

Struggle of Empires

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Overview

“Struggle of Empires” recreates the military, economic, and political rivalries of the major European powers of the eighteenth century. This was a period of almost constant warfare, often carried out in far-flung colonies.

Players will assume the leadership of one of these powers and attempt to expand their control into the neighbouring territories of Europe and the colonial territories of the Americas, Africa, and the Far East.

COMPONENTS

- 1 map board
- 1 rulebook (in English, French, and German)
- 3 double-sided player aid cards (one in each language)
- 4 six-sided dice (two white, two black)
- 5 game-state markers (black, wooden cylinders)
- 70 coins (40 copper, 30 silver)

- 168 player military counters (24 per player: 14 army, 8 navy, 2 fort)
- 161 player control counters (23 per player)
 - 65 neutral control counters (coloured and labelled by area; 3 Africa, 4 Ottoman Empire, 5 Baltic, 6 Mediterranean, 6 Central Europe, 6 N. America, 6 S. America, 6 East Indies, 7 Caribbean, 7 India, 9 German States)
- 60 unrest counters (24 valued 1, and 12 each valued 2, 3, and 5)

- 51 development tiles (including 2 neutral attack tiles and 3 military tactic tiles)
- 11 local alliance tiles
 - 9 trade tiles (7 unique, 2 duplicates)

Map Board

The map shows six colonial areas surrounding a main display of European areas. Eleven of the eighteen named areas include two or three numbers which represent available victory points and these are the areas for which you will compete. The other seven areas (with names printed in capital letters and without victory point listings) are the countries of the “major powers” from among which you and your opponents will each choose one to lead in the struggle of empires. For the remainder of these rules, references to “you” and “your” are synonymous with references to the country you are leading.

The map has a few special spatial considerations to note. In general, areas that share a land border are adjacent. The German States, however, are not adjacent to the Baltic. Furthermore, Spain is adjacent to the Mediterranean and Britain is adjacent to the German States. Also, while the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire are not adjacent, any navy in the Mediterranean occupies and supports both areas.

The map board affords various tracks and displays to record the state of the game during play. These are clearly labelled except for the “Victory Point track” which is the long track around the edge.

Concepts

CONTROL

Other than during initial set up and Phase 1: Battlegrounds, it is not possible to change the number of control counters on the map. Control is a zero-sum game, meaning that if you have achieved it, someone else has lost it. You and your opponents claim or “capture” control of the various areas by replacing foreign control counters with your own. Regardless of your military strength, you can never increase your control in an area that has no control counters for you to claim or capture.

POPULATION

You have a limited resource available in population to deploy military units and to provide you with revenue. Your revenues decline as your population is tapped for military deployment, and it's important to find the right balance between having a large, effective military and generating sufficient revenues to maintain that military.

Record your population on the Population track and never adjust beyond the indicated range (0-9).

UNREST

Unrest is the measure of discontent among your citizenry. Unrest increases when you spend gold in excess of your current holdings, or when you implement industry (a development tile), or when you lose a military unit for any reason. It's important to realize that you cannot reduce unrest other than when implementing government reform (a development tile) and that relatively high unrest will result in severe penalties at the end of the game.

Record your unrest by placing unrest counters face-down in front of you when your actions require it (you may “make change” as necessary).

GOLD AND WARTIME TAXATION

Gold is always available to you through wartime taxation. If you make a purchase, win an auction, or agree to a trade or negotiation that requires more gold than you currently have, you must (at that time and not sooner) receive gold from the bank to cover the deficit. Each wartime tax increases your unrest by one point and yields two gold (or three gold if you have implemented banking, a development tile). Your ability to do this is limited only by your tolerance for unrest.

The copper coins represent 1 gold and the silver coins represent 5 gold.

