War!

The worlds most popular war game must be Risk (1959). Considered a complex strategy game by some, and a simple dice game by others, it is without question a successful game franchise. The game War! attempts to recreate an experience that is accessible and enjoyable by fans of Risk, while at the same time trying to fix a few of the classic game's flaws, namely: A) It usually comes down to the will of the dice and B) It really doesn't end.

At a glance:

2-4 players

30 minutes

Complexity: Medium

Components used:

- All 36 tiles (fewer in 2- or 3-player game)
- All 54 cards (fewer in 2- or 3-player game)
- All cubes (20 in one colour pr player)
- Two dice

Setup:

Sort the tiles to get 3 of each symbol face up, and the rest face down. Shuffle them around the table, and use them to build a more or less random world map. Make sure the green (symbol) tiles are evenly distributed throughout the world, and try to create several continents/regions that all have at least two entry points.

Sort the cards by background into three decks, shuffle each deck and place them face down on top of each other. The brown deck (values 4,5,6) in the bottom, then the pink (1,2,3) and finally the green (1,1,2) on top. Take the top four cards and place them face up next to the board.

For a 2-player game, remove two symbols, including cards and tiles, and also 6 brown tiles. For 3 players, remove one symbol and 3 brown tiles.

Give each player their set of units (cubes), and keep the dice ready.

The youngest player now starts selecting one brown tile as starting position, by placing one of her units on it. The other players continue in turn, placing one unit at a time. When placing subsequent units, they can not be placed on tiles directly adjacent to a tile you have already chosen. Continue until all players have placed 4 units. Then continue for two more rounds, now placing units as reinforcements on tiles you have already chosen.

Now you are ready to start playing.

Play:

Each turn has three phases.

1: Play cards (not first round)

Play up to two cards to bring in reinforcements. Place a number of units equal to the value (number) on the cards onto the board. The units must be placed on one or more tiles that you already control, and that have the same symbol as the card(s) you played. You can not place more new units onto a tile than you already have there.

Play up to one card as your combat card for this round. This card will give you an attack bonus if you perform attacks into a tile with the same symbol this round. It will also give you a defence bonus that lasts until your next turn if any other player attacks you in a tile with the same symbol.

2: Move and attack

You can perform up to two moves each turn. One move means moving one or more units from one single tile onto adjacent tiles. You can move different units in different directions.

Moving units into a tile with units of a different colour is an attack. You and the defender each roll one die. Each adds to the die roll the number of units involved in the fight, and also any attack or defence bonuses as given by the cards played. The highest total wins, roll again if there is a draw. The losing player removes one unit from the board. The attacker may now choose to continue the attack until one side has been eliminated.

3: End turn and draw cards

Take two of the face up cards and place them in your hand. You must always take one card of the lowest value available, but the other card you can choose freely. Turn up two new cards from the deck. Play passes to the player to the left.

Winner:

The game ends once the deck is depleted and all cards have been taken from the table. Then each player gets one final turn before scores are counted.

Each player first scores 1 point for each and every tile they own.

Then they score extra points for controlling several different symbols on the board. The first symbol you control gives you 1 extra point. The second type of symbol you control gives you an additional 2 points. The third symbol gives you an additional 3 points. The fourth symbol gives you an additional 4 points (now for 10 extra points in total), and so forth.

Then they score an extra 5 points for each set of three of the same symbol that they control.

The player with the highest score wins the game.

Optional rules:

Going first can be a substantial advantage in this game, which is why we suggest the classic rule that the youngest player starts. To balance this out, you can give the other players some help in the form of starting cards. Try giving player 2 a random 1-card, player 3 a random 2-card and player 4 one of each. The cards should be dealt before choosing starting positions.

Fireworks

Hanabi (Antoine Bauza, 2010), the winner of the Spiel des Jahres award in 2013, packs a great cooperative game into a small box of cards. Although the Green Box cards features no fireworks, and not the exact same sequence of numbers, you can certainly enjoy playing with your cards facing outwards and waiting for the others to tell you what you have in your hand.

At a glance:

2-5 players

20 minutes

Complexity: low

Components used:

All 54 cards

One Clock tile (wheel) and one Rocket tile (arrow).

4 red cubes and 8 blue.

