



# The Voynich Puzzle

**RULEBOOK**



  
SALT & PEPPER  
GAMES

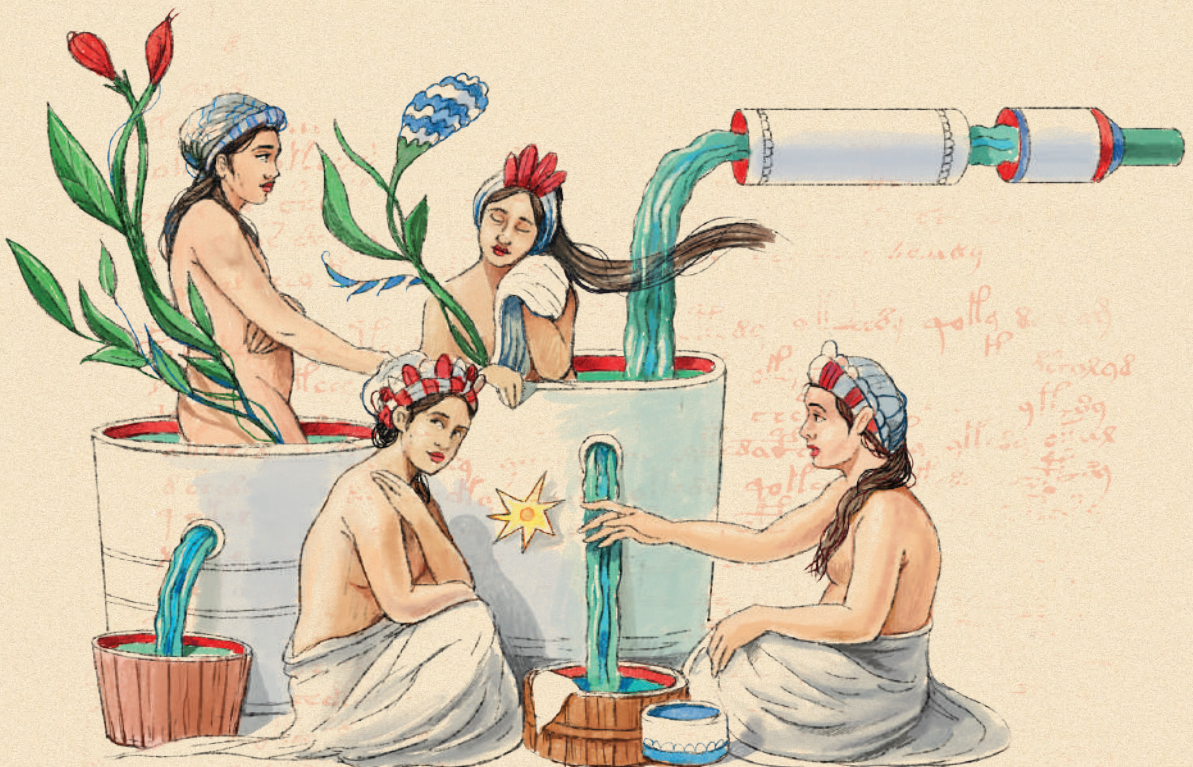
# The Voynich Puzzle

In the heart of a forgotten library, under layers of dust and centuries of neglect, lies a book that defies all logic. It is no coincidence that many believe it to be the most mysterious book in the world. Its pages are full of strange drawings, impossible plants, cosmic diagrams and women floating in mysterious liquids. But the most disconcerting part is not the images, but the writing. A language that not even the best cryptographers, linguists or dreamers have been able to decipher.

The Voynich manuscript, named in honor of the bookseller Wilfrid Voynich, who discovered it in 1912 in an old Jesuit villa near Rome, is an enigma that has defied human curiosity for over six centuries. Is it a botanic treaty from another world? A secret code of alchemists? Or perhaps a complex joke of some medieval genius?

Each theory falters before the mystery of the unknown author, the incomprehensible purpose and the unintelligible language. But one thing is certain: after exploring its pages it is difficult to look at the world in the same way again.

Now, the manuscript has fallen into your hands. A cryptic riddle full of elements that no-one has been able to assemble in a coherent manner until now. Will you be able to decipher its secrets and fit the pieces of such a mysterious puzzle together? The ink is dry, but the story is still alive... and you are about to write the next chapter.



# Components



1 double-sided board



4 books with front and back cover cards



40 Voynich cards (8 of each type)



40 Help cards



16 Water Drop tokens (4 in each color)



16 Leaf tokens (4 in each color)



16 Star tokens (4 in each color)



16 Text tokens (4 in each color)



4 Botany Knowledge markers



4 Baths Knowledge markers



4 Astrology Knowledge markers



4 Writing Knowledge markers



4 Overall Knowledge markers



24 Research tokens (6 in each color)



1 Central Puzzle piece



60 Puzzle pieces



1 Goat disc



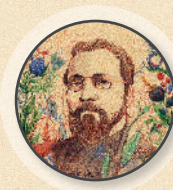
16 Neutral Player cards for 2-player games



8 Dirty Water drop tokens



16 Knowledge Sharing tokens



1 Starting Player token

# Setup



- 1 Place the **board** on the table with its multiplayer side up (*the side without the numbered yellow squares*).
- 2 Place the **Central Puzzle** piece at the center of the Puzzle area of the board, in any orientation, and place all the other **Puzzle** pieces with their letter side up, next to the board.
- 3 Place the **Goat disc** on its dedicated space on the board, with its darker section aligned with one of the 5 Astrology sectors, chosen at random.
- 4 Randomly place 7 **Dirty Water drops** on the first pool in the baths section, and 1 on the Dirty Water space under the fountain on the right.
- 5 Create a supply of **Knowledge sharing tokens** near the board.
- 6 Shuffle each of the 5 **Voynich** decks separately (**Botany, Astrology, Baths, Writing, and Recipes**), dealing 2 cards from each deck to each player. If there are less than four players, return any remaining cards to the box.
- 7 In a 2-player game, take a **Neutral Player card** of each type at random, and follow the instructions to place tokens on the board to simulate a neutral player. Also place the Puzzle pieces shown in the Puzzle area of the board. Text pieces are placed at random with their untranslated side up. In a 3-player game, do the same, but only in the Botany and Astrology sections.

# Player Setup

Randomly select a starting player who takes the **Starting Player token**. Then each player must:



Starting Player token

**8** Take a **book** and all the components of one color.

**9** Place all the cards dealt from the **Voynich decks** in the **book**, one of them on each sleeve, so that they all show their starting step at the top (the one with the least complete illustration). They must be placed in this order, starting on the first page of the book: **Botany, Astrology, Baths, Writing and Recipes**. Once finished, each double page of the book should show 2 cards from the same deck, all of them with their starting step up.



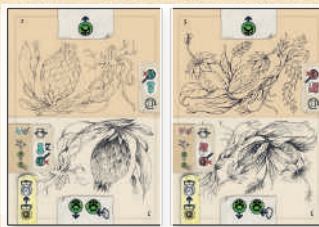
Starting step of a card



Insert the front cover card in the sleeve of the front cover.



The cover will have the first Botany card sleeved behind it.



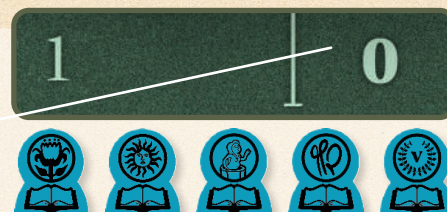
When you open the book, each spread should display two cards of the same type.



Insert the back cover card in the sleeve of the back cover.

**10** Place 1 of your **Leaves** on the Leaf starting position on the **Botany** section of the main board, and 1 of your **Research tokens** on each space of the Central Puzzle piece.

**11** Place your 5 Knowledge markers (**Botany, Astrology, Baths, Writing and Overall Knowledge**) on the '0' spot of the scoring track on the main board.



**12** Leave the remaining tokens of your color near your book, creating your supply: **Research, Leaves, Stars, Water drops and Text**, the latter with their untranslated side up.



**13** Search for cards in the **Help deck** matching the numbers of your cards in the book, and place them in your play area. They will help you have an overall view of your book.

## Game Overview

In *The Voynich Puzzle*, you will work collectively to try to decipher the puzzle of the Voynich manuscript, using your copy of the book as the main tool to do so. As the collective understanding of the manuscript grows, you will be able to gradually decipher pages in your book, improving your chances to decode it.

