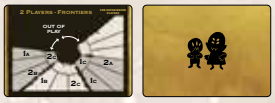
This marker tracks your current Power on the bottom map edge. The second marker is used in expansions to track negative Power and very high Power.

Cards



ACTION (28)

These cards are played to take actions and declare ambitions. With 2 or 3 players, you don't use the "1" and "7" action cards.



SETUP (12)

(4 each for 2–4 players)

One of these cards is used in setup to place players' starting pieces and cover parts of the map.



LEADER (8)

These cards give special powers and show a player's starting pieces and resources. They are used in Leaders & Lore mode (page 21).



GUILD (25)

These cards represent the support of guildmasters and task forces. They are gained from the Court, often give new actions, and can be stolen.



VOX (6)

These cards represent incidents in the Reach that you can turn to your own ends. They are gained from the Court and resolve immediately.



LORE (14)

These cards represent long-lost technologies and the intangible qualities of leadership, charm, and rank. They are used in Leaders & Lore mode (page 21).

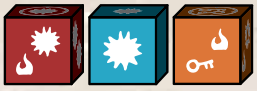
Other Pieces



RESOURCE TOKENS (25)

(5 each of Material, Fuel, Weapons, Relics, Psionic)

Resources represent both assets and the people skilled in using them. They add to ambitions and can be spent for special actions.



BATTLE DICE (18)

(6 each of Assault, Skirmish, Raid)

These dice are used to resolve battle.



CHAPTER MARKER

This marker tracks the current chapter of the game on the map.



AMBITION MARKERS (3)

These markers show which ambitions are currently declared. They start on their blue side with lower numbers.



ZERO MARKER

This marker covers the card number of the lead card, making it 0, when an ambition is declared.



INITIATIVE MARKER

This marker shows which player will take the first turn of a round.



PATH MARKERS (4)

(2 each of long and short)

These are added to the map during setup. They cover gates, making them out of play and connecting the gates of neighboring clusters.



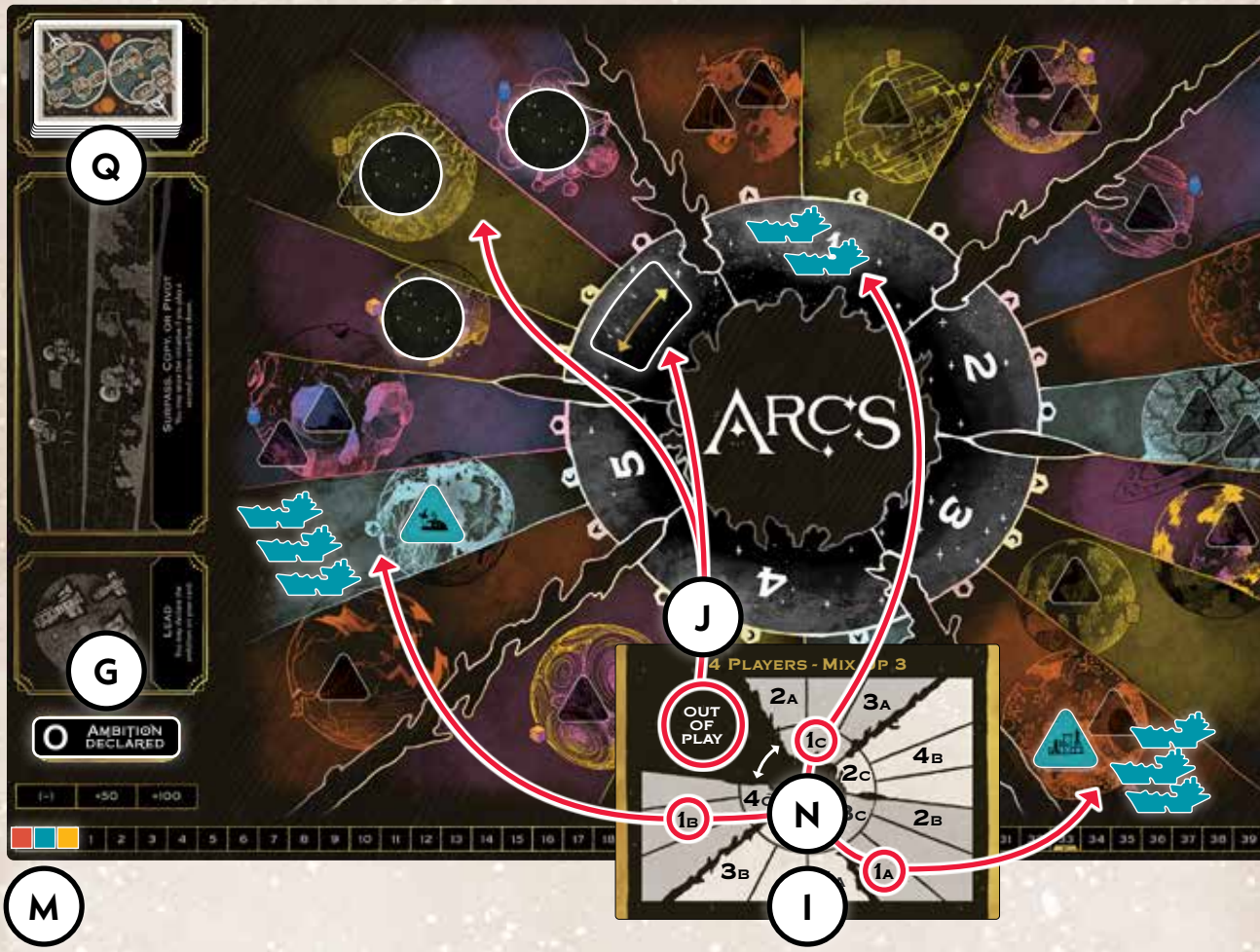
OUT-OF-PLAY MARKERS (6)

These are added to the map during setup. They cover planets, making them out of play for the game.