Setup:

Shuffle the cards and deal 4 to each player (or 5 with 2-3 players). Leave the rest of the deck as a draw pile.

Each player picks up their cards, and without looking at them arranges them in a fan with the face of the cards outwards, so that all the other players except you can see your cards.

Place the 4 red cubes next to the Rocket tile, and the 8 blue next to the Clock tile.

Play:

On your turn, you can perform one of the following actions:

1: Play a card to the table.

Take a card from your hand, without looking at it, and place it on the table. The played card must start or continue a sequence of cards in its colour. Each colour can only have one sequence on the table, and the cards must be played in ascending order. The sequence doesn't have to be complete, so if 1, 2 and 3 have been played you can add 4, 5 or 6, but not another 1, 2 or 3. If 1, 3 and 5 have been played you can also not play 4 or 2.

If the card you played is not valid, you put it in the discard pile, and also take one red cube and place it on the Rocket tile.

Draw a new card.

2: Give a hint to another player.

Point to one or more cards in another players hand and give her a piece of information. You can state either the number or the colour on the card(s), but not both. If the player has more cards of one colour, or with the same number, you can point to all of them (e.g. "These two cards are blue" or "These three have the value 1").

After giving a hint, place one of the blue cubes onto the Clock. If there are no cubes to place onto the clock, then you can not give a hint this round.

3: Discard a card.

Take one card from your hand and place it in the discard pile. Now move one blue cube from the Clock back to the table. Draw a new card.

Game end:

The game ends when either of these conditions are met:

All the red cubes have been placed on the Rocket
All the colours have a sequence ending with a 6
The deck is empty. In this case all players get one final turn.
Now add up the values of all cards played correctly into the sequences on the table. This is your total score. Write it down and try to beat it in the next game!

The Main Battle

This adaptation of Battle Sheep (2010, Francesco Rotta) was suggested by Sveinmain from Preikestolen Gamers. Just like "Hey, that's my fish", Battle Sheep is an elegant abstract tactical game disguised as a children's game, and it is a good fit for the Green Box.

At a glance:

Players:2-4

Time: 10 min

Complexity: Low

Components used:

9 tiles pr player

9 cubes pr player

Setup:

Select the tiles you need. You might want to balance the number of each symbol available, but a completely random selection can provide a more unpredictable experience and add replay value.

Build some kind of hexagonal board with the tiles face up. A compact symmetrical board is probably best for the first game, but you can experiment to add freshness.

Give each player 9 cubes of their chosen colour and select a starting player. Starting with the last player and moving counter-clockwise the players now select a starting position where they place all their 9 cubes.

Play:

Taking turns, each player can move any number of cubes in a straight line in any direction. The cubes must move as far as they can before stopping. They can not pass over the cubes of another player. You must always leave at least one cube in the space where you are moving away from.

Winner:

The game ends when no players are able to make any more moves. Count 1 point for each space occupied by a player, and add 1 point for each set of 3 symbols the player controls. The winner is the one with the most points.

Variations:

