

ALLIANCES

world domination trick taking game

In the game Alliances you will play a super-power nation seeking world domination along with an ally.

The game is mainly based on trick taking, where each trick represents a local struggle to control a country in the world.

The game is designed for 2, 3 or 4 players, and takes about 45 minutes to play.

The rules and game setup vary according to the number of players.

The following rules are for a classic game of Alliances –

4 players teamed into 2 pairs of allied super-powers.

Specific rules for a 2-player or 3-player game follow the standard rules (page 8).

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Components

- 36 Power cards, 12 of each suit: Military (red), Politics (blue) and Economics (green)



- 12 Special action cards, 4 of each suit



- 20 Country tiles



- 32 Alliance tokens, 16 of each color



- 1 Conflict token



Game Concepts and Terms

Suits of Power

The means by which you and your ally will try to take over target countries are:

Political (P)
power



Economic (E)
power



Military (M)
power



Political power is the highest ranked suit as it is the most peaceful means of settling a conflict, followed by economics. The military suit is the lowest ranked suit of power, as it is the most violent.

Countries of the world

The world is composed of a number of key countries, each represented by a tile on the table. Each country has its own defensive attributes: a certain military power, economic power and political power that need to be overcome.

Political power



Military power

Economic power

Game Goal

In order to win, your alliance has to dominate the world by gaining control over the most countries.

While you try to take over countries, your opponents will strive to stop you from winning conflicts.

Game Setup

After choosing teams, each pair sit opposite each other at the table.

In the middle of the table, randomly place 20 country tiles in 4 rows of 5 tiles each. Each player places 3 Alliance tokens of their team's color in one of the corners, as shown in Image 1.

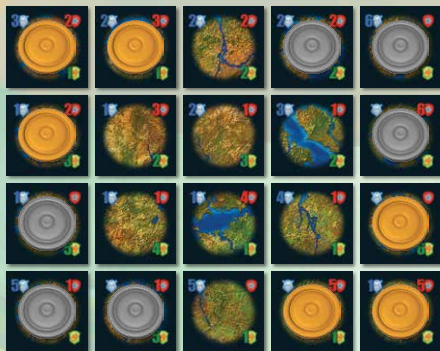


Image 1.

After the tiles are set, shuffle all cards and deal each player 12 cards.



Game setup for 4 players.

Playing the game

A game of Alliances lasts 2-3 campaigns (best of 3), each composed of two phases: the State of the Nations phase and the Conflicts phase.

State of the Nations phase

This is a bidding phase where each alliance bids on the number of countries it will control at the end of the upcoming campaign.

Starting with a randomly chosen player and moving clockwise, each player can either pass or announce a bid. If the player chooses to bid he announces the number of country tiles his alliance will control by the end of the campaign, as well as the dominant suit of

power ("trump suit") which will be used for the remainder of the campaign.

A valid bid must be between 10 and 20 countries, and must be either a higher number than the last bid (if there was one) or the same number but of a higher ranked suit (e.g., if one player announces "10 military" the next player may announce "10 politics", since the politics suit of power is higher ranked than military power). If a player passes, he can no longer take part in this phase, but his partner can continue bidding if he did not pass yet.

After all players but one have passed (i.e., no one out-bid the last bidder), the player with the highest bid is declared the first player and takes the Conflict token. His alliance gets the role of "Aggressor" and the other alliance gets the role of "Defender".

note

If all players pass without making a bid, you must discard all cards, reshuffle them and deal 12 new cards to each player.

In order to win a campaign, the Aggressor alliance must control at least the number of country tiles they bid on. For more details see "Concluding the Campaign" on page 7.

Example 1a: Player 1 starts the bidding by announcing "10 military". The player to his left, player 2, chooses to pass his turn, and so does player 3. Player 4 then announces "10 economics", which is a higher bid since the economics suit is higher ranked than the military suit.

Player 1 decides to keep up the bidding and announces "10 politics". Now player 4 is on the spot, as the other players have already passed in the first round of bidding and are excluded from further bidding. He finally decides to pass as well.

The Conflict token goes to player 1 and the bid, "10 politics", is written down.



Conflict phase

This phase is divided into 12 rounds of conflict.

The starting player decides which country will be the target of the next conflict and puts the Conflict token on the selected country's tile.

He may choose to target only a neutral country (one that is not yet controlled by either alliance) whose tile is adjacent orthogonally to a country tile his alliance already controls.

Only when there are no more neutral countries on the table or he cannot target a neutral country due to a lack of adjacency, a player may target a country that is controlled by the opposing alliance (it still has to be adjacent to a country controlled by his alliance). See example 5 on page 7.

