

THE KEY

INTRODUCTION

The doorman sizes her up from head-to-toe, then speaks in code, "The elephant neighs fives times."

A few miles away, your team is listening. You quickly decode the phrase and pass the answer to the agent's hidden ear piece. She smiles then replies, "Foxes in filthy tattered yarns."

The guard nods and unlocks the door.

OVERVIEW

You and your friends take on the roles of code breakers for a secret organization known as the ██████ Initiative. During each game, you are working together to discover the key phrase or code needed to ██████. If you manage to crack the code, all players win the game together.

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SETUP

- 1 Pick Player Colors:** Each player chooses one of the four character cards and also gains the matching standee. If playing with less than four players, each player controls one character and return the unchosen cards to the game box.



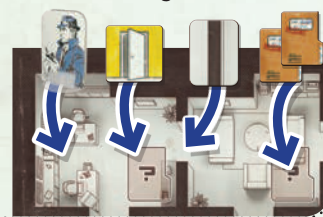
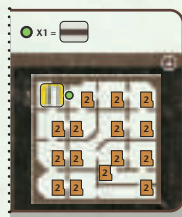
- 2 Prepare Mission and Game Board:** For your first game, you'll be using Mission 1 (the mission card with the number 1 in the upper left corner). Take the mission card and place it facedown (as shown below) **without looking at the other side**. Place the game board nearby on the side shown on this card.



- 3 Randomize Clue Tokens:** Place all of the tan clue tokens facedown on the table and randomize them. Return the other colored clue tokens to the game box for now.



- 4 Place Clues, Features, and Standees:** Place clue tokens facedown (without looking at them) on the game board as indicated on the mission card, creating a small stack of tokens in each room. Place feature tokens on the game board as indicated using the icons at the top of the card. Then, each player places their standee in the room containing the entrance feature token.



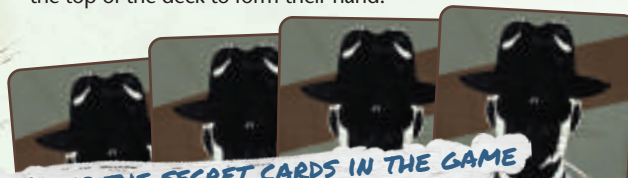
- 5 Prepare Mission Console:** Flip all plastic windows on the mission console so they are **facing down**. Then lay the console down, and without looking at the face of the mission card, insert the card into the console as shown below. Then stand up the mission console and place it by the game board.



- 6 Setup Action Cards:** Place the four (brown) action cards next to the game board. Place the "Discard Pile" card next to them with the four time (⌚) resource cards on it.



- 7 Shuffle Resource Deck and Draw:** Shuffle the remaining 36 resource cards to form the resource deck. Place it facedown within easy reach of all players. Each player draws **four** cards from the top of the deck to form their hand.



8. KEEP THE SECRET CARDS IN THE GAME BOX, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE MISSION CARDS.

YOUR CHARACTER CARDS MAY LOOK SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT.

PLAYING THE GAME

After setup, the first player that volunteers to start the game will take the first turn. If you have low-value cards in your hand, it is usually a good idea for you to go first. On your turn, follow these steps:

1. Perform **one or two** actions.
2. Refill your hand to four cards by drawing from the resource deck.

The player seated to your left takes the next turn, following the same steps. Continue resolving turns until you have won or lost the game.

PERFORMING ACTIONS

To win the game, you will need to move around the game board and collect clue tokens. Once you've collected enough clue tokens, you can try to solve the mission and win the game (explained later).

On your turn, you can perform either one or two actions. To perform an action, simply **PLAY** a resource card from your hand (faceup) onto one of the four action cards. Then **RESOLVE** that action card's ability. You must normally perform **at least one** action on your turn, even if the ability will have no effect (this is described in more detail later).

Important: You can only play a resource card if it has a value **higher than** the resource card on the top of that action card's pile. The suit (color) of the resource card has no effect, but some abilities in future missions may use suits in various ways.



A player plays a green 3 on the Regroup action card, covering up the yellow 1. They then resolve the action card's ability.

Strategy Tip: Choosing where to play resource cards is one of the most important decisions of the game. Playing a high resource card on an action makes it difficult to play other cards on that action. You will eventually need to perform a Regroup action to discard all resource cards from it. But beware, the Regroup action **cannot** discard cards from itself.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

As one of your two actions, you can use the special action on your character card. To do so, you must discard any two cards from your hand (place them faceup on top of the discard pile). Then resolve the ability on your character card.