The two-player game is rather small and short, but you can try playing with all 36 tiles and 18 cubes pr player. We recommend using two starting positions pr player, as moving 17 cubes around in the beginning can be quite difficult. 3 players can similarly use 12.
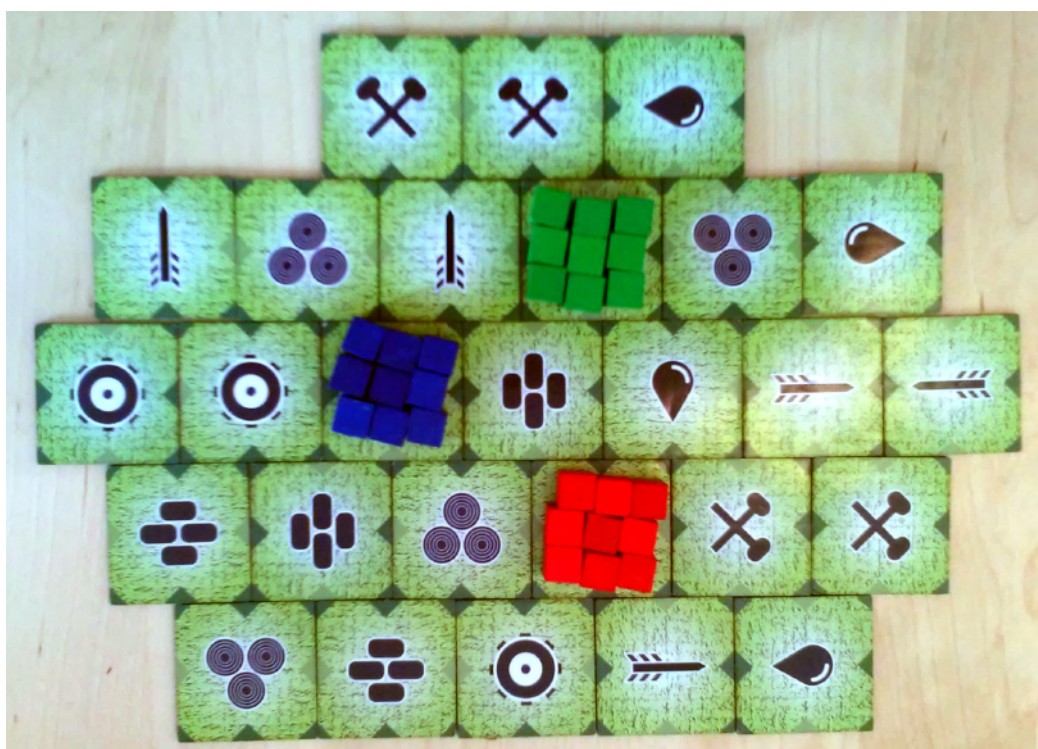
The Sutlers of Kansas

The best way to truly see how great a game really is, is by trying to recreate it. There can't be many gamers who have not seen or tried The Settlers of Catan (1995) by Klaus Teuber, loved by millions across the world. Although seasoned gamers might see it as a simple family game, there is a beauty to the simplicity and how the elements fit together to create the experience that has brought it's success.

The Sutlers of Kansas is our humble attempt at recreating the feeling of Catan, and also provides an opportunity to show off the clever way you can turn the square tiles of the Green Box into a hexagonal grid.

Quoting Wikipedia: A sutler is a civilian merchant who sells provisions to an army in the field, in camp, or in quarters. Sutlers sold wares from the back of a wagon or a temporary tent, traveling with an army or to remote military outposts.

So in this game you are trying to procure resources and materials that you can sell to the army (during the American Civil War), in order to generate a profit that you can use to expand your operation.

At a glance:

2-4 players

45 minutes

Complexity: Medium/high

Components uses:

All 36 tiles

All 54 cards

All 20 cubes pr player

Setup:

Sort the tiles into two identical groups, each containing 3 of each symbol. Shuffle one group and turn them face up to build the central fields of the board. The other group is kept face down to build the hills surrounding the board. Build the board as shown in the picture, or come up with your own design. Take care to orient each tile the same way, so that the dark border triangles are at the top and bottom of the tile, thus forming dark diamond shapes at every intersection between three different tiles.

Shuffle the cards and place them face down. Draw the top 8 cards and place them face up.

Give each player their 20 cubes.

Now each player can select two starting locations, in the same manner as in Catan: The first player places one cube, then the others continue clockwise. The last player places two, and the others their second counterclockwise back to the first player. The cubes are each to be place in the center of an unoccupied field tile (face up with symbol).

Play:

During your turn you may perform two different actions.

1: Procure goods:

From the 8 face up cards on the table you can take one single type of goods. The maximum number of cards you can take is determined by the number of cubes you have built on the board on the tiles with the corresponding symbols. Both cubes in the center (known as Houses) and on the border of the tile (known as Roads) count. So if you have no cubes on any tile of the particular type of goods you want, then you can not take it, and if you have for instance one House and two Roads on a given symbol you can take a maximum of 3 cards with that symbol. Roads bordering on two (or three) tiles with the same symbols are counted twice (or thrice).

After you have taken the cards you want, if there are less than four cards face up, you draw new cards from the deck to replenish the available goods up to a total of 8 cards.

2: Building:

In order to build, you must calculate the value the goods you have procured. Each card is worth 1, but the value increases by 1 for each additional card in a set of different goods. So if you have 3 cards with different goods, they are worth 1+2+3=6. 5 different goods are worth 1+2+3+4+5=15. Three cards of the same type is worth only 1+1+1=3. Take the sets/cards you wish to spend to build, and place them in the discard pile. Then place your new buildings/cubes on the board.