The player with the most Overall Knowledge (OK) at the end of the game will be the winner.

On your turn, you will select any double page on your book and perform the actions on the top half of one of those pages (cards). Each pair of pages will allow you to interact with one of the 5 main sections of the manuscript (**Botany, Astrology, Baths, Writing and Recipes**).

**Designer's note:** The pages on the player books are arranged in a different order than on the Voynich manuscript. Writing pages should be last, after the recipe pages, but for gameplay clarity, I decided to change the order.



Botany  
section



Astrology  
section



Baths  
section



Writing  
section



Recipes  
section



Overall  
Knowledge

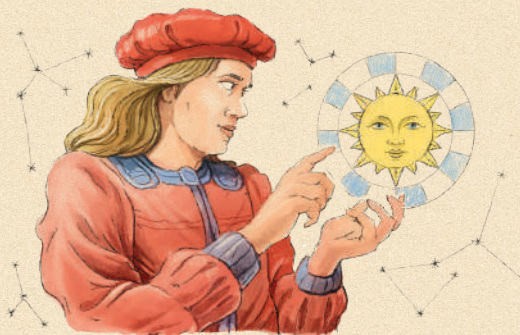
Once you gain enough Knowledge in an area, you will share that Knowledge, adding a piece of the Puzzle that the manuscript represents. All players will have access to that Knowledge, helping them decipher the manuscript, which is represented by the turning and flipping of the cards in your book. Deciphering the manuscript gives you access to better actions and endgame scoring, so it should be your main focus of the game.

**The game ends when the Overall Knowledge (OK) marker of any player reaches the endgame icon on the 52<sup>nd</sup> space.**

End the round so all players have played the same number of turns, and then all players play one more turn before calculating their endgame scores.



Space 52 on  
the game  
score track.



# Card Anatomy

Cards are divided into 4 steps (the top and bottom halves on both the front and back of each card), each step representing the progress towards the deciphering of each page.

Only the top step of the visible side on each card is active, although cards will be flipped and rotated upside down during the game, so the active step on each card changes throughout the course of the game.

Each step has up to 3 different sections.

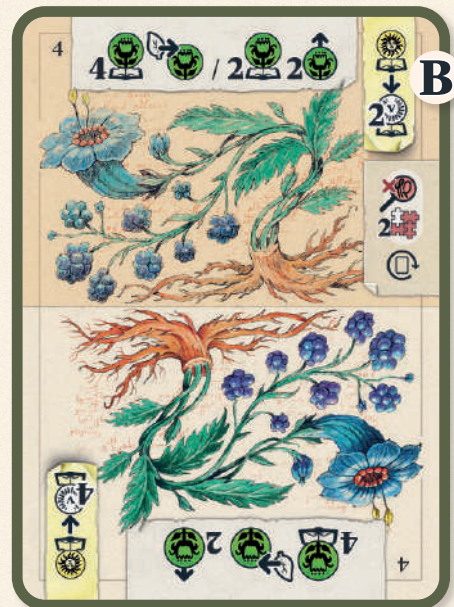
- A** The top middle section shows the actions you may perform when activating that page.
- B** The top right section shows the endgame scoring this page will grant you *(the starting step of the card grants no points)*.
- C** The lower right section shows the Knowledge you must use in order to progress on this page, and also the direction in which you must rotate or flip the card when you do so.
- D** Furthermore, on the second step of the card, you can find information about the progress conditions and the available actions on the opposite side of the card.

Actions and endgame scoring get progressively better in each step, and the progress conditions get harder, but they always follow a predictable path, which you can check on your help cards.

Actions will improve by adding more items to what is already provided, endgame scorings will increase, and progress conditions will require more Knowledge on top of that previously used to progress, so it is easy to plan ahead and prepare for the future steps of each card.



The front of the card, with the starting step on the top half, and the second step on the lower half.



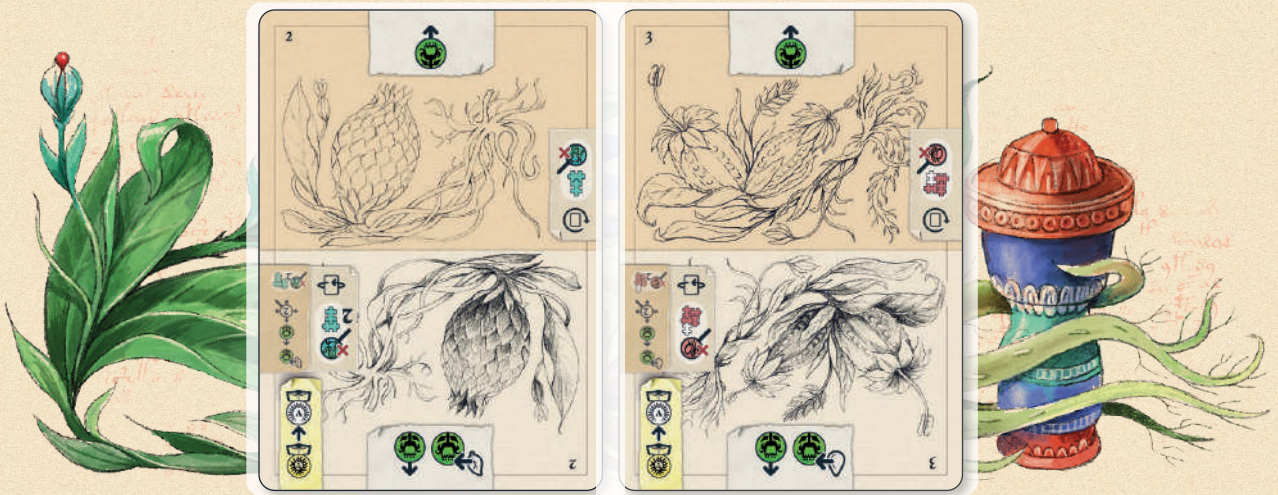
The reverse side of the card, with the third step on the top half and the fourth step on the lower half of the card.

## Goal of the game

By performing the actions on the pages, you will eventually reach certain Knowledge thresholds, which will allow you to share your Knowledge with everybody else, adding a Puzzle piece representing that Knowledge.

This shared Knowledge in the Puzzle can be used to progress on your pages, not only improving your actions, but also setting you up to transform part of your accumulated Knowledge into OK at the end of the game. This makes the positioning of each Puzzle piece crucial to your strategy.

You will have to balance your actions between progressing on your pages, gaining enough Knowledge to reach those thresholds, and gaining specific types of Knowledge worth points at the end of the game.



Open book with the active double page.



## Turn structure

In *The Voynich Puzzle*, you choose your actions using the book. You can hold it in your hands or leave it on the table; it is always regarded as being open on your active double page (spread of two cards of the same type). You can consult the other pages at any time, but you must always return to the active double page.

On your turn, you must change the active double page in your book to a different one (except on your first turn, when you can freely choose which double page to start on). To save time, you can open your book to the new active double page during another player's turn, so that when it's your turn, you can immediately begin taking actions.

**The golden rule is that you can't have the same active spread two turns in a row.**

Once you choose the double page for your turn, you must follow this order:

### 1) PROGRESS A CARD

You may progress on 1 or both of the pages currently open, as many times as you want or can afford to.

### 2) PERFORM ACTIONS

You may complete any or all of the actions shown on the top part of 1 of the 2 open pages, in any order. Some pages have a '/', which means you must choose between the two options when performing actions.

### 3) SHARE KNOWLEDGE

If you have 1 or more Knowledge sharing tokens, you **must** use them to share that Knowledge by placing Puzzle pieces on the board.

### 4) PROGRESS A CARD

You may progress on 1 or both of the pages currently open, as many times as you want or can afford to.

Then your turn ends and play continues clockwise to the next player.

# 1) PROGRESSING A CARD

Unless a page has reached its final step, it will show a progress condition on its lower right section. This condition will require you to return one or more of your Research tokens from specific places on the main board Puzzle to your supply.

If the condition requires you to remove more than one Research token, they **must be removed from different zones that fulfill the condition.** (Example **a**: if a condition requires you to remove 2 Research tokens on a group of 2 Botany Puzzle pieces, they must come from 2 different groups.)

If you fulfill a condition on a card, gain the Overall Knowledge (OK) shown on the row and column of the Research tokens removed to fulfill it **b**.