AID SHEETS (4)

These sheets summarize how to play and what actions you can take.



Setup

1. Set Up Table

A. Place the **map** and collect the **18 battle dice** and **25 resource tokens**.

B. Give the **initiative marker** to a random player.

C. Shuffle the **20 action cards** marked "2" through "6" to start the action deck.

D. ***4 Players Only:*** Shuffle the **8 action cards marked "1" and "7"** into the action deck. *(Otherwise, return them to the box.)*

E. Place the **3 ambition markers** on their blue, lower-numbered sides in the Available Markers section of the map.

F. Place the **chapter marker** on the "1" space of the Chapter track on the map.

G. Place the **zero marker** in the Ambition Declared slot on the map.

H. Shuffle **all 6 Vox and 25 Guild cards** to make the **Court deck**. Draw 3 cards (2 players) or 4 cards (3–4 players) from this deck to make a face-up **Court row**.

I. Shuffle the **setup cards** that list your number of players. Draw 1 setup card.

J. In the 2 clusters (2–3 players) or 1 cluster (4 players) on the map marked Out of Play on the setup card, place a **path marker** over its numbered gate and place 3 **out-of-play markers** over the planets touching that gate.

K. ***2 Players Only:*** Place the **6 resource tokens** matching the 6 planets covered by out-of-play markers onto the ambition boxes:

- Material and Fuel go on Tycoon.
- Weapons go on Warlord.
- Relics go on Keeper.
- Psionics go on Empath.



2. Set Up Players

L. Each player chooses a color, collects the matching **player board**, **5 cities**, **5 starports**, **15 ships**, and **10 agents**, and places the cities in the triangle slots along the top of their player board.

M. Each player puts their **Power marker** on the "0" Power track space on the map.

N. Players simultaneously place their **starting pieces** onto the map as follows. The player with the initiative marker does this:

- Place **3 ships and 1 city** in the system marked **1A** on the setup card. Place the leftmost city from your player board.
- Place **3 ships and 1 starport** in the system marked **1B**.
- Place **2 ships** in the system (3–4 players) or 2 systems (2 players) marked **1C**.

Going clockwise from the player with initiative, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th players set up in the same way in the systems marked **2A–C, 3A–C, and 4A–C** on the setup card, respectively.

O. Each player gains the **2 resource tokens** matching the planet icons in their A and B systems, putting them in the leftmost and next leftmost circle slots on their player board, respectively.

P. Each player draws **6 action cards** into their hand. ***2 Players Only:*** The player without initiative may discard all 6 action cards in their hand and draw 6 new ones.

Q. Discard all **action cards** not in players' hands into a facedown action discard pile on the map.

Core Concepts

The Arc of Play

In a game of *Arcs*, you play through a number of **chapters**, usually three to five. Each chapter is made up of several **rounds**.

Broadly, in a round, each player will take one **turn** by playing an action card to do various actions, starting with the player who has initiative. After everyone takes a turn, players check who gets initiative for the next round. You'll learn more in **Playing a Chapter** (page 8)!

Keep playing rounds until everyone runs out of action cards in their hand. At this point, the chapter ends, players gain Power from ambitions they fulfilled, and everyone draws a new hand of cards. You'll learn more in **Ending a Chapter** (page 18)!

Power & Ambitions

Players gain Power by fulfilling **ambitions**. The player with the initiative marker may choose to declare the ambition shown on the action card they play on their turn, marking the matching ambition box on the right map edge.

At the end of the chapter, players gain Power from declared ambitions that they fulfilled best. It doesn't matter whether another player declared an ambition—anyone can fulfill it.

The Map

The map is made of 6 **clusters**. Each cluster has 4 **systems**: 3 **planets** and 1 **gate**, which lists the cluster number.

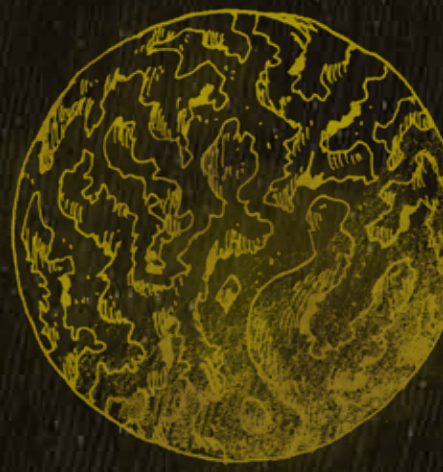
A system is **adjacent** to other systems sharing a thin border. Adjacency is most important when moving (page 13).

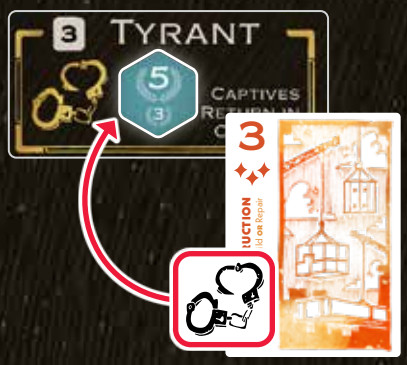
- Each gate is adjacent to the 3 planets in its cluster and to the gates of its 2 neighboring clusters.
- Each planet is adjacent to the gate in its cluster, and it is adjacent to one or both neighboring planets. Planets separated by a thick, irregular border are not adjacent.