A House is a cube placed in the center of a tile, and a Road is placed on an intersection between three tiles. All cubes you place must be adjacent/connected to another of your cubes already on the board.

The cost of building is: Road – 5; House in the fields – 5; House in the hills – 10.

You do not receive change, when you for instance spend a set of three goods worth 6 to build a road.

Free action: Trade!

At any point during your turn, you can offer to trade your goods with any of the other players. There are no rules governing this trade, other than that all players must be honest in regards to which goods/cards they are giving away.
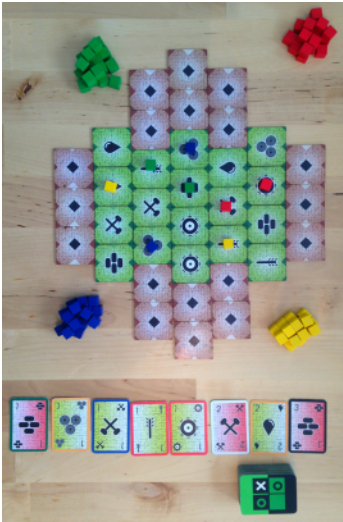
Winner:

Buildings on the board are worth victory points:
Road – 1vp;
House in the fields – 2vp;
House in the hills: 5vp.

The game ends as soon as one player has accumulated 25 vp, and this player is the winner of the game.

Suggestion: Use the scoring table on the back of the box to keep track of score during the game.

Gemstones

Gemstones is a push-your-luck game inspired by Diamant(2005)/Incan Gold(2006). The players venture into an underground cavern looking for precious gems, but the cavern can collapse at any time! The key is to get out with your loot before the roof comes down.

Components used:

All cards valued 2 and up

All cubes

Setup:

Shuffle the cards and place them in a face down draw deck. Place the cubes in a common pile on the table.

Play:

Each turn, a new card is turned up on the table. The number on the card denotes how many gemstones are to be found. Divide this by the number of players, and give each the corresponding number of cubes from the pile. Fractions that can not be divided equally are left on the card.

Now each player must decide whether to continue or flee, before the next card is turned up. Each player stick out their hand, with the thumb pointing outwards horizontally. On the count of three, each player decides whether to turn their thumb up ("I continue") or down ("I run away"). (As an alternative, players can use the back of a card hidden in their hands. Black end forward means "run", green end means "stay")

Players that run away get to collect and divide all the treasure left on the cards. They are then out of the game for the rest of the round.

Play continues until all players have left, or until three cards with identical symbols have been placed on the table. Then the cavern collapses, and any players remaining inside will lose all the treasure they collected this round.

Winner:

After 5 rounds, count the total gemstones each player has collected. The winner is the player with the most gemstones.

Hey, that's my stuff!

The game Hey! That's my Fish(2003) designed by Günter Cornett and Alvydas Jakeliunas is a challenging abstract strategy game disguised as a funny children's game about penguins collecting fish. The Green Box includes neither penguins nor fish, but there's lots of other stuff to collect.

Components used:

All 36 tiles

1-3 cubes pr player (more cubes with fewer players)

Setup:

Shuffle the tiles and build a board with a hexagonal structure. Use face up for more strategy, or face down for more chance. The board can be any shape, and doesn't have to be symmetrical, although that might ensure a more balanced game.

Select a starting player. The players, in turn, chose starting positions for their pieces on the board, starting with the player to the right of the starting player and moving counter clockwise to end with the starting player. If players have more cubes, they place one at a time in this sequence.

Play:

On your turn, you move one of your pieces in a straight line as many tiles as you want. After you move, you pick up the tile on which you started your turn, and place it in front of you.

Tiles that are removed leave blank spaces in the table, and no player is allowed to move across blank spaces. In this way, you can block your opponents by carefully choosing your moves.

You are also not allowed to move into or across a tile occupied by another players piece.

Keep moving in turns until no pieces are able to move any more. The players then acquire the tiles on which their pieces ended their movement, and the game is over.

The game is coming to an end, and much of the board is claimed. Can you see who will win?
The game is coming to an end, and much of the board is claimed. Yellow just moved, and it's red's turn. Can you see who will win?