Then, remove the card from the sleeve, and depending on the arrow shown next to the condition **c**, either rotate the card 180° , or flip it  maintaining its current orientation and finally return the card to the same sleeve in this new position.

As seen before, you may do that **before and/or after** your action, and you can do it more than once with the same card if you have enough Research tokens fulfilling the conditions, but you can only do it with the pages currently open on this turn.

This new step on the card will show an improved action, better endgame scoring conditions, and unless you have reached its last step, a new progress condition related to the previous one.

**Help cards:** you may display your Help cards in any way you prefer.

They show you an overview of all the progress conditions on your cards, so you can easily decide where to place Puzzle pieces and Knowledge tokens.



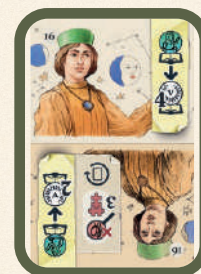
**a** Example of a progress condition.



**b** Removing and scoring 2 Research tokens.



**c** Flipping a card according to its arrow.



Help card

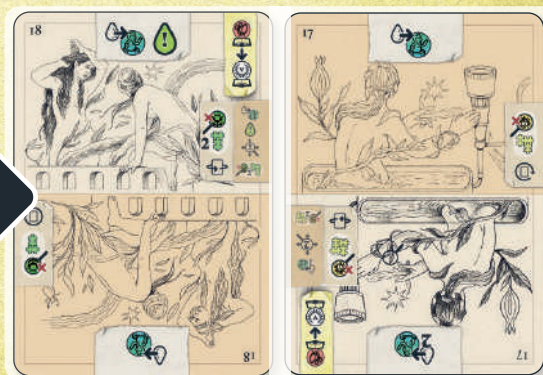
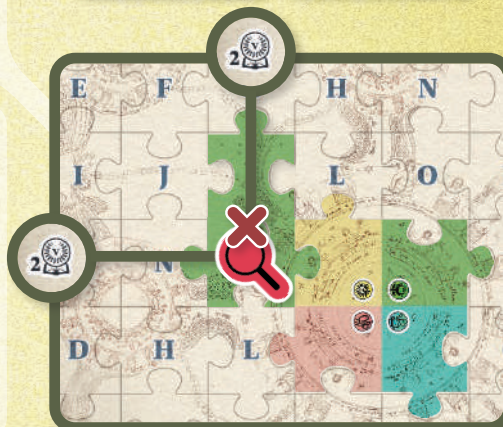
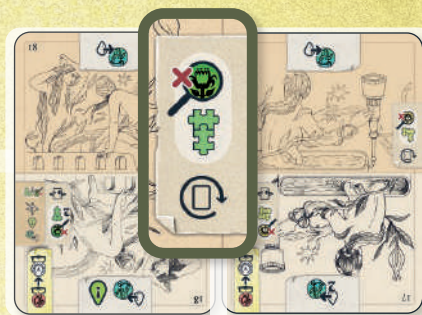
## EXAMPLE OF PROGRESSING A CARD

At the start of her turn, Clara (red) decides to progress on one of the pages she has opened for this turn. The progress condition requires her to have a Research token on a group of at least 2 adjacent Botany pieces.

She removes the Research token that fulfills the condition, and scores 4 in Overall Knowledge (OK), because of the column and row where that token was placed.

Then she removes the card from the book, rotates it as the card indicates, and returns it to the book.

If she were able to fulfill more conditions on any of the 2 open cards, she would be allowed to do so, but that is not the case right now.



**Designer's note:** Most people researching the Voynich manuscript share their theories through the internet. The Puzzle is a representation of this, and every time you gain enough Knowledge about the specific part of the book, you will share it by adding a Puzzle piece.

This new shared Knowledge on the Puzzle might then be used by anyone doing Research—represented on the game by the Research tokens—in order to make their own discoveries.

## 2) PERFORMING ACTIONS

Each type of card is related to a section of the Voynich manuscript and it has its own selection of possible actions and a corresponding section on the main board. By performing the actions in one section, you may trigger actions in a different section, representing the connection between the different parts of the manuscript.

**You must perform the actions as explained below, regardless of how you activate them (directly from your pages, or as a consequence of your actions on the main board).**

**Limited Tokens:** The tokens in your color are limited. When a game effect allows you to add a new token somewhere, you can only take them from your supply or from a different section of the main board. *(For example; you can take a Star from the Astrology section to place it in the Writing section, but you cannot take a Star from the Astrology section to place it somewhere else on the Astrology section.)*

In some rare instances, you may use a token to trigger an action that allows you to place the same type of token somewhere else. You cannot remove the token that triggered the action; you must use a different token of the same type. *(For example: if placing a Star on the Astrology section triggers the action of placing a Star on the Writing section, it must be a different token.)*

## GAINING KNOWLEDGE

You can gain Knowledge through the actions on your cards or as a reward for completing other actions during the game.

These actions allow you to gain Knowledge of the matching type (**Botany, Astrology, Baths or Writing**), by moving the corresponding Knowledge marker along the track.

Whenever you reach or surpass a breakthrough icon on the track, you must take a Knowledge sharing token matching the Knowledge type of the marker you have just moved. As seen before, you will use this token later in your turn to share your findings, adding a Puzzle piece to the board.



Botany  
Knowledge



Astrology  
Knowledge



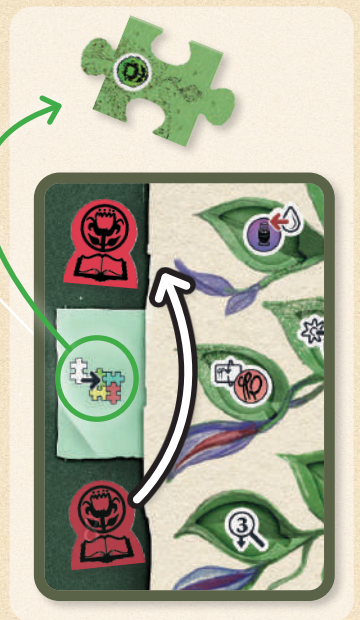
Baths  
Knowledge



Writing  
Knowledge



Overall  
Knowledge



**Nothing happens if your Overall Knowledge (OK) marker reaches or passes a breakthrough icon.**



## RESEARCH ACTIONS



You may find these actions on cards of all types, or as a reward for completing other actions during the game. They allow you to...



... either place one of your Research tokens on any of the 4 spaces of the Central Puzzle piece...



...or place them on any Puzzle piece on the board, including the Central piece...



...or move one of your Research tokens on the board in the direction depicted by the action or in any direction.

You can only move Research tokens onto spaces with a Puzzle piece (or towards any of the 4 spaces of the Central Puzzle piece), but never towards empty spaces on the Puzzle. Any number of Research tokens may occupy each space. The position of these Research tokens will help you fulfill the requirements to progress on pages in your book.

**Actions with numbers:** Any action icon with a number means you can perform that action up to as many times as the number shows.

In the cases where the action can be applied to a number of tokens, you can perform all the actions with one of your tokens, or split the actions between various tokens. (For example: the 'plant growing' action lets you complete several movements in the Botany section. You can move one of your tokens as many times as the action indicates, or split the movement between different tokens.)



## BOTANY ACTIONS



These actions affect the Botany section of the main board, and you will find them on Botany cards, or as a reward for performing other actions during the game.

The 'add Leaf' and 'add Water drop' actions allow you to take a Leaf or a Water drop token respectively from your supply or from another section of the main board, and add them to the Botany section:

**A** Leaves are placed on the space on the base of the plant stem, where any number of them can be placed.

**B** Water drops can be placed on any of the 4 root tips, gaining the reward on them. Only 1 Water drop can occupy each space. You can choose to place a Water drop on a root tip that already has a Water drop, in which case, your Water drop will immediately move to the next empty space following the arrows, collecting the reward it lands on.



Add leaf



Add water drop



The 'plant growing' action allows you to move one of your Leaves or Water drops one space following an arrow's direction and gain the reward you land on. Obey these rules when doing so:



Plant growing

If a Water drop reaches the base of the plant stem, immediately gain an extra 'plant growing' action with that same Water drop. It effectively skips that space.

With the exception of the space on the base of the plant stem and the two top flower spaces, **tokens cannot share a space**. If you have to move one of your tokens to an occupied space, skip that space, and keep moving the token until you find an empty space to land on.



Top flower spaces

When you move one of your tokens to a branch, choose any empty space on that branch and place your token there, gaining that reward.