Preparation

- * Place all of the neutral control counters in a bag or container from which they can be easily drawn.
- * Arrange the development, local alliance, and trade tiles face up within clear view of all players.
- * Place a game state marker on the 1 space of both the War and Round tracks.
- * Give each player 10 gold and group the remaining coins to form the bank.
- * Randomly determine who will be the first player.
- * Each player should do the following:
 - From among the available major powers, choose a country to lead and take the sets of military and control counters in the corresponding colour. (If preferred, countries may be assigned randomly.)
 - Place a control counter near the Alliances display on the board.
 - Place a control counter on the 0 space of the Victory Point track.
 - Place a control counter on the 5 space of the Population track.
 - Draw five random neutral control counters (duplicates are acceptable). For each counter, place one of your control counters in the indicated country and remove the neutral control counter from the game. Ignore any symbols visible on the neutral control counters.
- * Randomly draw 10 neutral control counters and add them face-up to the map in their indicated areas.
- * Beginning with the first player and continuing in clockwise order, place one military unit on the map. Repeat this procedure five times. Units can be armies, navies, or forts. No unit of any type may be placed into the country of a foreign major power and no navy may be placed into the areas of the German States or Central Europe. Otherwise, any area is available.

War

The game is played in a series of three wars, each consisting of the following phases:

1. Battlegrounds
2. Diplomacy
3. Action
4. Assessment
5. Control
6. Conclusion

Each phase is explained below. At the conclusion of the third war, the game ends.

PHASE 1: BATTLEGROUND

Skip this phase in the first war.

Randomly draw 10 neutral control counters and add them face-up to the map in their indicated areas.

PHASE 2: DIPLOMACY

Divide the major powers into two alliances by completing a number of auctions equal to half the number of major powers in play, rounded up (two at a time, until all powers are in an alliance). All players participate in all auctions. Winning an auction entitles you to enforce a specific proposal concerning who becomes allied with whom.

To make a proposal, you must make a bid in gold (zero is a valid bid) and then choose any two different countries that have yet to enter an alliance and place the corresponding control counters into the “A” and “B” Proposal boxes. The “A” candidate is proposed to enter the “Top” alliance, and the “B” candidate is proposed to enter the “Bottom” alliance. (With an odd number of players, the final auction places the single remaining non-allied power into one or the other alliance following the same proposal method.)

Following your proposal, each player in clockwise order has the opportunity either to pass or to raise the bid and change the proposal. If all subsequent players pass, you win the auction – move the “A” and “B” candidates into the left-most empty boxes of the “Top” and “Bottom” alliance rows respectively, and pay your bid to the bank. If you cannot afford the bid, you must tax for the shortfall, taking unrest as usual. Losing bids are not paid.

In the first war, the first auction is started by the first player. In the second and third wars, the first auction is started by the player who took the last turn at the conclusion of the previous war. Within this phase, the privilege of starting an auction rotates one player in clockwise order with each new auction. Consider using one of the extra game state markers to indicate who started the most recent auction.

PHASE 3: ACTION

During this phase, players perform two actions along with any additional actions allowed by the tiles they possess. The order of play is according to the positioning of the control counters on the Alliances display, with the left-most “Top” alliance member going first followed by the left-most “Bottom” alliance member and continuing as labelled. When all players have taken a turn, the Round marker is advanced one space and the phase repeats until every player has taken 6 total turns (or 5 total turns when playing with 5 or more players).

The standard actions available on your turn are as follows:

- * Pass
- * Colonize/Enslave
- * Claim One Tile
- * Build One Unit
- * Move Two Units
- * Make One Attack

Action: Pass

You may choose to do nothing.

Action: Colonize/Enslave

Once per round, you may claim a control counter by either colonizing or enslaving.

To colonize, replace a neutral control counter marked “Pop” with your control counter and reduce your population by one point. You are not required to have any presence whatsoever in the area.

To enslave, replace a neutral control counter marked “Slaves” with your control counter. You must have a navy in Africa (regardless of the counter's location) at the time you perform this action, but you may thereafter move your navy out of Africa. Enslaving has no effect on your population.

Action: Claim One Tile

Once per round, you may claim a tile from those in the display and, optionally, immediately use it.

Simply claim the tile and pay its cost, if indicated, which may be a payment of gold, an increase of unrest, a reduction of population, or a combination of these costs. Gold is indicated in a red circle, unrest is indicated in a grey square, and population is either one or two population symbols similar to those on the Population track (reduce population by 1 point per symbol).

You can claim a tile and immediately use it – tile actions are in addition to the two allotted standard turn actions, meaning you can use any number of different tiles during your turn (except as noted in the appendix for specific tiles).

In general, you possess tiles until the end of the game, and your possessing them gives you a permanent and continuous privilege or ability, but there are a few exceptions:

- * Local alliance tiles must be returned to the display at the conclusion of each war.
- * Tiles marked with a solid, black triangle can be used only once per war.
- * Tiles marked with a solid, black square can be used only once per game.
- * Other exceptions for the Neutral Attack tiles “Pirates” and “Slave Revolt” and the Military Tactic tiles “Blockade!,” “Fighting Withdrawal!,” and “Surprise Attack!”