The Special Action Icon

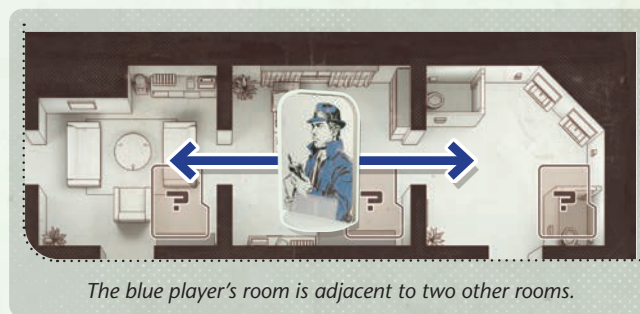
You can perform your special action twice on your turn if you wish, taking up both of your actions and requiring you to discard four cards from your hand.

COMMUNICATION

You can only look at **your own hand** of resource cards. You can discuss cards in your hand, but you **cannot** give information that reveals their exact values. For example, you can tell players that you have three high valued cards, but you **cannot** say that you have a 12.

MOVING

The Run action card lets you move up to three rooms. Each of these three moves allows you to move your character to an adjacent room (any room connected to it by a passageway as shown below).



The blue player's room is adjacent to two other rooms.

WALLS AND PASSAGEWAYS

Each room is surrounded by walls and passageways. During setup, you may be instructed to cover up some passages with wall tokens, or place passageway tokens over walls on the game board.



A Wall Token

You cannot move through walls, regardless of whether they are printed on the game board or are on wall tokens.

NEARBY

Some abilities affect **NEARBY** components. Nearby includes components **in your room** and in adjacent rooms.

REVEALING CLUES

The Intel action card is the easiest way to get information about which clue tokens are in which rooms, and it can help you determine where you want to move. It lets you reveal up to two clue tokens in **any** room, **one at a time**. Both clue tokens must be in the same room, but you do not need to be in that room.

To reveal a clue token, take the top clue token from that room's clue token stack, flip it faceup, and place it next to the stack. Whenever you reveal a glyph that does not appear on the mission card, you may remove the token from the game board (to prevent clutter).



A player reveals a clue token. If performing an Intel action, they may then reveal a second clue token in this room.

I'VE LEFT YOU SOME SURPRISES, BUT DON'T READ SECRET CARDS UNTIL INSTRUCTED.

COLLECTING CLUES

In order to solve the mission and win the game, you'll need to collect tokens from the game board. The Gather action card lets you collect up to two clue tokens from **your** room, **one at a time**.

To collect a clue token, choose any faceup clue token in your room that has a glyph (black symbol) on it. Remove the token from the game board, then flip up all windows on the mission console that match the glyph you collected.



After collecting the  token, flip up all windows that are below  icons.

Instead of collecting a faceup clue token, you can attempt to collect the facedown clue token **on top of your room's stack**. Reveal the token (flip it faceup and place it in the room). If it has a glyph, you may immediately collect it as explained above.

Some glyphs have a  or  icon below them. These icons have no effect, but may be referred to by other components.

Strategy Tip: If a glyph shows up more than once on a mission card, that glyph represents the same letter or number.

TRAPS

Some clue tokens, when revealed, are traps instead of glyphs. Each trap has a different negative effect.

Traps with a brown background stay in the room they were revealed in. Traps with a yellow background have an immediate effect when revealed and are then removed from the game board.



Security Camera: Keep this in the room. At the end of your turn, you must discard 1 card from the top of the resource deck for each security camera in your room (before you draw cards).



Gas: When revealed, each player in this room discards 1 random card from their hand (if able). They do not draw replacement cards until the end of their turn as normal. Discard this token.



Counter Intel: When revealed by an Intel action, place this token on the action card matching the brown icon. If revealed **by any other action, discard this token** instead of placing it on an action card.

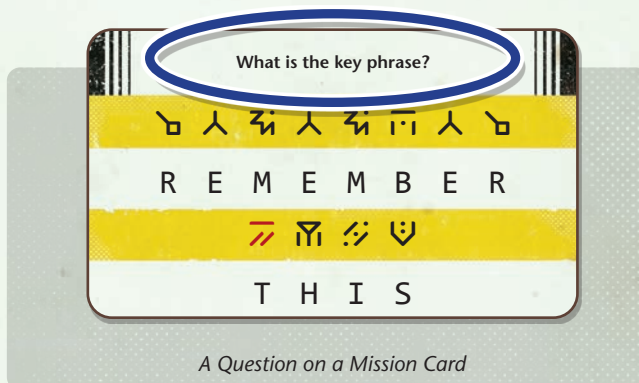
Resource cards **cannot be played on** an action card that has a counter intel token on it. This token can be discarded by the Regroup action card.