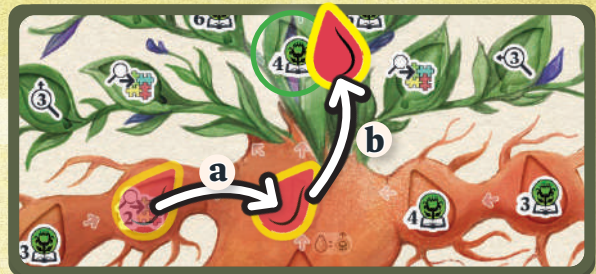
Once on a branch or on a flower space, your token cannot be moved any more with this action. (However, you can withdraw them to perform actions in other sections of the board.)

### EXAMPLE OF BOTANY ACTIONS

The left page allows Clara (red) to gain 4 in Botany Knowledge, add a Leaf and to perform a total of 2 'plant growing' actions.

She starts by using one of the 'plant growing' actions to move her Water drop up one space **a**, which immediately allows that Water drop to move up another space, rewarding her with 4 in Botany Knowledge **b**.

She then adds the Leaf to the stem **c**, and uses the other 'plant growing' movement with the Leaf, skipping the token on the stem to land on this space of the branch, gaining its reward **d**.



**Designer's note:** The Botany section of the manuscript seems to show different types of plants and their descriptions. To represent this study, players must add Leaves to the stem and Water to the roots that travel towards the flowers and Leaf branches.



## ASTROLOGY ACTIONS



These actions are completed on the Astrology section of the main board, and you will find them on Astrology cards, or as a reward for performing other actions during the game.

The 'add a Star' and 'add Text' actions allow you to take a Star or a Text token respectively from your supply or from another section of the main board, and add them to the Astrology section:



Stars are placed in any of the empty star-shaped spaces (with no other Star) on the constellation drawings. When you do so, you gain the reward of the space they are placed on.



Text tokens are placed on any of the empty Text spaces (with no other Text token) on the constellations, gaining the reward indicated on those same tokens.



The astrology section is divided into 5 sectors, and each of these sectors is in turn divided into two parts, one inner **a** and one outer **b**. You can only place a Star on the outer part of a sector if the Star space on the inner part of that section already has a Star. Likewise, you can only place a Text on the outer part of a sector if the Text space on the inner part of that section already has a Text. Note that each outer part of a sector has two different constellations.

After placing a Star or Text, if the corresponding constellation then has both tokens, the owners of the Star and the Text tokens gain the Knowledge reward shown on that constellation. **If the same player is the owner of both tokens, the Knowledge reward is only gained once.**



The 'turn Goat' action allows you to turn the Goat clockwise towards the next sector and gain the Knowledge reward of any constellation in that sector that either has a Star, a Text, or both.

**Using Text tokens:** Text tokens must never be flipped unless specifically instructed to.

Whenever you place a Text token, you can choose which one you want to place, based on their rewards.



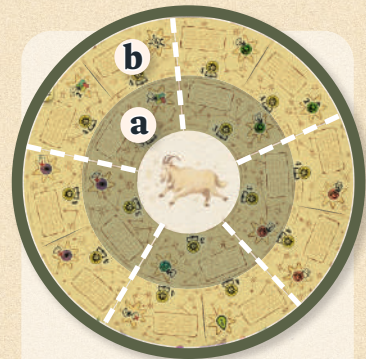
Add a Star



Add Text



Star and text spaces on a constellation (with its corresponding bonus).



The five sectors of the Astrology section.



Turn Goat

## EXAMPLE OF ASTROLOGY ACTIONS

The left page allows Clara (red) to rotate the Goat twice, to add a Text to the Astrology section and to add a Research token to the Central Puzzle piece.

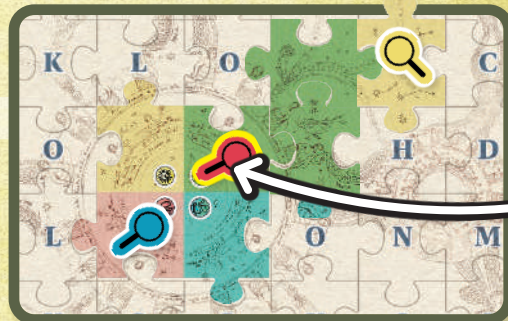


Clara starts by placing the Text on this space, which is permitted because there is already a Text on the inner part of that section, gaining the reward on the Text token used (which, in this case, is gaining 1 in Writing Knowledge point).

With this placement, this constellation now has both a Text and Star token, so both Clara and the Blue player gain 4 in Astrology Knowledge.

She then rotates the Goat 2 times clockwise (passing by two different sectors) and gains a total of 10 in Astrology Knowledge: 3 in the first section and 7 in the second.

Finally, she adds the Research token to the Central Puzzle piece.



**Designer's note:** The Astrology section of the manuscript seems to represent Astrology signs, as well as astronomical bodies like the sun or the moon. I used the page that seems to represent Capricorn, making it rotate so it faces the different constelations, trying to mimic the movement of the stars in the night sky through the year.



## BATH ACTIONS



The Baths section of the board also has its own actions, to be found on Bath cards, or as a reward for doing other actions during the game.

The ‘**add Water drop**’ action allows you to take a Water drop token from your supply or from another section of the main board, and add it to the Baths section. You can place it on any of the 2 fountain spaces, gaining the corresponding reward.

**Any token already on that space will be pushed along the stream to the next space following the arrow’s direction, and their owner will gain the reward they land on, if any.**

If that token is also pushed into a space with another token, this next token is also pushed along, and the process continues until no more tokens are pushed on.

If a Water drop reaches the first pool, it will stay there and will not be automatically pushed any further.

However, **if a Leaf reaches the first pool**, (this can happen because there is an action that allows you to convert a Water drop token into a Leaf token. See ‘transform’ action on the next page) **it will immediately move another space towards the second pool**, and if there is already another Leaf on that space, it will also be pushed on to the next pool.

**The second pool:** Whenever one of your Leaves reaches the second pool, even outside your turn, immediately place it on a space with no Leaf and gain the corresponding reward.



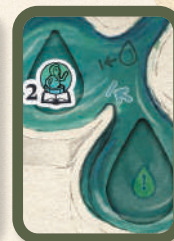
The ‘**clean water**’ action lets you take one of the Dirty Water drops in the first pool and gain its reward.

After gaining the reward, place that Dirty Water drop **on the space below the right-hand fountain**, and push the Dirty Water drop already on that space one space to the left. If there is a token on the space it moves to, it is pushed along following the usual rules.

Whenever a Dirty Water drop reaches the first pool, it becomes available to be chosen again.



Add Water drop



Fountain spaces  
(with the Dirty Water drop space under the fountain on the right).



First pool



Second pool



Clean water action

The **'transform'** action lets you withdraw one of your Water drops from the Baths section and put a Leaf in its place.



*Transform*

If the Water drop is in the first pool, the Leaf immediately moves another space towards the second pool and as usual, this movement may push another Leaf on.

**2-Player games:** whenever 2 Water drops of a non-player color reach the first pool, immediately withdraw them and place one on the left fountain space, and the other on the right fountain space, in this order. This may cause other Water drops to be pushed forward, as usual.

## EXAMPLE OF BATHS ACTIONS

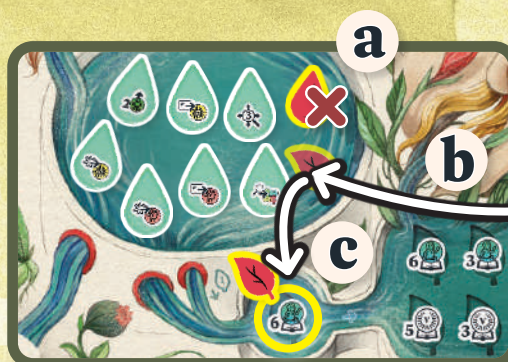
One of the active pages allows Clara (red) to clean water and to transform a Water drop.



She starts by transforming the Water drop in the first pool, returning it to her supply **a** and placing one of her Leaf tokens instead **b** which immediately moves on one space **c**, gaining 6 in Bath Knowledge.

She then cleans the water, taking a Dirty Water drop from the first pool, gaining its reward, and placing it on the space below the fountain on the right.

This token then pushes the Dirty Water drop on that space, which in turn pushes the two yellow Water drops, making the Yellow player gain 4 in Bath Knowledge.