Action: Build One Unit

Reduce your population by one point, place one unit of any type into your home country, and deploy the unit to its new area. You may instead choose to redeploy a previously built fort, which means to spend another population to build and deploy it as though it were new after first destroying it and taking one point of unrest. You cannot build more units than you have counters to represent them.

You are allowed a “free” move for the new unit for its initial deployment. The move must adhere to the rules under Action: Move Two Units except that only the one new unit is moved.

Action: Move Two Units

Move any two units. The moves are treated as separate, completely independent events. The two units moved during this action must be unique, meaning you cannot attempt a second move with a single unit (i.e., after a distant sea move, explained below) – you must take a second move action to try again.

The only situation in which you may move a fort is if you are attempting its initial deployment away from your home country, including if it only ever previously attempted and failed (but survived) distant sea moves. If you move a fort in this situation, regard it as an army during its move.

The following rules apply to moving units:

- * You can always move a navy to the six colonial areas, the Baltic, and the Mediterranean, but never to Central Europe, the German States, or the Ottoman Empire. (See special note under 'Map Board'.)
- * You can move an army to a colonial area only if you first occupy the destination area with a navy (including moves between adjacent areas in the Americas – i.e., consider all six areas independently).
- * You can move an army to a European area only if the area is not the home country of a foreign major power and the area satisfies one or more of the following:
 - The area is your home country or is adjacent to your home country.
 - The area contains one or more of your control counters or is adjacent to such an area.
 - The area is occupied by your navy.

Distant Sea Move

Any move that is not entirely within Europe or entirely within the Americas (i.e., moving a unit such that it “crosses the rope” pattern on the board) is considered a dangerously distant sea move that is subject to failure. To check whether a distant sea move succeeds, roll one die of each colour. The move succeeds if the white die is greater than 1. Otherwise, the black die determines the result as follows:

- * On a roll of 1 or 2, the unit is lost (available to be rebuilt).
- * On a roll of 3 or 4, the unit returns to its point of origin.
- * On a roll of 5 or 6, the unit successfully completes its movement.

Only one check is required per unit regardless of how many rope patterns the unit crosses.

Action: Make One Attack

Select an area to execute the attack, select an opponent, pay 2 gold to the bank, call for allies, and resolve the attack. Each destroyed military unit increases its owner's unrest by one point and then immediately becomes available to be rebuilt. Do not increase unrest for losses that cannot be satisfied.

Prior to declaring the attack, you and others may discuss the combining of forces but agreements are not binding. You cannot attack the members of your alliance established during Phase 2: Diplomacy. Otherwise, in the areas where you or the members of your alliance have military units, you choose which control counter to attack (or which military to attack where units have no associated control counter). Offering gold to potential allies is acceptable, but offering them the capture of control is not – only the active player can ever capture control counters. In return, a potential ally can offer to commit any or all present navy and army units, but cannot offer to commit forts or to volunteer or sell any benefits from developments, military tactics, or local alliances.

After you have declared and paid for your attack (but before rolling any dice), you and then the defender each have the opportunity to make a formal “call for allies” to the other members of your alliances. No player can ever ally with a neutral country whether attacking or defending. Your attack is aborted at this point if neither you nor your allies can bring to battle at least one navy or army unit.

A single attack includes both a preliminary naval battle (involving only navy units) and a land battle (involving only army units and forts). The naval battle occurs only if both sides commit at least one navy unit to battle, with the attacker declaring before the defender and both indicating at that time any local alliance support. The land battle occurs if the attacker commits at least one army unit and the defender has any military or control counter present. Note that a defence is always allowed on land when control is contested even if the defender has no military units.

A victory at sea awards the “naval support” bonus to the victorious navy's associated force on land. A committed navy that faces no opponent, which is always the case when attacking a neutral country, wins the bonus even though no battle occurs. No other benefit accrues from naval battle.

A victory when attacking on land captures control and wins any spoils indicated on the counter: the number three in a circle awards you three gold from the bank, and the number one in a square awards you one victory point. A captured control counter is removed from the game if neutral, or returned to its owner otherwise. Note that control does not change unless the attacker wins on land and the defender has a control counter to capture!