Winner:

Count the tiles acquired by each player. Each tile is worth one point. Count the symbols each player has collected, and award 2 extra points for each set of 3 identical symbols a player has collected. The player with the most points win.

Son of Kark

The mother of all modern tile placing games, Carcassonne(2000) by Klaus-Jürgen Wrede, is an indisputable classic and a point of reference for gamers and game designers. The Son of Kark is an adaptation of the core mechanics of this great game to fit the tiles in the Green Box.

At a glance:

2-4 players
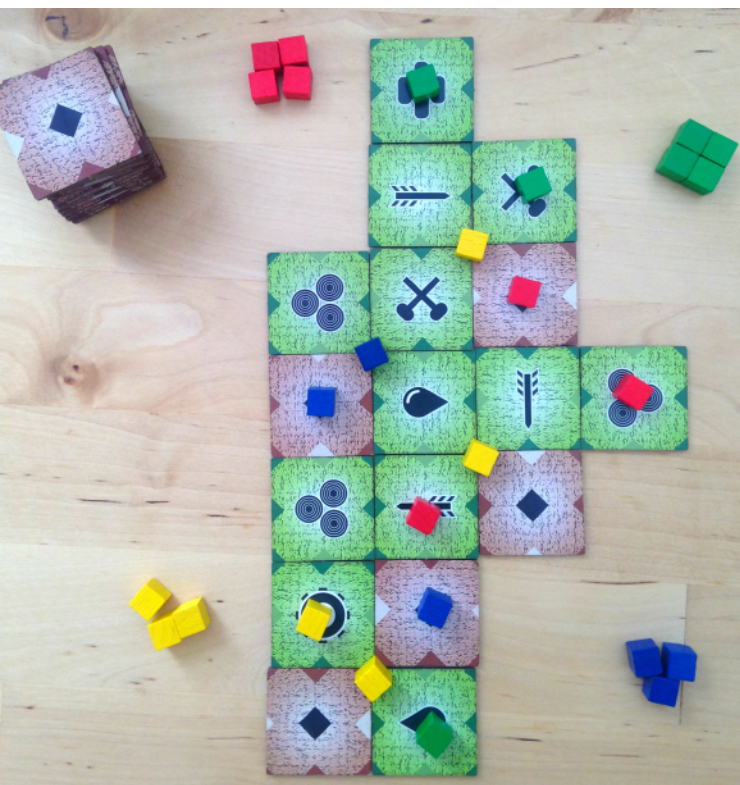
30 minutes

Complexity: Medium

Components used:

All 36 tiles

4 players: 6 cubes pr player,, 3p: 7 cubes, 2p: 10 cubes

To keep score: Scoring table or pen and paper (or you can use the cards)

Setup:

Shuffle the tiles in a face down stack. Take the top tile and place it face down on the table as the starting tile. Select a starting player randomly.

Play:

On your turn you must draw and place one tile, and you may place a token on this tile.

Placing tiles:

After looking at the symbol on the tile, you can choose whether to place the tile face up or face down. The tile must be placed adjacent to at least one other tile already on the table, so that they have one shared side. Note that you can not place a tile face down adjacent to another face down tile.

Placing a token:

You can choose to place a token either in the center of the tile, or on the intersection/border between your tile and one other tile already on the table (corners not allowed). A token in the center of a face up tile is known as a Market, and on a face down tile as a City. A token on an intersection is known as a Crossroad.

Scoring:

Your placed token may score points later in the game, depending on where it was placed

Market:
You own this symbol until someone else places a token on the same symbol. When that happens, you return your token to your stack and score one point for each of these symbols currently on the table.
City:
One point for each different symbol surrounding the tile, including diagonally. Return and score when you have 6, or when the tile is completely surrounded.
Crossroad:
Crossroads score points only at the end of the game. Each token on a crossroad has influence on all 4 adjacent tiles. For each of the symbols, and counting cities as a symbol, award 5 points to the player with the greatest total influence on that symbol across the board. If two players are tied, they get 3 points each, 3 players tied get 2 points each.

Winner:

Play continues until all tiles have been placed. Now all tokens on the board are scored according to the rules above. After scoring Markets and Cities, remove these tokens to make it easier to calculate the Crossroads.