**Designer's note:** The Baths section is probably the strangest one on the manuscript. I used Water drops and the mechanics of pushing to simulate a stream of Water flowing down, and the green color of the Water on the original manuscript gave me the idea of algae, which is represented by the Leaf tokens flowing along with the water.



## WRITING ACTIONS



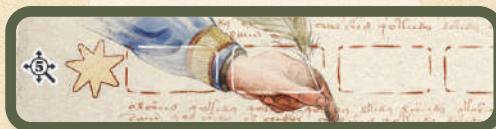
The actions of the Writing section are found on Writing cards or as a reward for performing other actions during the game.

The 'add Text' action allows you to take a Text token from your supply or from another section of the main board and place it on the leftmost empty Text space on any row.

After placing it, gain the reward on that Text token, and also gain the reward printed at the start of the same row on the board. You can gain these rewards in any order.



Add Text



Text row with a Star space and a reward at the beginning.

The 'add Star' action allows you to take a Star token from your supply or from another section of the main board and place it on any empty Star space.

You gain all the rewards on the Texts on that row, **regardless of their color**, and also gain the reward printed at the start of that row, in any order.



Add Star

The 'translate Text' action allows you to flip one of your Text tokens on the Writing section of the main board to its translated side, gaining the reward of this side **and also the reward printed at the start of that row** on the board, in any order.

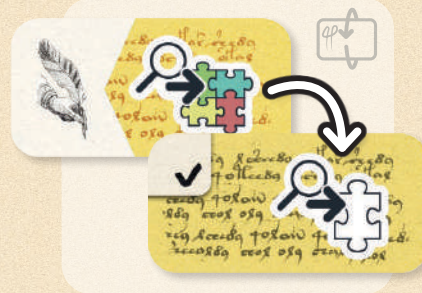
From now on, that token will always show its improved translated side with a better reward.



Translate Text

**Designer's note:** The Writing section is the hardest to give a meaning to, as nobody knows how to translate the Text.

I used the Stars, the only other element in the section besides the Text, to create an interesting dynamic with these pages.



## EXAMPLE OF WRITING ACTIONS

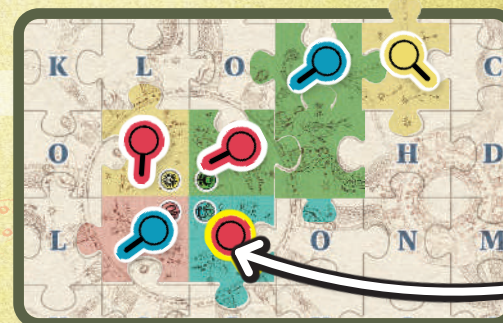
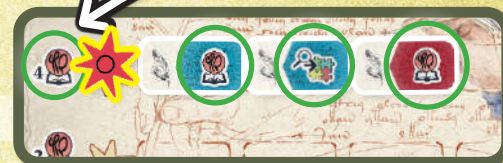
*The right page allows Clara (red) to add 1 Text and 1 Star token to the Writing section, and to add a Research token to the Central Puzzle piece.*



*She starts by adding a Text token to this row, gaining both the reward on the token (which, in this case, is 1 in Writing Knowledge) plus the 4 in Writing Knowledge printed at the start of the row.*

Then she places the Star on this row, gaining the rewards on all the Text tokens on the row, including the blue ones, plus the 4 in Writing Knowledge printed at the start of the row.

*She finally adds the Research token to the Central Puzzle piece.*





## RECIPE ACTIONS

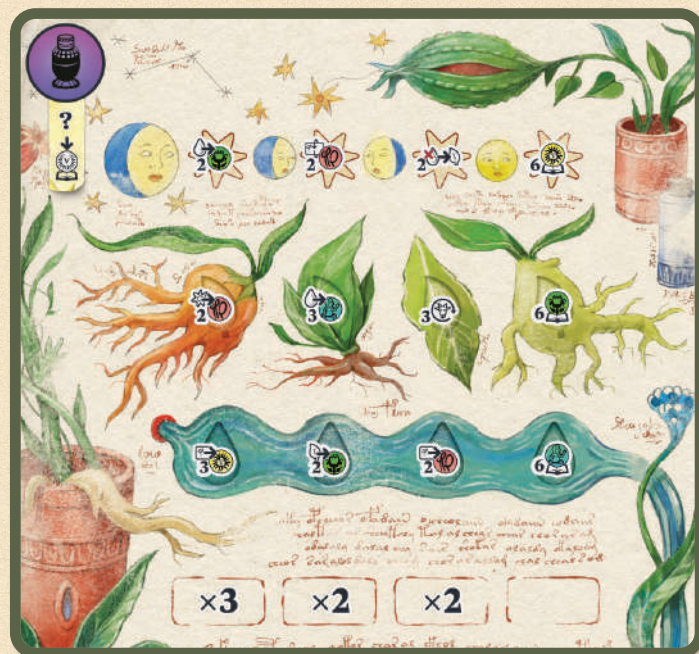


The actions of the Recipes section can be found on Recipe cards, or as a reward for completing other actions during the game.

All these actions allow you to take the depicted component (Leaf, Star, Water drop or Text) of your color from any other section on the main board, **but never from your supply**.

Then, place it on one of the corresponding empty spaces on the Recipes section (as shown by the illustrations on each row), gaining the corresponding reward.

In the case of Texts, the reward on the Text token you place is multiplied by the number indicated on the space it is placed on.



Star  
row

Leaf  
row

Water  
drop row

Text  
row



Move a Leaf to Recipes



Move a Star to Recipes



Move a Water  
Drop to Recipes



Move a Text to Recipes



**Designer's note:** The Recipes section seems to combine all the other parts of the manuscript, perhaps explaining how to create potions by combining the plants on the Botany section, the time of the year shown on the Astrology section, the Water from the Baths section and the instructions on the Writing section.

There is no proof of any of this, of course, but I took those ideas in order to create the mechanics for this section, taking tokens from other parts of the board in order to gain rewards here.

### 3) SHARING KNOWLEDGE

If you have 1 or more Knowledge sharing tokens after you have performed the actions on your pages, you must return each token to the supply and choose a Puzzle piece from outside the board to add (taking 1 Puzzle piece for each token returned). The Puzzle pieces must match the Knowledge type of each token returned.

Place these Puzzle pieces on the Puzzle area, following these rules:

- A** You must place the Puzzle piece on an orthogonally adjacent space to an already placed piece.
- B** You must take the Puzzle piece with the letter matching the space you want to place it on, flipping the piece when placing it, so that the letter is no longer shown.

Once you have placed all the required pieces, you may move 1 of your Research tokens already on the Puzzle onto 1 of the pieces you have just placed.

**2-Player games:** The Puzzle pieces added during setup are not considered to be in the Puzzle board until they are connected to the Central Puzzle piece through a path of orthogonally connected pieces.

You cannot place a Puzzle piece next to them if it does not also connect to the Central Puzzle piece through a path of orthogonally connected pieces, nor can you place or move your Research tokens on them until they are connected.

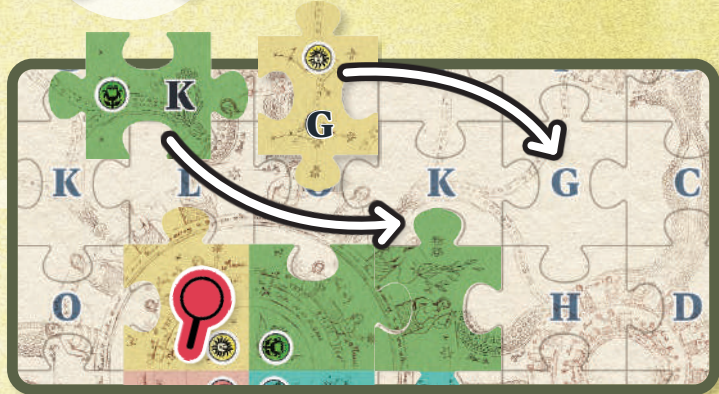


## EXAMPLE OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

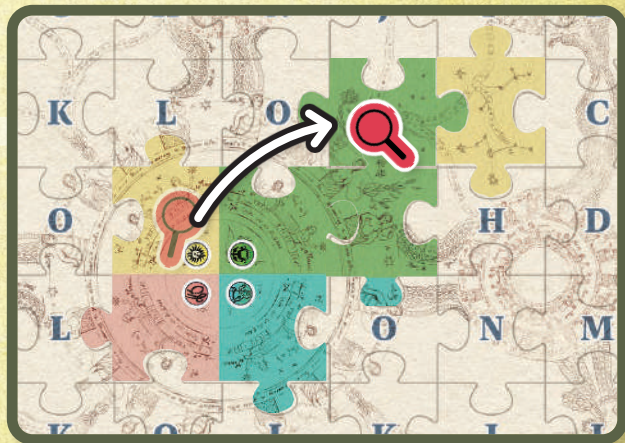
At the end of the turn, Clara (red) has collected a Botany Knowledge and an Astrology Knowledge sharing token.