The center of the map with the *Arcs* logo is not in play.

In setup, 1 or 2 clusters are covered with **out-of-play markers** on its planets and a **path marker** on its gate. These clusters are out of play in every way. The path marker joins together the gates of the two neighboring clusters, allowing for movement between them in a single move.

Each **planet** has a **planet type**, along with 1 or 2 **building slots** where you can build cities and starports. *(Each planet also has an **ID symbol** of ▲, ⬢, or ☾, used in expansions.)*





Declaring Ambition



Cluster 4



Planet Types



Building Slot



Resources



Opening Resource Slots



Influencing the Court



Tip Ship or Flip Building to Damage



Red Has Control



Taking a Trophy



Resources & Cities

There are 5 types of **resources** matching the 5 planet types. Usually, you gain them by taxing cities (page 12) and raiding Rivals in battle (page 16).

Resources can be spent for various actions (page 17), and some of them add to the **Tycoon**, **Keeper**, and **Empath** ambitions (page 18).

You hold resource tokens in the **resource slots** on your player board. As you build **cities**, you open resource slots and uncover Power bonuses for winning ambitions.

Agents & The Court

Your agents are the bureaucrats and diplomats that administer your cities and influence powerful interests in the Reach.

Through play, you can place agents on cards in the **Court**, a row of cards along the edge of the map (**Influence**, page 13). If you have the most agents on a card in the Court, you can take it (**Secure**, page 13).

Damage & Control

Pieces start off **fresh**—ships are fresh when standing upright, and buildings are fresh on their fully colored side.

By battling, fresh pieces can become **damaged**, shown by flipping or tipping it over. If a damaged piece is damaged again, it is **destroyed**, removing it from the map.

You **control** a system and its contents if you have ***more fresh ships*** there than each **Rival** (*other player*). On a tie, no one controls the system.

Controlling a system lets you tax Rival cities there and capture their agents, restricts how their ships move, and damages pieces they build (pages 12–13).

Trophies & Captives

If you **destroy** a Rival's pieces, put them in the **Trophies box** on your player board. Trophies add to the **Warlord** ambition. Actions such as Battle (page 14) let you destroy Rival pieces.

If you **capture** a Rival's agents, put them in the **Captives box** on your player board. Captives add to the **Tyrant** ambition. Actions such as Tax (page 12) and Secure (page 13) let you capture Rival agents.

Playing a Chapter

A game of *Arcs* lasts up to 5 **chapters**. In each chapter, you play some number of **rounds**. In a round, each player takes one **turn**, starting with the player with the initiative marker.

Broadly, on your turn, you must play 1 **action card**, which lets you take one or more actions.

At the end of the round, the initiative marker might go to a new player based on which cards were played.

Keep playing rounds until everyone runs out of action cards. At this point, the chapter ends (page 18).

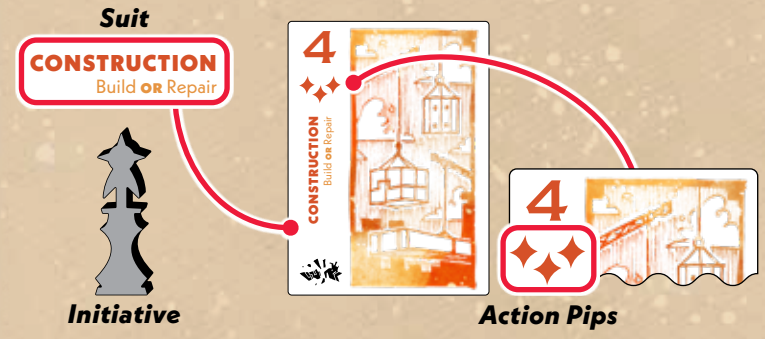
Step 1: Player with Initiative Takes Turn

As the player with initiative, you must play one action card face up as the **lead card**. You may take one action (pages 12–16) for each **action pip** on the lead card based on its suit:

- **Administration** pips can **tax**, **repair**, or **influence**.
- **Aggression** pips can **battle**, **move**, or **secure**.
- **Construction** pips can **build** or **repair**.
- **Mobilization** pips can **move** or **influence**.

Place the card in the "Lead" card slot on the left map edge, so players can reference it during the round.





Mikah has the initiative, so she plays the lead card. She plays a Construction card, which lets her build or repair.

This card has 3 action pips. She spends one to build, one to repair, and chooses not to take a third action.

Passing Initiative

If you have the initiative, but you have no cards in your hand or just choose to skip your turn, you must **pass the initiative**.

When you pass the initiative, give the initiative marker to the next clockwise player who has any cards in their hand, then immediately end the round. The player who now has initiative will play the lead card of the new round.

If everyone with cards in their hand passes consecutively, discard all action cards and end the chapter (page 18).

Declaring an Ambition

If you have the initiative, you may **declare the ambition** shown on your lead card before taking ***any*** actions:

- The "1" cards have ***no*** ambition. *(Four players only.)*
- The "2" through 6" cards let you declare the ***matching*** ambition. *(They are listed on page 18.)*
- The "7" cards let you declare ***any*** ambition. *(Four players only.)*

Take the highest-number ambition marker from the Available Markers section on the right map edge, and place it in the ambition box of the declared ambition.

Place the zero marker onto the lead card to cover the **card number** in its top-left corner—its card number is now 0.

You cannot declare an ambition if all ambitions markers are already placed.