A battle is won by the side having strength strictly greater than that of the opponent, regardless of which side has more units remaining after casualties. Both sides lose when strengths are equal. A neutral country calculates strength as the number on its control counter plus the difference of two dice rolled on its behalf. A major power calculates strength as follows:

- * Add 2 points for each defending fort.
- * Add 1 point for each navy or army unit.
- * Add 1 point for having naval support.
- * Add 1 point for each supporting local alliance.
- * Add 1 point for having more training (appropriate Naval or Army Training development tiles).
- * Add points equal to the difference of two dice (roll, and subtract the lesser from the higher).

After determining a winner, if any, each side takes casualties of zero, one, or two units as the result of two independent considerations. First, a casualty occurs without exception if the dice rolled for the side sum to seven. Second, a casualty occurs if the side loses the battle, with the exception that a defending fort cannot be destroyed when the attacker also loses (i.e., a tie).

You and the primary defender choose all casualties for your respective sides, subject to the following:

- * Only unit types participating in the battle can be chosen.
- * For land battles, an available army must always be chosen before a fort.
- * For the first casualty, an available primary unit must be preferred over an allied unit.
- * For the second casualty, an available allied unit must be preferred over a primary unit.

Control counters are “surrendered” to winning attackers, but are never taken as casualties.

PHASE 4: ASSESSMENT

Receive revenue in gold from the bank, pay back to the bank your maintenance costs, and then increase your population by up to 5 points.

Your revenue is equal to the size of your population plus the number of your control counters on the map. Your maintenance costs equal the total size of your military – one gold for each of your military counters on the map (you cannot avoid maintenance costs – use wartime taxation as needed).

PHASE 5: CONTROL

Evaluate the map in terms of control and record earned points on the Victory Point track.

For each area with victory point values listed, increase your victory points by the highest listed value if you have (or are tied for) the most control counters in the area. Do likewise for the second most control counters (and the third most, if a third value is listed). All tied players score equally and no awards are skipped due to ties. If you have no control counters in the area, you are not eligible for victory points. Ignore neutral control counters during this phase, including any captured by Pirates or Slaves.

PHASE 6: CONCLUSION

Skip this phase in the third war.

Refresh the game state and begin the next war.

Advance the War track marker by one space. Return the Round track marker to the 1 space. Return local alliance tiles to the display and reset any “once per war” tiles to indicate their availability. Make a note of which player took the last turn in this war (this player will start the first auction in Phase 2: Diplomacy) and remove the control counters from the Alliances display.

Game End and Victory

Reveal unrest, calculate final scores, and determine the victor.

Reveal your unrest counters. If you have unrest of 20 points or more, your country is in revolution – reduce your score to zero. Among those remaining, if you have (or are tied for) the highest unrest, you lose 7 victory points, and if you have (or are tied for) the second highest unrest, you lose 4 victory points. All tied players lose victory points equally and no penalty is skipped due to ties.

The winner is the player with the most victory points!

Appendix: Tiles

TRADE

Trade tiles are the coloured tiles without the stylized 'A' icon. Using a trade tile is a free action taken in addition to the two actions available for a round, but each may be used only once per war (as indicated by the solid, black triangle).

A trade tile awards you an income of one gold per control counter you have in an area at the time the tile is used. You may use trade tiles only in the area(s) to which they relate (listed on the player aid, but the tile colours should serve to convey the relationships) and, if given a choice, you must choose which single area provides the income. It is possible to simultaneously possess and use two identical tiles.

LOCAL ALLIANCE

These tiles are the coloured tiles showing the stylized 'A' icon. Return these tiles to the display at the conclusion of each war in Phase 6: Conclusion.

Local alliance tiles afford you one extra point of strength during combat in support of the unit type indicated, although an actual unit of the type is not strictly required to participate in the battle. The support is not considered a unit and can neither be a casualty nor initiate an attack or defence not otherwise allowed. Support is available for only one unit type per combat and only in the area(s) listed.

NEUTRAL ATTACK

The “Pirates” and “Slave Revolt” tiles must be actioned immediately when claimed and remain in play until the Pirates or Slaves suffer a defeat. The neutrals battle to capture a control counter of your choice within a colonial area (regardless of alliances). If the neutrals win, place the control counter on top of the tile and leave the tile in the area. If they later lose a battle, their opponent captures the control counter. While the neutrals have control of it, the counter is considered neutral and is ignored in Phase 4: Assessment. All battles with neutrals, whether attacking or defending, are resolved normally except that neutrals never inflict casualties and major powers cannot “call for allies” to fight them.