Clara returns them to the supply and takes a Puzzle piece of each type from outside the board, making sure her letters correspond to the spaces she wants to cover and adds them to the Puzzle.



Clara decides to move 1 of her Research tokens already on the Puzzle board on to the newly added Botany piece.



She can now progress one of her active pages, since she fulfills its progress conditions.

## 4) PROGRESSING A CARD

As with the beginning of your turn, you can now progress on 1 or both of the pages currently open as many times as you want or can afford to.

Then your turn is over and the player to your left takes their turn.

# Endgame scoring

The game ends when the **Overall Knowledge (OK)** marker of any player reaches the endgame icon on space 52.

End the round when all players have played the same number of turns, and then all players play one more turn before they proceed to endgame scoring.

**Endgame scoring is as follows:**



Each player adds up the Overall Knowledge (OK) on the rows and columns of **all of their Research tokens on the board**, then divides the total by 2, rounding down, and adds that to their score.



Each player applies the different **scoring conditions shown on the active steps of all the pages** in their book. Each scoring condition grants Overall Knowledge (OK) based on the position of a specific Knowledge marker (indicated on each section of the board) on the scoring track. The Overall Knowledge (OK) gained is calculated in following manner:

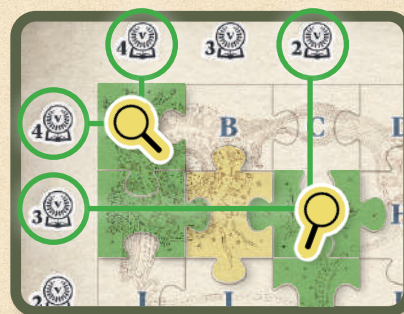
First identifying the highest scoring box that the specific marker has reached or passed, and then multiplying the amount of Overall Knowledge (OK) shown in that scoring box by 1, 2 or 4, depending on what is indicated on the corresponding page.

Note that each section of the board shows which Knowledge marker will be scored by pages of that section. The only exception is **Recipes**. Each **Recipes page** shows two types of Knowledge. When you're calculating your final score, you must choose which type of Knowledge you will score on that page.

Once all players have added up the scores from all their pages, **whoever has the most Overall Knowledge (OK) is the winner.**

In case of a tie, the player with the most advanced Knowledge marker (**excluding Overall Knowledge (OK)**), is the winner. If there is still a tie, players compare their second most advanced Knowledge marker (**excluding Overall Knowledge (OK)**), and so on.

If the tie persists after checking the 4 markers, the tied players share the victory.



6 Overall Knowledge (OK) points for Yellow.



For the first page, Clara (red) multiplies the last scoring box her Bath Knowledge marker reached and multiplies it by 4. She scores 32 Overall Knowledge (OK) points.

The second page grants her 16 Overall Knowledge (OK) points.



## Solo Mode

In the solo mode you will play against Voynich himself. Perform the setup as in a 2-player game **a** but making sure the **board is placed with its solo side up**, and Voynich's Text tokens are randomly placed in a stack with their untranslated side up **b**. Rather than placing 7 Dirty Water drop tokens freely on the first pool, place each one on a numbered space. **c**. The last Dirty Water drop token goes to its corresponding place below the right-hand fountain as usual.



Shuffle his Help cards and create a deck, **d** making sure all cards are placed so that the top card on the deck always shows its first step oriented towards you, and also that **the top card is not a Recipe card**. Place that deck nearby Voynich's book: from now on this will be called "Voynich's deck".

Finally, choose a difficulty level between easy, normal, hard, very hard and extreme. If you choose very hard or extreme, Voynich immediately progresses once on the 2 left side cards of his **Botany** and **Baths** double pages, as well as once on the 2 right side cards of his **Astrology** and **Writing** double pages. Check Final Scoring on page 32 to see how different difficulty levels score.

You are the starting player.

In the solo mode, you play your turns exactly as in a 2-player game. Voynich also follows most of the normal rules, with 3 differences:



He will automatically progress on a page at the start of his turn, ignoring conditions, and because of that he will never use his Research tokens.



If he gains any Research actions he will exchange them for 1 Overall Knowledge (OK). (For example: instead of placing 2 Research tokens, he will gain 1 Overall Knowledge (OK).)



Whenever he must take a Text token from his supply, he will take the top one.

## TURN STRUCTURE

At the start of his turn, flip the top card on Voynich's deck, placing it on a pile next to his deck, and change the page on Voynich's book to the double page matching the card you have just flipped.

If that card shows the current double page already open on his book, repeat the process with the new card on top of the deck, until you can change to a new double page. If the deck ever runs out, take all the cards but the top one on the pile, and shuffle them to create a new deck.

Once Voynich has chosen a new double page, follow these steps:

- 1 If possible, he progresses 1 step on one of his open pages. If the page number visible on the top card of his deck is an odd number, progress the left one. If not, progress the right one.
- 2 Perform the actions on the page he has just progressed (or tried to progress).
- 3 If he has any Knowledge sharing tokens, use them to place Puzzle pieces on the board.



*Voynich discards a Writing card and opens his book on the pages of the same type. The page number on the top card of his deck is now an odd number, so...*



*...Voynich progresses the page on the left, following the usual rules. He now performs the actions on that page.*

## PERFORMING ACTIONS

Voynich performs all the actions on the page he has just progressed (or tried to progress) in order, **from left to right**.

Whenever a card has 2 options divided by a slash, he will choose the left one if he is performing an action on the left page, or the right one if the action is on the right page.

If Voynich cannot perform the complete actions he does so as much as possible, skipping the actions he cannot perform. (For example: if he is supposed to place 2 Leaves on the Botany section, but it already has 3, he will only place 1, as he cannot legally place any more.)

If he cannot gain any benefit from the actions (other than Research actions) repeat the process of flipping the top card of Voynich's deck to choose a new page until you find a page he can get some benefits other than Research actions, but on this occasion **he does not progress on the new chosen page**.



*This page would grant Voynich 3 'plant growing' actions and 1 Overall Knowledge (OK) from the Research action.*

*He would perform the actions on this page if he could at least complete 1 of the 'plant growing' movements, but if he had no tokens to move, he would change to a different page.*

# PLACING PUZZLE PIECES

Whenever Voynich must add Puzzle pieces to the board, you can decide where to place them, although you must follow the progress condition shown on the top card of the deck, if possible.

If there are multiple pieces to be placed, you can choose in which order to place them. You must also always follow the normal Puzzle placement rules. When checking progress conditions, consider all of them to be of 'any color', ignoring their specific color.

Depending on the condition, you must:



**Being on or being adjacent to groups of X pieces:** you must place the Puzzle piece on a group of its color of at least as many pieces shown on the condition.



**Being on an edge:** you must place the Puzzle piece on an edge or a corner.



**Being in a circle:** you must place the Puzzle piece so that it is part of a circle.



**Being adjacent to different colors:** you must place the Puzzle piece adjacent to at least 3 different colors.

If there is no possible placement for the Puzzle piece that follows the condition, you can then freely choose where to place it.