You can even declare an ambition that was declared in an earlier round! Just place another ambition marker in its box.

You cannot declare an ambition multiple times using the same card.

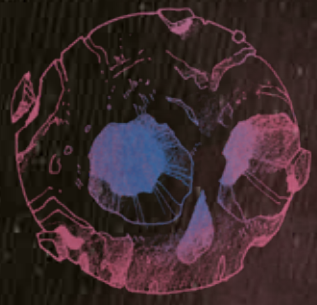
Declaring does not change your card's number of action pips.

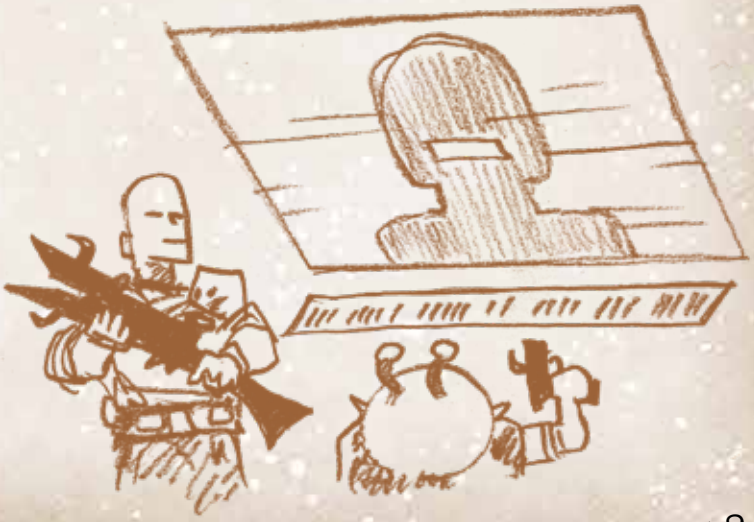
Before taking her actions, Mikah declares the Warlord ambition on her card.

She places the available ambition marker worth the most Power into the Warlord ambition box on the map.

Then she covers the card number on her card with the zero marker, setting it to 0. She still gets 3 action pips!







Step 2: Other Players Take Turns

After the player with initiative takes their turn, each other player in clockwise order takes a turn. Players with no cards in their hand skip their turn.

On your turn, you must play an action card in one of three ways:

- **Surpass:** Play an action card face up of the lead card's suit. Its card number must be higher than the lead card. You may take actions up to the number of action pips on ***your card***.
- **Copy:** Play any action card face down. You may take only one action of ***the lead card***.
- **Pivot:** Play an action card face up that is not of the lead card's suit. It can have any card number. You may take only one action on ***your card***.

Place the card in the "Surpass, Copy, or Pivot" card slot on the left map edge, so players can reference it during the round.

Surpassing *only needs a card higher than the lead card, not all played cards!*

Pivoting *does not change the lead suit.*

Pivot - 1 Action!



Surpass - 2 Actions!



After Mikah played her Construction card to lead the round, Dane takes his turn. He plays an Aggression card to Pivot and chooses to move.

Lotus takes the next turn by playing a "5" Construction card. It matches the lead suit of Construction and its card number is higher than "0," so they Surpass and build twice.

Seizing the Initiative

When you play a card, before taking ***any*** actions, you can **seize the initiative** marker from the player who holds it. There are two ways to do this:

- **You may choose to play an extra action card.** Place it face down beside the card you played as a reminder. You ***do not*** get actions for it.
- **You Surpass with a "7" action card.** You still get to take its actions. *(Only four-player games have "7" cards.)*

Take the initiative marker and lay it down to show it is seized. For the rest of this round, players cannot seize the initiative.

The player with initiative cannot seize the initiative.



To Surpass, you must match the lead suit!

If the initiative is seized, you can still Surpass with a "7" card—you just won't seize the initiative.

Step 3: Check Initiative

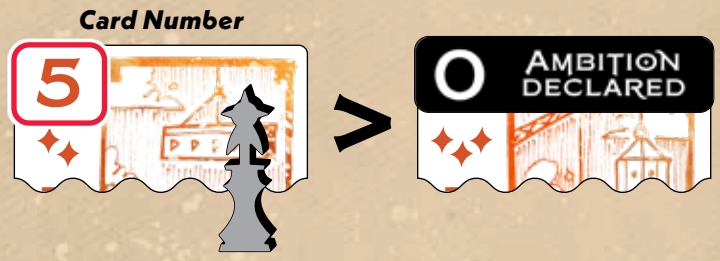
After everyone has taken a turn, check whether the initiative marker goes to a new player.

If no one seized the initiative this round, give the initiative to the player who ***Surpassed with the highest card number***. If no one Surpassed, the initiative stays with its holder.

If someone seized the initiative this round, that player keeps the initiative.

Lotus played the highest Construction card to Surpass this round.

Nobody seized the initiative, so Lotus takes the initiative marker.



Step 4: Discard Cards & Check for New Round

Discard all played action cards, and any action card used to seize the initiative, into the action discard pile on the map ***face down***.

If any players have any action cards left in their hand, start the next round. Otherwise, end the chapter (page 18).



Standard Actions

Tax (administration)

Choose a Loyal city or choose a Rival city you control.

Gain 1 resource of the city's planet type from the supply.

If you tax a Rival city, you also capture 1 agent of that Rival from their supply, even if you didn't gain the resource.

Tax Limit: You cannot tax a city more than once per turn.

Captives: Place captured agents in the Captives box on your player board. They add to your **Tyrant** ambition (page 18).