The winner is the player with the most points.

Tunnel Run

This game is heavily inspired by the great game Cartagena (2000), developed by Leo Colovini. We fully recommend getting a copy of the game for the full pirate experience, but you can also mimic some of the game mechanics using the Green Box.

One really cool thing about Cartagena is that although it's labelled as an 8+ game that provides sophisticated strategic choices to all ages, you can easily reduce the rules and complexity to play with younger kids. All the way down to the most basic: Draw one card, find the right symbol on the board and move your piece forward to that symbol. This plays right into the flexibility of the Green Box as well, where we encourage players to come up with their own games and variations.

Here are suggested rules for a variant that can be played with preschoolers:
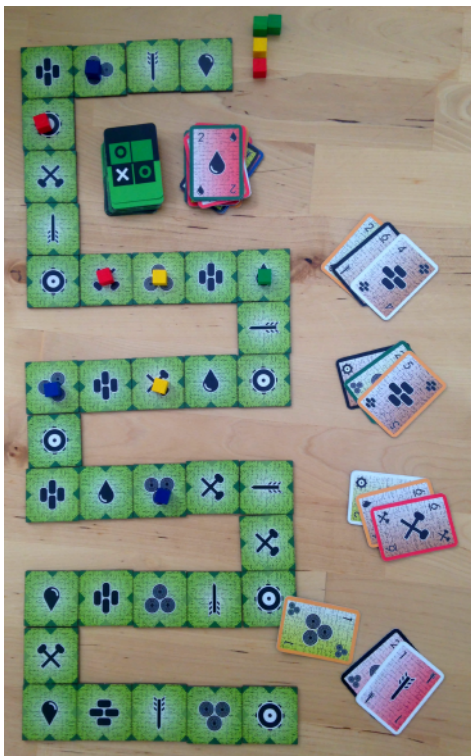
At a glance:

2-4 players

15 minutes

Complexity: Low

Components used:

All 36 symbol tiles
All cards
3 colored cubes
pr player

Setup:

Sort the symbol tiles in 6 stacks, each containing all 6 different symbols. Shuffle each stack, and use them to build a "tunnel", or track. The shape can be anything you like, straght, spiral, serpentine. Place all player cubes outside one end of the tunnel. Shuffle the cards and deal 2 cards to each player.

Play:

Somebody starts. On your turn, you play one card from your hand. Take one of your pieces and move it forward towards the end of the tunnel. Stop when you reach a tile with the same symbol as the card you played. If this tile is occupied by another cube, keep moving until you reach the next. If you reach the end without coming across an available tile, place your piece outside the tunnel. This piece has completed the track and exited the tunnel.

When you have played one card and completed your move, draw a new card from the deck. Then it's the next players turn.

Winner:

The winner is the first player to get all her or his pieces to the exit.

Variations:

Try different numbers of cards and pieces pr player to adjust the level of complexity.

Advanced rules:

In the original game of Cartagena, the movement rules are a bit more complex. Each player plays with six pieces. You play a card to move forward as described above, but you do not draw new cards every turn. In order to draw new cards, you must move one of your pieces backwards until you reach an occupied tile. If this tile has one other piece on it, you draw one card, if it has two pieces, you draw two cards. If it has three pieces you must continue backwards to the next occupied tile. In addition, on your turn you can do a total of three movement actions (forwards or backwards) before play passes to the next person. Check out BoardGameGeek for the full official rules with more variations.

Skyline

Andreas Seyfarths classic game Manhattan (1994) is a clean game concept combining the "area control" mechanic with the joy of building skyscrapers. While the skyline you can build with the Green Box is not half as impressive as the original, you can still recreate the basic experience, and maybe add a few twists of your own?

At a glance:

2-4 players

20 miuntes

Complexity: low

Components used:

All 36 tiles (for 4 players)

20 cubes pr player

All 54 cards

Setup:

Sort the tiles in stacks with 6 different symbols in each, and use them to create 6 "cities". With fewer than 4 players you probably want fewer than 6 cities, and/or fewer than 6 tiles in each city.

Each player gets 20 cubes of one color.

Shuffle the cards, deal 3 to each player and leave the rest in a draw pile.