Traps are not glyphs, and they cannot be collected.

If you reveal a trap while performing an action, resolve the trap's ability (if able) and then continue resolving the action.

WINNING THE GAME

The object of the game is to answer the question asked at the top of the mission card.



A Question on a Mission Card

At any time, as a group you may agree to solve the mission. To do so, simply announce your answer aloud then remove the mission card from the mission console. If your guess was exactly correct, **you all win the game!**

If your guess was wrong, even by a single letter or number, **you all lose the game.**

WIN OR LOSE, AFTER THE GAME, CHECK THE CAMPAIGN LOG TO SEE WHAT TO DO NEXT. DO NOT REPLAY THE MISSION.

Some missions have a grey area on the face of the card labeled "Answer." For these missions, you only need to guess the information below the "Answer" area to win the game. The answer may have multiple letters or numbers behind each window.

You cannot attempt to solve the mission if one or more players do not want to solve the mission at this time.

Strategy Tips: You are encouraged to use pen and paper to take notes and help solve missions. Also, we recommend placing the mission console in front of the player currently resolving their turn so they can clearly see it.

RUNNING OUT OF CARDS

You can lose the game if you take too long to solve the mission.

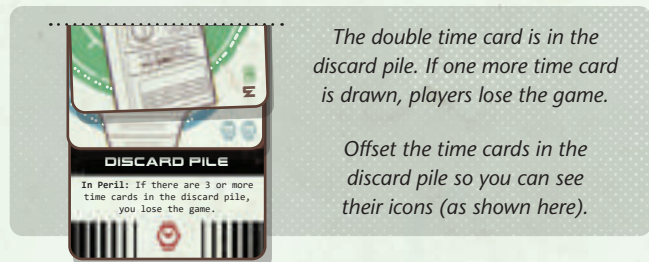
At the start of the game, the four time resource cards are placed in the discard pile instead of in the deck. When there are no cards left in the resource deck, flip the Discard Pile card to the "In Peril" side. Then shuffle all cards in the discard pile, including the four time cards, and place this pile facedown to create a new resource deck.

If this interrupted you drawing cards, create the deck and then continue drawing cards from this new deck (if you wish).

WHY ARE SOME GLYPHS RED?

Whenever you draw a time card (⌚), **you must immediately discard it**, and you may choose to draw another card. If there are ever **three** time cards in the discard pile while in peril, **you lose the game**. You do not get a chance to guess the answer to the mission if this happens.

Be aware that one card has two time icons in the corners. This card counts as two time cards instead of one (shown below).



Drawing cards at the end of your turn is normally **mandatory**, but while in peril, **this becomes optional** (even if you have 0 cards in your hand). You draw cards one at a time, and you can choose to stop at any time.

Strategy tip: While in peril, you should forgo drawing cards unless you need to, especially if there is a time card already in the discard pile. One unlucky draw could make you lose the game.

While in peril, you may be forced to pass your turn. Normally, you need to perform at least one action on your turn (either an action card or your character's special action, even if it will have no effect). However, **if you cannot perform any actions, you are forced to pass** (skip) your turn. This can happen if you have no cards in your hand, or if you only have one card and it cannot be played on any action card. After being forced to pass, draw cards if you wish, then the next player takes their turn.

*SOME RULES ARE MISSING, BUT BE PATIENT.
ALL WILL BECOME CLEAR SOON.*

TURN EXAMPLE

It is the blue player's turn. He decides to resolve an Intel action to help decide if he should move this turn.

1. There is a 4 on top of the Intel action card, so he cannot play his 1 or 3. He decides to play his 6 on top of it.
2. He resolves the Intel action card's ability, choosing a room and revealing two clue tokens in it, one at a time. He places these tokens faceup in the room. The X glyph is not on the mission card, so he removes it from the game board.
3. For his second action, he decides to try collecting the facedown clue token in his room. He plays his 1 on the Gather action card.
4. He reveals the top (and only) clue token in his room. Since this glyph (人) is on the mission card, he collects the token. He removes the token from the game board and flips up all three windows of the mission console that have a 人.

The blue player resolved both of his actions, so he draws two resource cards and ends his turn. The player to his left will resolve the next turn.