Loyal *pieces are your color.*

Rival *pieces are other players' colors.*

Control *means you have the most fresh ships in the system.*

Resources you gain go in empty resource slots on your player board—see **Resources** *(page 17).*



Mikah taxes twice—one Material city of her own and one of Dane's Psionic cities, which she controls.

She gains 1 Material and 1 Psionic. Because she taxed Dane's city, she places 1 agent from Dane's supply into her Captives box.

Build (construction)

You may build a **building** or a **ship**:

- **Building:** Place 1 starport or city in an empty building slot in a system with a Loyal piece. When building a city, use the leftmost city on your player board.
- **Ship:** Place 1 ship at a Loyal starport. Each starport can only build one ship per turn.

When you build anything in a system that is controlled by anyone other than you, place the piece damaged.

Damaged *ships are tipped over, and damaged buildings are flipped to their darker side.*



Dane builds twice. First, he builds a starport at a planet where he has a ship.

Then he builds a ship. He can place the ship at any of his starports, so he places it at the starport he just built.

Move (Mobilization & Aggression)

Move any number of Loyal ships from one system to an adjacent system.

If you move from a system with a Loyal starport, you may take **Catapult moves**—keep moving the ships as much as you want, dropping them off as you want, until they move to a gate controlled by anyone else ***or they move to any planet***.

Out-of-Play Clusters: You cannot move into any systems in out-of-play clusters. The path marker placed on out-of-play gates makes its two neighboring gates adjacent.

*A **system** can be a gate or a planet (page 6).*

*Systems sharing a single thin border are **adjacent**.*

*When you take a **Catapult move**, check for control before moving in, not after.*

You can't Catapult from Rival starports you control.

*Lotus moves 2 Loyal ships from a Loyal starport, so they take **Catapult moves**.*

They move from the planet into the "4" gate. Normally they would end the move here, but the Catapult lets them move more.

They move through the path to the "5" gate, but it is controlled by Mikah, so they stop moving. Lotus will have to take another Move action to keep moving.









You can't immediately use Prelude actions on the secured card (page 20).

Repair (Construction & Administration)

Stand up 1 damaged Loyal ship, or flip over 1 damaged Loyal building. *(This can be anywhere on the map!)*

Influence (Mobilization & Administration)

Place 1 agent on any card in the Court. *(The Court is the card row along the map edge.)*

Secure (Aggression)

Take 1 card from the Court if you have more Loyal agents on it than each Rival. Return all Loyal agents on it to your supply, and capture all Rival agents from the secured card.

Resolve its **When Secured** action, if any. If it says to discard it, place it in a face-up Court discard pile near the Court deck.

Finally, draw a card from the Court deck and place it face up in the Court in the same spot as the secured card.

Captives: Put agents you capture in the Captives box on your player board. They add to your **Tyrant** ambition (page 18).

Battle (Aggression)

1. **Choose Battle System:** Choose 1 system that has any Loyal ships. This is the battle system. These are your **attacking ships**.
2. **Choose Defender:** Choose 1 Rival whose pieces are in the battle system. These are their **defending pieces**.
3. **Collect Dice:** For each attacking ship, you may collect 1 assault, skirmish, or raid die.
   - **Assault dice** damage the defender quickly at some cost to you.
   - **Skirmish dice** damage the defender slowly but keep you safe.
   - **Raid dice** steal stuff from the defender and might damage them but are risky.

   Raid Dice Limit: You can only collect raid dice if there are ***defending buildings*** or if the defender has no Loyal buildings in any systems on the map.
4. **Roll and Resolve Dice:** Roll the collected dice. You must resolve all rolled faces in this order:
   1. Hit any of your ***attacking ships*** once per .
   2. If you rolled any number of , the defender **intercepts** you—hit any of your ***attacking ships*** once per fresh defending ship. *(This can only happen once per battle!)*
   3. Hit any of their ***defending ships*** once per . Once no defending ships remain, hit any of their defending buildings instead.
   4. Hit any of their ***defending buildings*** once per .
   5. Raid their ***resources and cards*** by spending , if you have any attacking ships left (**Raiding**, page 16).

If you hit a fresh piece, it becomes **damaged**—tip it over if it's a ship or flip it over if it's a building.

If you hit a damaged piece, it is **destroyed**—remove it. The attacker takes destroyed defending pieces as Trophies. The defender takes destroyed attacking pieces as Trophies.

Trophies: Place pieces taken as Trophies in the Trophies box on the respective player board. These add to the **Warlord** ambition (page 18).

»

*A **system** can be a gate or a planet (page 6).*

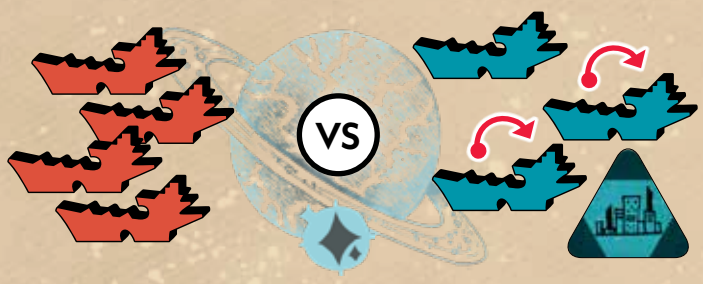


You may collect fewer dice than the maximum, and you may mix types, but you cannot collect more than 6 dice of a type.



To be clear, the attacker rolls and resolves all the dice. The defender doesn't usually make choices.