Play:

On your turn, you play one card from your hand allowing you to build on a tile with the corresponding symbol. To build, place one or more of your cubes on the chosen tile, and stack your cubes on top of each other if you think it looks cool.

You can build on any tile with the same symbol as the card you played, and you can place any number of cubes that you wish.

Winner:

When all cubes have been placed, check to see who has control over the different tiles and cities. "Control" means you have more cubes than anyone else.

Score 1 point for each tile you control, plus 2 points for each city you control. The winner is the player with the most points.

Variations:

To make the game more similar to the original, intro-duce scoring in the middle of the game, say after everyone has had 6 turns or after everyone has placed 8 cubes.

To make the game more different, and the scoring more complex, build one megacity as a 6×6 grid at the start. You score points for control over each tile, control over each column and over each row. Or try an 8×4 grid with different scoring for rows and columns.
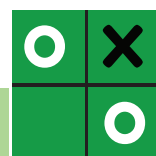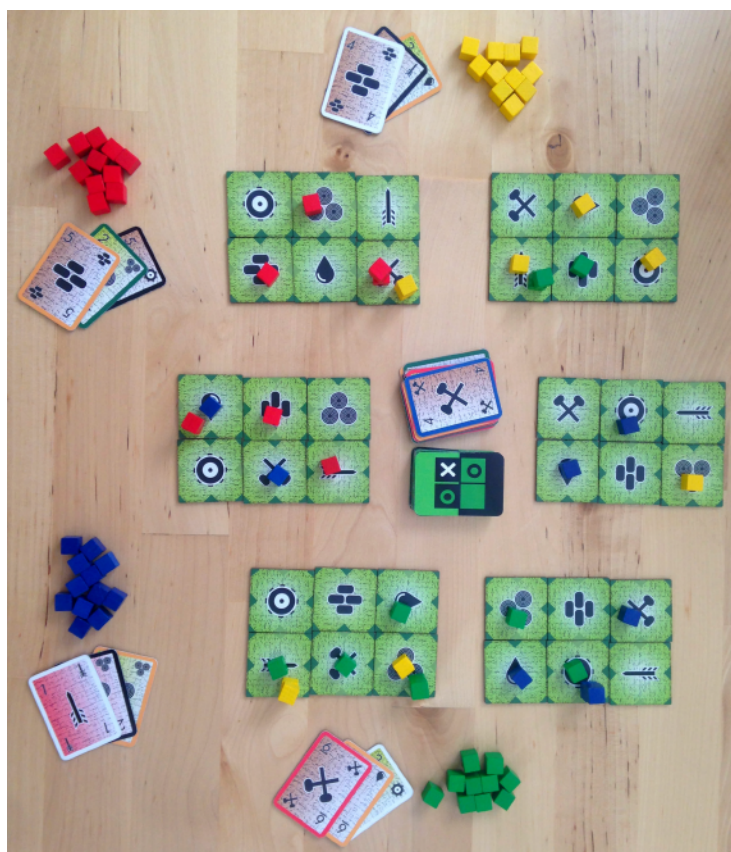
Guess What?!

In this game you get to create your own rules, and the other players have to guess what they are. It is inspired by the card game Eleusis, created in 1956.

At a glance:

3-8 players

30 minutes

Complexity: low

Components used:

All cards

All cubes

Setup:

Determine randomly who is to be the first "Professor", the other players are "Students".

Shuffle the cards and deal 5 cards to each Student. Draw one card from the deck and place it in face up in the center of the table as a starting card.

Play:

At the start of a round, the Professor secretly creates a rule deciding what is a correct sequence of cards. Examples of rules:

Always play a different colour than the previous card
Always play a higher value card…
Alternate between even and odd numbers
The colour must match the symbol of any card previously played
The students now play cards to the table in turn, creating a row of cards from the starting card. Each time a Student play a card, the professor states whether it was correct or not. If it was correct, place one cube next to the card, and give one to the Student. If it was incorrect, nothing happens.

The Student may now choose to make a guess as to what the secret rule is. If the guess is incorrect, the Student must give up one of her cubes, and play continues. The Student then draws a new card, and the player on the left continues to play.

If, however, she correctly guesses the rule, then the round is over. The cubes next to the cards are divided between the Student and the professor. Fractions go to the Student. Now the cards are reshuffled, the player to the left of the Professor becomes the new Professor, and all Students are dealt 5 new cards to start a new round.