Example 1b: Player 1 goes first as he won the State of the Nations phase. He has four target country options, as shown in Example 1b image. He chooses one of the countries and places the Conflict token on its tile.



Example 1b.

After placing the conflict token, the starting player starts the conflict by playing a card from his hand face up in the middle of the table.

The suit used by the starting player of the round determines the leading suit for this conflict. Next, the player to his left must play one of the following:



starting player

P-1

Example 2.

4

1. A power card of the leading suit.
2. Any special action card.
3. If the player does not have a card of the leading suit (including special action cards), he may play any power card.

Example 2: In this example, military is the dominant suit of power.

- A. Player 1 plays a "4 politics" power card, so politics is the leading suit in this conflict.
- B. Player 2 (see Example 2 image on page 7) must play his politics special action card, as it is the only card of the leading suit in his hand.

Example 3: In this example, politics is the dominant suit of power.

- A. Player 1 plays an "8 military" power card, so military is the leading suit in this round.
- B. Player 2 (see Example 3 image) can play any card from his hand as he has no military cards. He chooses to play

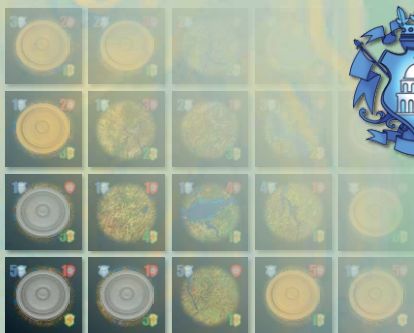
"4 politics" as it is the dominant suit and may lead him into an easy victory.

Whenever a special action card is played, the player who played it must immediately resolve the action. An explanation for each special action can be found at the end of the rule book (pages 10-11).

After all 4 players have played a card, it's time to determine the winner of the conflict and whether they were able to take control over the targeted country.

To determine the outcome of the conflict, first calculate the conflict power of each of the players. A player's conflict power is either the number of power written on a power card that player played or the calculated power that results from playing a special action card (by that player or any other player). It can also be affected by another player's special action. Only conflict power belonging to the leading suit is counted, and the highest result is the winner of the round.

However, if any player has played a card with the



Example 3.

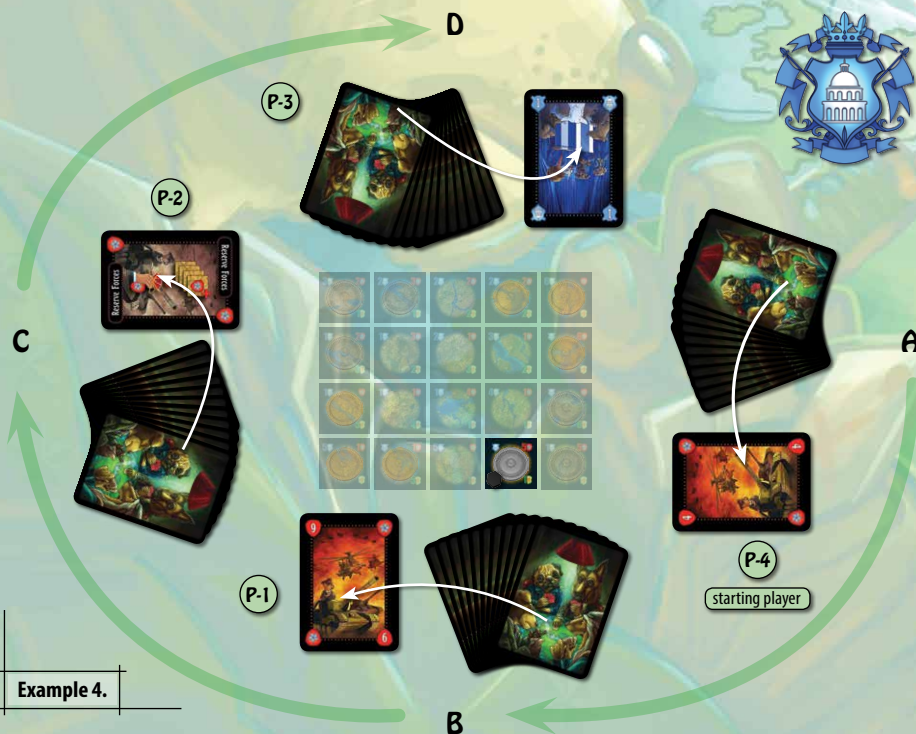
dominant suit (the one announced by the Aggressor alliance at the beginning of the campaign), this “breaks” the round and the highest conflict power of the dominant suit wins. After the winner of the conflict is determined, his conflict power is compared to the targeted country’s defense value of the same suit of power. If the conflict power is higher than the defensive value, the conflict winner takes over the country and places an Alliance token on the country’s tile.

note When taking over a rival controlled country (with a placed token), the winning alliance places a token over the existing rival token. After winning a conflict over a country controlled by your alliance, place an additional token on top of the existing one.