Mikah is battling Lotus at a Relic planet. Mikah has 4 fresh ships. Lotus has 1 fresh ship, 2 damaged ships, and 1 damaged city.

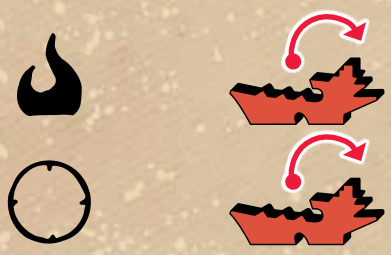


Mikah can collect up to 4 dice. She collects 2 assault dice and 2 raid dice.

She rolls the dice and gets .



First, Mikah must take hits. She takes 2 hits—1 from the , and 1 from the because Lotus has 1 fresh ship. Mikah chooses to damage two of her ships instead of destroying one.



Next, Mikah deals hits.

With the , Mikah chooses to damage Lotus's last fresh ship.

With the , Mikah must damage Lotus's city, destroying it. It goes in Mikah's Trophies box.



Destroying Cities

If you destroy a city—even outside battle!—do the following:

1. **Provoke Outrage.** Discard all resources and Guild cards you have of that city's planet type, placing the discarded cards in a face-up Court discard pile near the Court deck. Place an agent to cover the Outrage icon of that city's planet type on your player board—that resource is now **Outraged** (see below).
2. **Ransack the Court.** Secure any card that has ***any number*** of the defender's agents. Take all Rival agents on the card as ***Trophies***, not Captives.

Outrage: You cannot spend Outraged resources for their normal Prelude action (page 17).

If you have no Loyal agents, use a placeholder piece until an agent becomes available.

If you already have Outrage of the city's type, perform both steps except placing the agent.

You can still tax Outraged resources and add them to your ambitions.



Because she destroyed a Relic city, Mikah discards all her Relics and Relic Guild cards, then covers her Relic icon with an agent.

Then, Mikah takes a card from the Court where Lotus has 1 agent. She takes all 3 Rival agents there into her Trophies box. Finally, she draws a card from the Court deck to refill the Court row.

Raiding

If any attacking ships remain after taking hits, you may spend 🔑 you rolled to steal resources and Guild cards from the defender, one at a time, by spending the number of 🔑 in its **raid cost**, shown above the resource slot on the player board or in the top-left corner of the Guild card (page 17).





Mikah spends her 🔑🔑 to steal 1 Material and 1 Weapon from Lotus's player board.

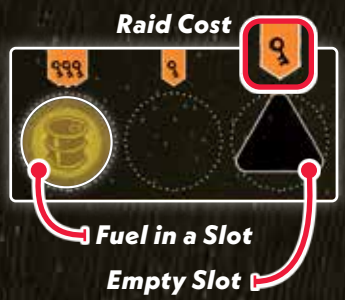
If she had rolled one more 🔑 she could have stolen the Relic instead.

Your **Prelude** *begins when you play an action card and ends when you spend any action pips from the card.*

You can't spend resources if you pass the initiative or have no cards.

For Weapons, act like you add "or Battle" to the relevant played card.

Weapons cannot turn actions from other resources into Battle actions.



You can open resource slots by building cities!



Resources

In your turn's Prelude (page 20), you may spend any number and mix of your resource tokens to optionally use their actions:

	Material: Take a Build or Repair action.
	Fuel: Take a Move action.
	Weapon: This turn, you may spend any action pips from your card play to take Battle actions.
	Relic: Take a Secure action.
	Psionic: Take an action listed on the lead card.

Resources are held in resource slots. When you take or are given a resource, place it in an empty resource slot of yours. To do this, you may rearrange any resources in your resource slots, but you must discard resources you cannot hold.

If a city returns to your player board and covers a resource slot, rearrange and discard resources as described above.

Each resource slot has a **raid cost**: the number of 🔑 that the attacker in battle must spend to steal the resource.

Some cards say they hold resources. These resources can be spent and add to ambitions, but they can be stolen only as the card describes. If a card holding resources is stolen, the resources on the card stay on it. If it is buried, discarded or scrapped, the resources on it return to the supply.

Guild Cards

You can gain Guild cards by influencing them in the Court and then securing them (page 13).

Guild cards have 3 parts: their **suit**, **rules**, and **raid cost**.

Suit: This suit icon matches 1 of the 5 resources. It adds to ambitions just like resources—Material and Fuel cards add to the Tycoon ambition, Relic cards add to the Keeper ambition, and Psionic cards add to the Empath ambition. Weapon cards do not add to any ambitions.

Rules: Guild cards give new actions and modifiers (page 20).

Raid Cost: This shows how many 🔑 an attacker must spend in battle in order to steal the card.

Ending a Chapter

The chapter ends when everyone runs out of action cards or when everyone with cards passes the initiative.

When the chapter ends, resolve the following steps.

Step 1: Score Ambitions

Score each ambition that has any number of ambition markers in its ambition box on the map:

- **Tycoon.** Have the most total Fuel and Material icons from resources and Guild cards.
- **Tyrant.** Have the most Captives on your player board *(gained from* **taxing** *and* **securing***).*
- **Warlord.** Have the most Trophies on your player board *(gained in* **battle***).*
- **Keeper.** Have the most Relic icons from resources and Guild cards.
- **Empath.** Have the most Psionic icons from resources and Guild cards.

The player who gets ***first place*** for the ambition gains the higher Power shown on all its ambition markers.

The player who gets ***second place*** for it gains the lower Power shown on all its ambition markers.

Show the Power you gained by advancing your Power marker on the Power track on the bottom edge of the map.