The round will also end if 15 cards are played without anyone guessing the correct rule. In this case the cubes on the table go back to the stack. In other words, if the Professor creates a rule that is too hard tu guess, she might not score any points at all.

Winner:

The game ends when all players have been the Professor once. The player with the most cubes is the winner.

Example of play. The rule in this case is: The value of the card played must be lower than the sum of the two previously played cards.

Sloth

In thiThe classic deduction card game Sleuth (Sid Sackson, 1971) has been reimagined for the Green Box. One card is missing from the deck, and you have to interrogate the other players in order to discover which one.

At a glance:

3-8 players

30 min

Complexity: medium

Components used:

All 54 cards

All tiles

Some cues

2 Dice

Setup:

Shuffle the cards, and place one card face down in the centre of the table. This is the hidden card that the players must identify. Deal the rest of the cards amongst the players so everyone gets the same number of cards. Any cards left over are placed face up on the table.

Mix the tiles face down and give each player three random tiles. Place the rest face down in a draw pile.

Give each player one cube in each colour. Place three cubes in each colour in a draw pile.

Roll the two dice and leave them on the table. Reroll if you get a 1.

Play

Each turn you will ask one of the other players a question regarding the cards in her hand. To do this you may first reveal one of your own cards to all other players in order to be allowed to take something from the table. You can take either two cubes OR two tiles OR one cube and one tile OR one single die (without changing the face up value). You put the card back in your hand after everyone else has seen it.

Then you must spend something you have in order to ask a question.

Spending one cube allows you to ask another player how many cards of that colour she has on her hand. She must not reveal the cards, but she must answer truthfully with the correct number. If you do not have a cube of the colour you want to investigate, you may spend two cubes to ask about any colour, including black or white.

Spending a tile allows you to ask another player how many cards with that symbol she has on her hand. You may spend two tiles to ask about any symbol.

Spending a die allows you to instruct another player to pass you any and all cards she has with that number to you for inspection. Only you get to see the cards, but the other players get to know the number of cards. When you have inspected the cards, you pass them back to their owner. Reroll the die before returning it to the table, and roll again if you get a 1 (there are just too many 1s in the deck)

You will probably want to make a note of the information you receive. To aid you in this, on the website there is a pdf you can download which shows the complete deck six times on one sheet of paper.

Winner

The winner is the first player to correctly identify the hidden card selected at the start of the game.

After you have completed your turn, you may try to guess what is the hidden card. Note down the card (symbol, colour and number) on paper and then check the hidden card on the table to see if you are correct. If you are, then reveal it to the other players and declare yourself the winner. If you are not correct, quietly place the card back on the table. You are now out of the game, except that you will have to continue answering questions from the other players.
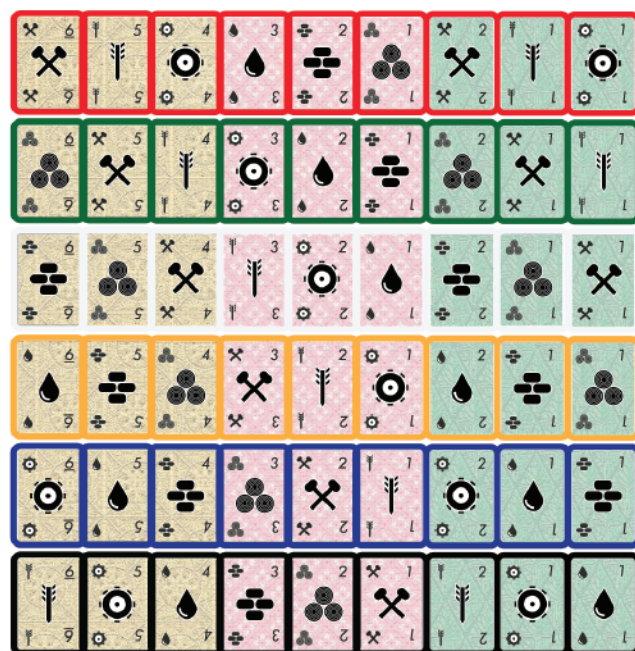
This is the complete deck of 54 cards.