Pirates [1] Pirates have a strength of 1 plus the difference of two dice. Battles against them are conducted as normal naval battles except that the defender is always allowed to roll the dice.

Slave Revolt [1] Slaves have a strength of 3 plus the difference of two dice. Battles against them are conducted as normal land battles, including naval support for attackers or defenders who can win it. Also, slaves only revolt in N. America, S. America, and the Caribbean.

MILITARY TACTIC

The “Blockade!,” “Fighting Withdrawal!,” and “Surprise Attack!” tiles are returned to the display after use. These tiles cannot be used and then reclaimed by the same player in the same round.

Blockade! [1] You may choose between two uses for this tile:

- A) Increase your naval support to +2 in a land battle for which you have won naval support. You must decide before dice are rolled for the land battle.
- B) Place the tile under one of your naval units in a colonial area. No single major power outside of your alliance (determined in Phase 2: Diplomacy) can move army units into the area until it breaks the blockade by having more naval strength in that area (including local alliance support). You can later add to your naval presence in support of a blockade. Allied powers cannot combine forces either to reinforce a blockade or to break one. A blockade remains in effect until all enemy powers have broken it, or until the removal or destruction of the entire blockading force, or until the end of the war, whichever happens first.

Fighting Withdrawal! [1] As the defender, avoid all military losses in one combat (sea and land) for you and your allies, at the expense of losing the control counter. Withdrawal should be used after dice have been rolled. Do not move units out of the area.

Surprise Attack! [1] As the attacker, prevent any other major powers from combining forces with the defender (not including the defender's local alliances).

DEVELOPMENT

Development tiles are the light grey tiles (except the Neutral Attack tiles “Pirates” and “Slave Revolt”). Most of these can be kept for the entire game and have a permanent, continuous effect. Those marked with a solid, black square are usable once per game and should be removed from play when they are used. Those marked with a solid, black triangle are usable once per war and should be turned or flipped when they are used to indicate they are unavailable again during the war.

VICTORY POINTS

Industry [3] When you claim this tile, add 3 victory points to your score.

POPULATION AND UNREST

Improved Agriculture [5] Once per war as a free action, add 1 point to your population.

Government Reform [10] When you claim this tile, decrease your unrest by 2 points.

WARTIME TAXATION

Banking [2] Take 3 gold instead of 2 when you use wartime taxation. The banking benefit does not double for having both tiles.

CLAIM ONE TILE

Diplomatic Service [1] Once per war as a free action, you may take one local alliance tile. You must still pay any cost on the tile.

BUILD ONE UNIT

Pressgangs [1] Once per war as a free action, you may build one navy with no population cost.

Mercenaries [2] Once per war as a free action, you may build one army with no population cost.

Trained Natives [1] Once per war as a free action, you may build one army with no population cost. Build the unit directly in a colonial area where you have any control or military counter. No distant sea move is involved. Grant the unit a free move if you wish, checking for a distant sea move if applicable. Natives can be trained behind a blockade.

Militia [3] When you build any military unit (except with Pressgangs, Mercenaries, or Trained Natives), you may take an additional build action to build one army unit (not a navy or fort).

MOVE TWO UNITS

Logistics [3] When you perform a move action, move one additional unit. The logistics benefit increments for having multiple tiles (i.e., having all three tiles allows you three extra moves).

Navigation [2] When you make a distant sea move check, add 2 to the black die. The navigation benefit doubles to 4 for having both tiles.

MAKE ONE ATTACK

War Office [1] Once per war as a free action, you may perform one extra attack with no gold cost.

COMBAT STRENGTH

Army Training [6] During any land battle, add 1 to your force strength if you have more such tiles than your opponent. You must have an army or fort involved in the battle.

Naval Training [2] During any naval battle, add 1 to your force strength if you have more such tiles than your opponent. You must have a navy involved in the battle.

Reserves [4] Once per war as a free action, you may re-roll the dice for a battle. Both attacker and defender must re-roll and disregard any previous rolls. You or your opponent can use several tiles during a single battle. You can use reserves only if you are the primary attacker or defender.