Ties: On a tie for first place, all tied players get second place. On a tie for second place, the tied players do not place and gain no Power.

Qualifying: You cannot gain Power from an ambition if you have none of the thing it is counting. *(For example, if Warlord is declared and nobody has Trophies, nobody gains Power.)*

Bonus City Power: Each time you get first place in an ambition *(not tied)*, gain 2 extra Power if the "+2 to won ambitions" city slot on your player board is uncovered, or gain 5 extra if both the "+2 to won ambitions" and "+3 to won ambitions" city slots on your player board are uncovered.



Tycoon Ambition Box



Trophies and Captives Boxes

First Place



Second Place or Tied for First



Bonus City Power

You can only gain bonus Power once per ambition, regardless of how many ambition markers it has.



Tycoon is worth 7 Power. Mikah has 1 Fuel and 1 Material Guild card, and Dane has 2 Material. They tie and each gain 3 Power.

Mikah could have gained 2 more Power from her +2 to Won Ambitions slot, but does not because she tied for first.





Starports *and* **ships** *return to their players' supplies.*

Cities *return to the rightmost empty city slot on their original player boards.*



Six Cards!



Two-Player Scoring

During setup with 2 players, 6 resources matching the planets with out-of-play markers are placed on the ambition boxes.

For scoring, count these resources as if a third player had them. Weapons on the Warlord box count as Trophies. Otherwise, these resources are out of play.

Step 2: Clean Up & Flip Ambition

If Warlord was scored, return all Trophies. If Tyrant was scored, return all Captives.

Return all ambition markers to the Available Markers spaces on the map.

Flip over the ambition marker with the ***lowest Power*** that hasn't been flipped yet to its side with more Power.

Step 3: End Game or Advance Chapter

The game ends if any player has at least ***27 Power*** (4 players), ***30 Power*** (3 players), or ***33 Power*** (2 players), or if the chapter marker is currently on Chapter 5.

If the game ends, the player with the most Power is the winner. On a tie, the tied player earliest in turn order is the winner.

If the game does not end, advance the chapter marker to the next space.

Step 4: Draw Cards

Shuffle all of the action cards. Each player draws a hand of ***6 action cards***.

Discard all action cards not in players' hands into the action discard pile on the map ***face down***.

The player with initiative starts the next chapter!

Two-Player Mulligans

In games with 2 players, after drawing, the player ***without*** initiative may discard their hand of 6 action cards to draw a new hand of 6 action cards. They must accept this new hand.

Other Actions

Prelude Actions

Many cards and all resources (page 17) give **Prelude actions**. On cards, these actions begin with **"Prelude:"**

Your Prelude begins once you play an action card and ends once you spend an action pip from your played card. You can take any number of Prelude actions, with two limits:

- Resources spent in Prelude return to the supply at the ***end*** of your Prelude, so you cannot regain them until then.
- You cannot use Prelude actions on cards that you secured from the Court in the same Prelude.

Some Prelude actions on cards make you discard the card. Place it in a face-up Court discard pile near the Court deck.

New Actions

Cards can give you a **new action** followed by the name of a standard action in parentheses, such as **Assassinate (Battle)**.

When you would take the standard action by spending an action pip or a non-Outraged resource, you may instead take the new action.

Modifiers

Cards can give you **modifiers** to standard actions, which are shown in **bold**, such as "In **battle**, collect 1 extra die." Modifiers do not modify new actions, but they do modify standard actions that are within new actions.

Modifiers can also affect critical play steps, such as **setup** (pages 4–5), **scoring** (Step 1, page 18), **declare an ambition** (page 9), and **seize the initiative** (page 10).





Before Prelude actions, you must choose whether or not to declare an ambition or seize the initiative.

For example, if you spend an action pip to take the Battle action, you can Assassinate instead. You can even do this if you spent a Weapon in your Prelude to allow this.

*For example, the Living Structures lore card says "***Nurture (Build):** *Tax a Loyal city." In this case,* **build** *modifiers do not modify Nurture, but* **tax** *modifiers do modify the Tax action it contains.*



Leaders & Lore



Lore Card

After playing a game or two, you're ready to play with **Leaders and Lore**! This mode gives players wild, unique abilities, but they can be hard to handle if you're starting out. ***Really, don't play your first game with Leaders and Lore.***

- Your **leader card** gives you unique powers, starting pieces, and starting resources.
- **Lore cards** give persistent powers. They don't have a guild icon or raid cost, so they do not add to ambitions and cannot be stolen.

Setup

Replace Steps N–O of setup (page 5) with the following:

Lay out **lore cards** and **leader cards** in face-up rows, each with cards equal to the ***players plus one.***

In reverse turn order—start with the player to the right of the player with initiative, and go counterclockwise—each player may take 1 leader or lore card.

Continue this until each player has 1 leader card and 1 lore card. You cannot take a leader card if you already have one, and you cannot take a lore card if you already have one.

Each player places their starting pieces onto the map in the systems marked on the setup card as shown in the ***A, B, and C boxes shown on their leader card***. Pips under a ship icon show how many ships to place.

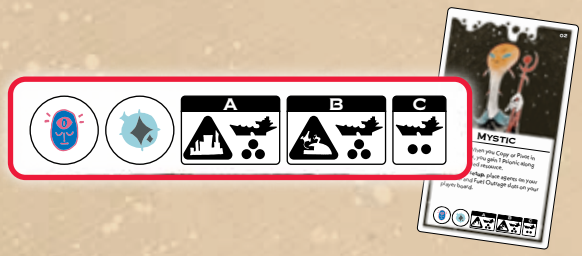
Each player gains the ***2 resource tokens shown on their leader card***, placing them in their 2 leftmost resource slots in the order shown.