**For each Puzzle piece Voynich places, he gains the Overall Knowledge (OK) on the row and column of that space.**

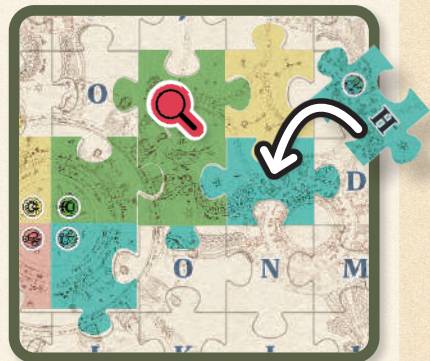


*Voynich has to place a Baths Puzzle piece...*

*The top card on the Voynich deck shows the progress condition...*



*...so Voynich places the H Puzzle piece, since it forms part of an outer circle, as the condition demands.*



*Finally, he gains the Overall Knowledge (OK) on the corresponding row and column.*

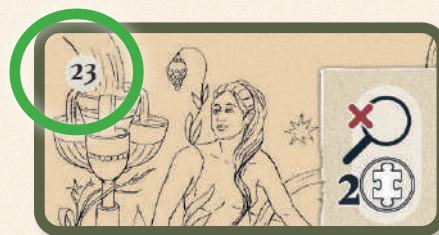
*Unfortunately for him, while H column gets him 3 Overall Knowledge (OK), its row gets him none.*



## ADDING AND REMOVING PUZZLE PIECES

Whenever Voynich must add tokens to the board, he will always take them from his supply, if possible. Use the page number visible on the top card of his deck (from now on the **priority number**), to decide where to place the tokens. You must look for the first available spot on the board starting with the priority number, checking all numbers in order and continuing past 40 on to 1 again, if needed, until you find a spot where Voynich can place the token.

Be aware that not all numbers appear on the board, so if the priority number is not on the part of the board you are checking, you must use the closest lower number. (For example: if your priority number is 18, and the closest numbers on the section you are checking are 7 and 22, you would start checking from 7.)



*Priority number*



*Numbers on the solo board*

The priority number system is used to decide how to perform some other actions as explained below.

If Voynich needs to withdraw a token from the board in order to place it somewhere else, he cannot take tokens from the same section he wants to place them in, just like any other player.

Depending on the type of token, he will select one to be withdrawn, giving priority to the following:



Tokens that have **already reached a branch or the top flowers in the Botany section.**



Tokens in the **inner circle** in the Astrology section.



Tokens in **any of the pools** in the Baths section.



**Texts in rows with no Stars, and Stars in rows with one or less Text tokens in the Writing section.**

If more than one token matches these conditions, remove any one of those tokens. On the other hand, if no token fulfills any of these conditions, you may freely choose which token to remove.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR BOTANY ACTIONS



When adding **Water drops**, Voynich uses the priority number to choose which root to place them on.



When performing the '**plant growing**' action, he moves a token towards the branch or flower with the matching number or the closest one lower than the priority number.

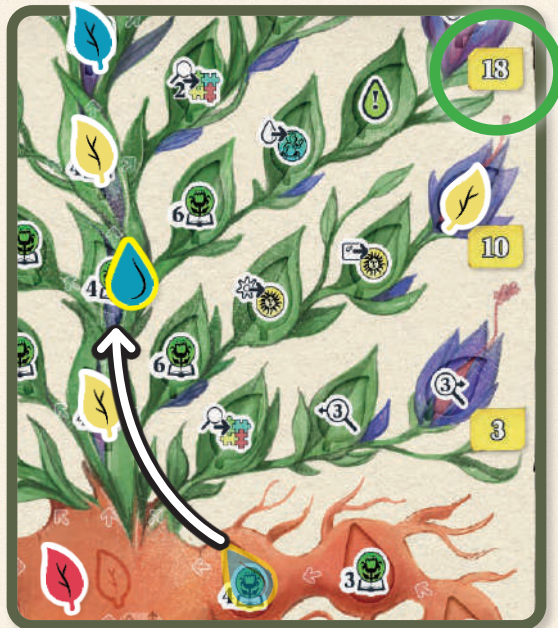
Move the token that is closest to that number. If the token reaches a branch, occupy the first empty icon and perform its action, if possible.

In the rare case that all the spaces on the chosen branch are full, move towards the next branch or flower in numerical order.

If all the available tokens have already passed the branch corresponding to the priority number, keep checking all the numbers in order until you find one where tokens can be placed.

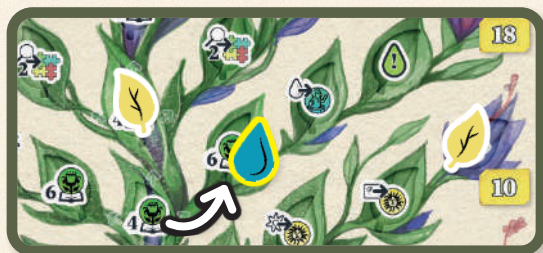


Voynich (blue) is performing the 'plant growing' action twice, with a priority number of 20, so he wants to move tokens towards the branch numbered 18.



His closest token is this Water drop, because the Leaf has already passed the target branch.

This means the first movement will skip the base of the stem—same as any player—and also this neutral Leaf token, to land on this space and gain 4 in Botany Knowledge.



With the second movement, the Water drop will land on the 6 in Botany Knowledge spot on the branch, gaining that reward.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR ASTROLOGY ACTIONS



When Voynich is **adding Stars or Texts** on the section chosen by the priority number, he places them on the inner circle if available.



Otherwise, he places them on the outer part of a sector, on the first available space in a clockwise direction. If all three spaces are occupied follow the same procedure on the next sector in a clockwise direction.



Voynich (blue) wants to place a Star, which he must take from the board, because he has no more Stars on his supply. He takes it from this space in the Writing section, as there is only one Text token on that row. His priority number is 27, so he checks section 22.



The inner Star space on that section is occupied, but the first one in clockwise order from the outer circle is not, so he chooses that one, gaining the corresponding reward.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR WRITING ACTIONS



When Voynich adds a **Text** or a **Star**, use the priority number to choose which row to add it to. If that row has no empty spaces of the required type, move down to the row beneath, and continue, moving from the bottom back up to the top row if necessary.



When performing the 'translate text' action, Voynich translates the first (from left to right) of his untranslated Texts on the row chosen by the priority number.

If no Text can be translated on that row, move down to the row beneath, and continue, moving from the bottom back up to the top row if necessary.

Voynich (blue) is adding a Text token to the Writing section of the board.



He must take from the Recipes section, as he has no Texts left in his supply, and all his other Texts are on the Writing section already.

As he has 2 Texts on the Recipes section, you can choose which one to take.

His priority number is 15, so he will place it on row 15.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR BATH ACTIONS



When Voynich adds a **Water drop**, he uses the priority number to choose the left or the right fountain.



When he performs the '**clean water**' action, he uses the priority number to choose which Dirty Water drop to withdraw, and perform its action as usual. If it is already withdrawn, check all the numbers in order, continuing on to 1 from 40 if necessary, until you find a Dirty Water drop to withdraw.

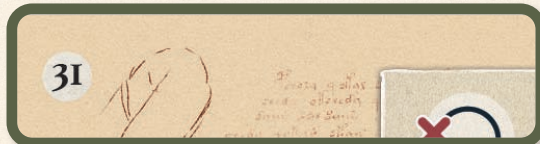


When he is performing the '**transform**' action, the Water drop that is closest to reaching the first pool is transformed (a Water drop already on that pool would be the closest, and therefore a priority).

When reaching the second pool, the priority number is used to choose which reward to take from the second pool. If it is already occupied, check all the numbers in order, passing 40 on to 1 if necessary, until you find an empty space.

If at any moment a Dirty Water drop reaches the first pool, place it in the first available empty space, following the number order.

*Voynich (blue) is using the 'clean water' action with 31 as the priority number.*



*The Dirty Water drop on space 28 has already been taken, as has space 35, so continuing around, he chooses the Dirty Water drop on space 1.*



## SPECIAL RULES FOR RECIPE ACTIONS

When adding a token to the Recipes section, Voynich uses the priority number to choose the space.

If this prompts Voynich to perform an action that he cannot complete, not even partially, he will keep checking all the numbers in order, continuing past 40 on to 1 if needed until he finds an action he can perform, at least partially.

If that is not possible, simply place the token on the action chosen by the priority number and gain no benefit from it.

### Endgame scoring

EASY

Move all of Voynich's Knowledge markers except for the Overall Knowledge (OK) marker 5 spaces backwards. Voynich adds up the scores from his pages, the same way as any player, but he doesn't gain points for his Research tokens on the board, as he won't have any.

NORMAL

Voynich adds up the scores from his pages, the same way as any player, but he doesn't gain points for his Research tokens on the board, as he won't have any.

HARD/  
VERY HARD

Voynich gains 2 Overall Knowledge (OK) for each of his tokens on the board, and then he adds up the scores from his pages, the same way as any player, but he doesn't gain points for his Research tokens on the board, as he won't have any.