Example 4:

- A. Player 4 starts the conflict by putting down 4M.
- B. Player 1 puts down 9M (he leads at the moment).
- C. Player 2 puts down a special card that will give him a conflict power of 12M (by summing up all the military power of his alliance’s controlled tiles), so he takes the lead.
- D. Player 3 puts down 1P, as he does not have any military cards in his hand.

Player 3 wins the conflict, as the dominant suit in this campaign is politics; in addition, his conflict power is 1P, which beats the targeted country’s defense of 0P. Player 3 puts his Alliance token and gets to be the starting player in next conflict.



Example 5: Player 4, who is the starting player in the final conflict, chooses to put the Conflict token on the country tile as shown in the Example 5 image (he can choose a nearby rival tile as no neutral tiles exist). If he succeeds in this conflict, he can put his silver Alliance token over the existing gold one.



Example 5.

Starting a new conflict

The winner of the current conflict becomes the starting player in the next conflict. If a conflict ends in a draw where no player had the highest conflict power or the target country's defenses held up, then the starting privilege passes to the next player in clockwise order from the previous starting player.

Concluding the campaign

After finishing all 12 rounds of conflict, it is time to declare the winner of the campaign.

In order to win the campaign, the Aggressor alliance must control at least the amount of country tiles they bid on.

In the case where the bid was "10" and the Aggressor controls exactly 10 countries, the Aggressor alliance wins only if they have more Alliance tokens on the tiles than the Defender alliance. Otherwise, the Defender alliance wins.

Example 6: The gold alliance (the Aggressor alliance) wins this campaign as they control 11 countries and their bid was "10 politics".

Before starting the next campaign, shuffle and place the country tiles on the table and shuffle all playing cards.



Example 6.

Game End

The game ends as soon as one of the alliances wins 2 campaigns, and they are declared the winners.

Game Variants

Drafting

Start each campaign with a drafting phase. Each player receives a starting hand of 12 cards, from which they choose 2 cards to keep and pass the rest of the hand to the player on their left. Then they choose 2 cards from the new hand they received, and pass it on. This continues until all cards have been chosen.

This option decreases the luck factor and gives each player a more strategic playing style.

Secret meeting

Each team of allied players has the opportunity to secretly show each other 2 cards from their hand, simul-



taneously, just before the State of the Nations phase. This “meeting” can help the players to better communicate throughout the game.

2-player Game

We will describe here the differences between the 2-player and 4-player games.

Setup

The setup is the same as in a 4-player game, except for the starting tokens' positions, as shown in image 2.

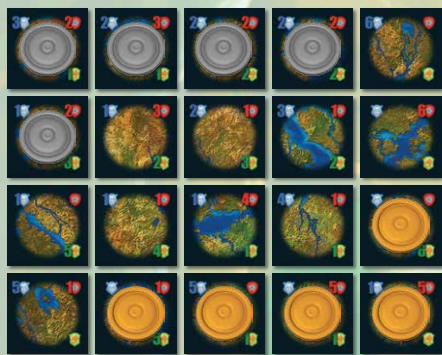


Image 2.

Each player is dealt a hand of 12 cards. The rest of the cards (24) are placed face down in a reserve pile between the 2 players.

Starting player

Being the starting player is less important in the 2-player game, so the players can take turns starting.

Drafting phase

In the 2-player game, the 2 super-power nations must arm themselves for the great upcoming campaign. The goal of this phase is to improve each player's hand by increasing the arsenal of powerful cards and getting rid of the weaker cards. In this phase no taking over of country tiles takes place.

The starting player plays a card from his hand. His opponent must then play one of the three options stated in the Conflicts phase of the 4-player game (page 5). In this phase there is no dominant suit, so the winner of the conflict is the player with the higher overall conflict power of the leading suit. The “trick” is placed on the table, next to the winner. Then each player draws a new card from the reserve deck (so they always have 12 cards in hand). The winner of the previous conflict always starts the next conflict by playing a new card.

Strategic note

Most special action cards are worth zero conflict power in this phase. Some will be worth zero in the next phase as well, so you may want to discard them and hope to draw a better card, but some may hold a higher value in the next phase and are better kept.