Leader's Starting Resources and Pieces

The Mystic starts with a Psionic and a Relic.

They have initiative, so they place 3 ships and a city in 1A, 3 ships and a starport in 1B, and 2 ships in 1C.



Finally, if any leaders have extra setup steps, players perform them in turn order.

If you want to increase chaos and uniqueness even more, you can let players choose a second lore card. Just add 1 extra lore card per player to the starting row, and keep choosing cards until each player has 1 leader card and 2 lore cards.

You can set up with as many lore cards as you want, but you run the risk of overwhelming everyone. Be careful!

Fine Print

This section covers some technical parts of play.

Tiebreakers & Choice Order

If you have a tie and its tiebreaker is not specified, break the tie in turn order. Likewise, if players must make a decision in an unclear order, resolve it in turn order. *(Start with the player with initiative and go clockwise.)*

If multiple things happen at the same time but must be resolved in order, the player taking their turn chooses their order. If no one is taking a turn, the player with initiative chooses.

Elimination & Concession

Rarely, a player will have no starports or ships on the map. If this happens, they place 3 fresh ships in any gate at the end of their turn.

Sometimes, usually in games with 2 players, it may become clear that a player has won. Feel free to concede!

Pieces & Piece Limits

Pieces are limited by the contents of the box with one exception: if you need an agent to place on an Outrage slot but none are in your supply, use a placeholder piece until an agent enters your supply, then place the agent.

If a rule makes you **place** pieces, this refers to fresh Loyal pieces by default.

Pieces that you **place** and **return** come from and go to their original supply by default except for cities: cities come from and go to the rightmost empty city slot on their original player board. *(Remember, pieces often go to Trophies and Captives instead of back to supplies.)*

If you must **place** or **return** more pieces than possible, do the maximum possible.

If you **replace** a piece, return it and place another piece in its place. If the old piece was damaged, the new piece is placed damaged. *(Replacing a piece does not destroy it.)*

Rules Hierarchy

This rulebook supersedes the aid sheets and player boards.

Cards supersede this rulebook, but any rule that uses the term **cannot** is absolute—it cannot be superseded unless explicitly named using the term **ignore**. *(For example, "You ignore Outrage when spending Material for its Prelude action.")*

Sidebars as well as text written in italics and parentheses *(like this)* are clarifications and reminders, which are superseded by the core rules they reference.

Negotiations

Players may make deals and promises, but they are not binding. Players cannot give each other pieces unless a rule allows it.

Private Information

Players cannot show the action cards in their hand to anyone else.

Turn Etiquette

Though declaring an ambition and seizing the initiative happen before any other actions, we usually let people do them during their turn as long as new info hasn't been revealed—such as rolling dice or drawing a card—and any relevant modifiers are followed. Don't get bogged down in technicalities unless it changes the game. *Arcs* thrives when the game flows!

Split Discard Piles

Normally, all action cards are discarded face down, even ones played face up. This speeds up play but it favors players with good memory.

If you're running a tournament or want a more strategic but slower game, you can split the action discard into two piles—one for cards played face down, and one for cards played face up.

If you're prompted to draw from the action discard pile, draw from the facedown pile. In the rare circumstance that it doesn't have enough cards, shuffle the piles together first.

Glossary

Adjacent: Shares a thin border (**The Map**, page 6).

Building: Cities and starports.

Bury: Place on the bottom of the Court deck.

Capture: Place the prompted piece in the Captives box on your player board.

Chapter: The time in which players play rounds until they all run out of action cards.

Clear: Return all pieces from the prompted area.

Control: You control a system and its contents if you have more fresh ships there than each Rival. On a tie, no one controls the system.

Damaged: Not ***fresh***—a tipped ship or a building on its darker side.

Destroy: Return a fresh or damaged piece from the map. *(It often goes to a Trophies box.)*

Empty: Has no pieces in or on it.

Fresh: Not ***damaged***—an upright ship or a building on its lighter side.

Gain: Add the specified piece to your play area ***from its supply***. *(You can't gain it if its supply is empty.)*

Give: Add the specified piece to a Rival play area.

Hit: Tip over a fresh piece on the map, or remove a damaged piece from the map.

Loyal: Of your player color.

Out of Play: Cannot be interacted with.

Piece: Any component in the game.

Place: See **Pieces & Piece Limits** (page 22).

Play Area: On and around your player board. *(Most pieces go in specific parts of your play area.)*

Prelude: See **Prelude Actions** (page 20).

Replace, Return: See **Pieces & Piece Limits** (page 22).

Rival: Of another player's color. When used alone, refers to another player.

Round: The time in which each player takes a turn.

Scrap: Make ***out of play*** permanently.

Seize the Initiative: Take the initiative marker. You cannot do this if you have the initiative marker or if someone has already seized the initiative this round.

Spend: When referring to a resource, return the spent resource to its supply.

Steal: Add the specified piece to your play area ***from a Rival's play area***. *(This is distinct from **take** because some rules prevent stealing.)*

Supply: The general supply holds resources and other shared pieces, and players' supplies hold their Loyal ships and agents.

Swap: Give the prompted piece and take the prompted piece at the same time.

Take: Add the specified piece to your play area.

Turn: The time in which a player plays an action card and may take actions.

Turn Order: Starting with the player with initiative and going clockwise.

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