EXTREME

Voynich gains 5 Overall Knowledge (OK) for each of his tokens on the board, and then he adds up the scores from his pages, the same way as any player, but he doesn't gain points for his Research tokens on the board, as he won't have any.

**You calculate your endgame scoring as usual.  
If you have more Overall Knowledge (OK) than Voynich, you are the winner.**





## APPENDIX

## ACTION ICONS

Remember that any action icon with a number means you can perform that action up to as many times as the number shows. In the cases where the action can be applied to a number of tokens, you can perform all the actions with the same token or split them between various tokens. (For example: advancing different tokens on the Botany area with the 'plant growing' action, or moving different Research tokens with a 'research' action.)

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                         |                                                                                     |                                                                                                            |                                                                                       |                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Perform the 'add Leaf' action on the Botany section of the board.                                       |    | Perform the 'add Water drop' action on the Botany section of the board.                                    |    | Perform the 'plant growing' action on the Botany section of the board.   |
|    | Perform the 'add Star' action on the Astrology section of the board.                                    |    | Perform the 'add Text' action on the Astrology section of the board.                                       |     | Perform the 'turn Goat' action on the Astrology section of the board.    |
|    | Perform the 'add Water drop' action on the Baths section of the board.                                  |    | Perform the 'clean water' action on the Baths section of the board.                                        |     | Perform the 'transform' action on the Baths section of the board.        |
|    | Perform the 'add Text' action on the Writing section of the board.                                      |    | Perform the 'add Star' action on the Writing section of the board.                                         |     | Perform the 'translate Text' action on the Writing section of the board. |
|   | Send a token of the shown type to the Recipe section of the board (In this case, a Leaf.)               |   | Place one of your Research tokens on any of the 4 spaces of the Central Puzzle piece.                      |    | Place one of your Research tokens on any Puzzle piece on the board.      |
|  | Move one of your Research tokens one step in the arrow's direction, onto any Puzzle piece on the board. |  | Move one of your Research tokens one step in any orthogonal direction, onto any Puzzle piece on the board. |  | Gain Botany Knowledge.                                                   |
|  | Gain Astrology Knowledge.                                                                               |  | Gain Baths Knowledge.                                                                                      |  | Gain Writing Knowledge.                                                  |
|  | Gain Overall Knowledge.                                                                                 |                                                                                     |                                                                                                            |                                                                                       |                                                                          |



## PROGRESS CONDITION ICONS

Remember, when removing Research tokens, you also gain the OK of their row and column. Not all conditions are shown, although the iconography is repeated consistently through all of them.

**Note:** When a number of Puzzle pieces of the same type are orthogonally connected forming an uninterrupted chain, this is considered a group. A group may have any shape, not just what is shown on the icons, as long as it has the same number of pieces.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a group of 2 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a group of 3 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a group of 4 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 2 of your Research tokens, each one on a different group of 2 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens orthogonally adjacent to a group of 2 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens orthogonally adjacent to a group of 3 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens orthogonally adjacent to a group of 4 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 2 of your Research tokens, each one orthogonally adjacent to a different group of 4 or more Puzzle pieces of the color shown.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on an edge Puzzle piece of any color (excluding corners).



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on an edge Puzzle piece of the color shown (excluding corners).



Remove 3 of your Research tokens on different edge Puzzle pieces of the color shown (excluding corners).



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a corner Puzzle piece of the color shown.



Remove 2 of your Research tokens, each one on a Puzzle piece of any color that is part of one of the 8 exterior circles on the Puzzle (excluding the center circle). They must be on different circles.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a Puzzle piece of the color shown that is part of one of the 8 exterior circles on the Puzzle (excluding the center circle).



Remove 2 of your Research tokens, each one on a Puzzle piece of the color shown that is part of one of the 8 exterior circles on the Puzzle (excluding the center circle). They must be on different circles.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a group of 3 or more Puzzle pieces of the same color.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a group of 4 or more Puzzle pieces of the same color.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens on a group of 6 or more Puzzle pieces of the same color.



Remove 2 of your Research tokens, each one on a different group of 3 or more Puzzle pieces of the same color. Each group must be of the same color.



Remove 1 of your Research tokens orthogonally adjacent to Puzzle pieces of at least 3 different colors.



Remove 2 of your Research tokens orthogonally adjacent to Puzzle pieces of at least 3 different colors. Each one must be on a different Puzzle piece.



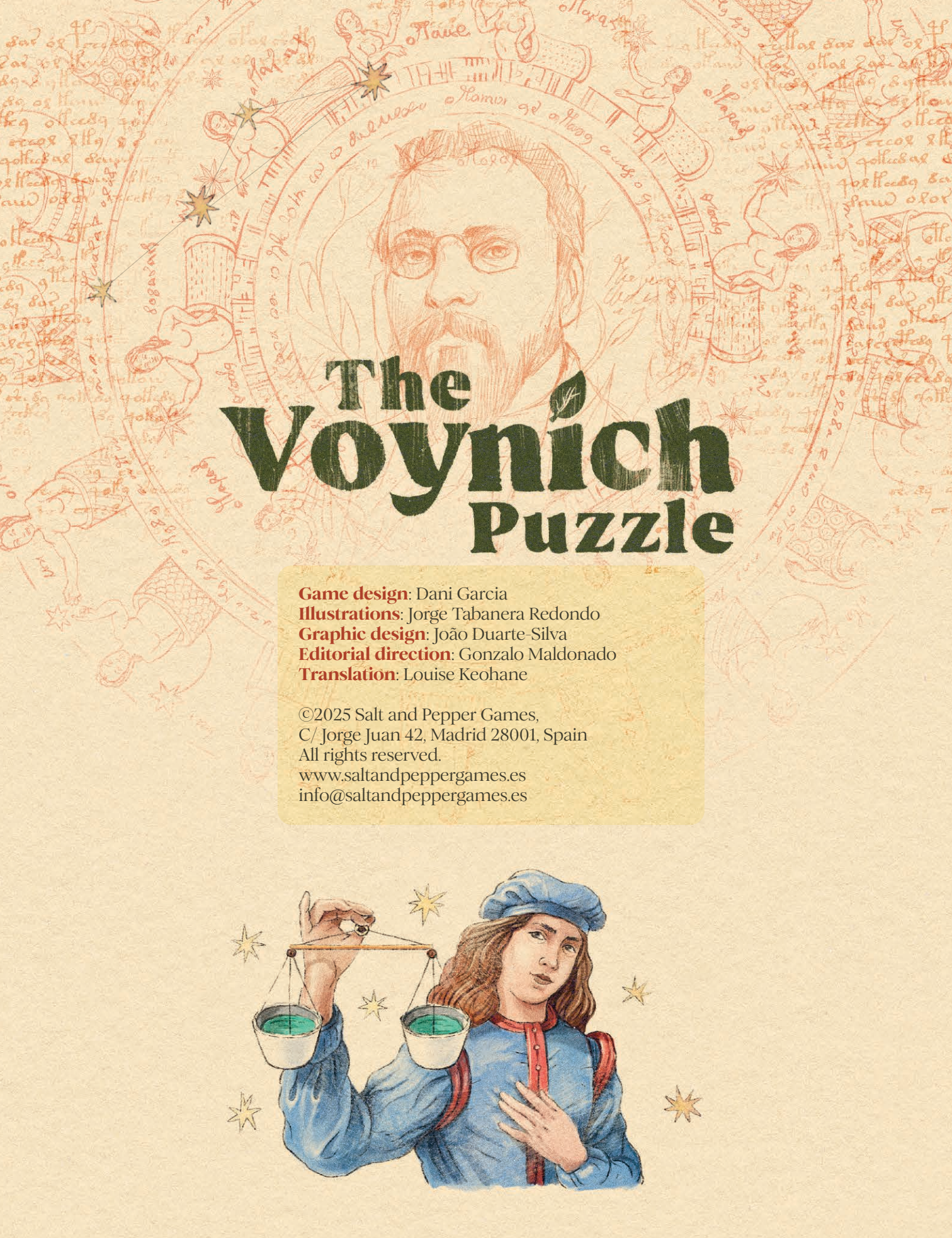
Remove 2 of your Research tokens orthogonally adjacent to Puzzle pieces of 4 different colors. Each one must be on a different Puzzle piece.



Remove 2 of your Research tokens on different edge Puzzle pieces of any color (excluding corners).



Remove 2 of your Research tokens on different corner Puzzle pieces of any color.



# The Voynich Puzzle

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