This phase continues until there are no cards left in the reserve pile. At this point each player should have 12 cards in his hand.

The player who has won the most conflicts (has the most “tricks”) wins the drafting phase and gains the starting position in the next campaign.

He calls the dominant suit as in the 4-player game, and starts the campaign as the Aggressor.

Campaign

The starting player must put his Conflict token on any adjacent orthogonally neutral country tile he wishes to take over (targeted country), and plays one of his cards.

Then, his opponent must play one of the three options stated in the Conflicts phase of the 4-player game (page 5). The winner of the conflict is determined in the same manner as in the regular game, as well as whether the targeted country was taken over.

If the winner of the conflict cannot take over the targeted country, he loses his momentum and the starting player position shifts to his opponent.

A player who successfully takes over a country becomes the starting player in the next conflict and takes the Conflict token.

Campaign End

The campaign ends after all 12 conflicts are played. The winner is the player with the most country tiles under his control.

In the example shown in image 3, the gold player is the clear winner with 11 tiles to 9.



Image 3.

In case of a tie, the Defender wins the campaign.

Game End

The game ends as soon as one of the players wins 2 campaigns, and he is declared the winner.

Game Variant

State of Nations

The winner of the drafting phase must declare the exact number of countries he will control at the end of the campaign (along with the dominant suit of power).

In this variant, the declaring player wins only if he manages to control the exact number of countries he declared, otherwise his opponent wins.

3-player Game

This game embraces most of the concepts of the regular 4-player game, with some minor changes.

A 3-player game lasts exactly 3 campaigns. During each campaign, one player will play the Empire position and the other two players oppose him as the Rebels coalition. In each campaign a different player serves as the Empire, so that all three players play this position exactly once during the game.

You can only score points while playing the Empire position.

Setup

The setup is the same as in the regular game, except for the starting markers' positions, as shown in image 4.

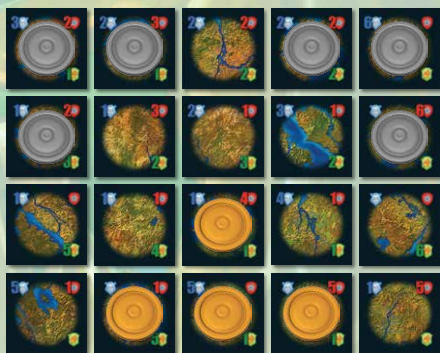


Image 4.

The gold markers belong to the Empire player and the silver markers belong to the two Rebel players.

Divide all cards equally between the players.

In the first campaign, choose the Empire player randomly, and in the subsequent campaigns pass the Empire position in clockwise order.

Rise to Power phase

The Empire player chooses 4 cards (generally cards with a low value) and places them face-down, in 2

pairs. He then declares the dominant suit of power, as in the regular game. Each Rebel player must put his two highest-value power cards face-down, one of the dominant suit and one of another suit. The Empire player puts the Rebels' 4 cards into his hand, and each Rebel takes one of the Empire's pairs.

Campaign

The campaign will be conducted in a series of conflicts, as in the 4 player game.

The starting player is the Empire player and the next in order is the one on his left. The conflicts are conducted as in the 4-player game.

At the end of each campaign, the Empire player counts the country tiles he rules, and writes down his score for the campaign. Each Rebel writes down how many conflicts ("tricks") he has won.

Game end

After all 3 campaigns are concluded, the grand winner is the player who took over the most country tiles during his role as Empire.


In case of a tie, the tie-breaker is the number of conflicts taken by the player during his roles as Rebel.

If there is still a tie, the tying players split the honors.




Special action symbols

Below are the 4 x 3 suits special action symbols with their explanation.



Spin

This special action has an effect only if played last.* Each player moves his conflict power to the player on his left. The player who ends up with this card has '0' conflict power.





Peace Treaty

Discard all Military power cards from the table.





Embargo

Discard all Economics power cards from the table.

Dual Allegiance

Take any Politics power card from the table and add it to any player's conflict power.



*4th in 4 player, 3rd in 3 player, etc.





Bribe

Take any Politics power card from the table as your new Economics conflict power.



Free market

Add targeted country's Military power to its Economics power to form a stronger Economics defence.



Global trading

Sum up to 4 neighbors' Economics power as your new Economics conflict power.



Monopoly

Discard all Economics cards on the table but one of your choice.



Reserve Forces

Sum Military power of 4 of your controlled countries as your new military conflict power.



Reinforcement

Double any Military power card on the table.



Covert Operation

Discard any special action card on the table.



Defensive Pact

Triple the Military power of the targeted country.





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Pledge your name here



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Acknowledgements

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