

GAUNTLET - Official Rulebook

Version 0.6.1 - First Playtest Revision

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Welcome to Gauntlet

Gauntlet is a two-player tactical card-and-territory game. Each player builds a Deck, chooses one of six factions and one of that faction's Leaders, and contributes three Territories to a shared six-Territory battlefield called the **Gauntlet**.

Players advance toward one another, fight battles, occupy and capture opposing Territories, develop Assets, and pursue faction-specific plans. The normal way to win is to cross the entire battlefield, capture the opponent's final Territory, force a Last Stand beyond the Gauntlet, and win that battle.

This rulebook is written in two layers. Each major section begins with **How it works**, which teaches the ordinary rule in clear language. **Complete rules** follows with exact timing, exceptions, and edge cases. The two layers are parts of the same rulebook and do not contradict one another.

Rules Conventions

How it works

Follow the instructions on cards and components. When a specific rule conflicts with a general rule, the specific rule wins. Do as much of an instruction as possible unless the missing part is a required cost, requirement, or target.

Complete rules

- **May** indicates an optional effect. **Must** indicates a required effect.
- Resolve instructions in the order written unless another rule establishes a different order.
- When a card, Leader, faction, Territory, or supplemental-component rule conflicts with a general rule, follow the specific rule.
- Card text changes a card's normal destination only to the extent stated.
- If an instruction cannot be completed in full, complete as much as possible unless the uncompleted instruction is a required cost, requirement, or target.
- An effect resolves only at its stated timing. Revealing a card early does not cause a later portion of its effect to resolve early.
- An effect cannot be canceled or negated after it has resolved.

Playing cards

A card may have several printed effects. The way the card enters play determines which effect is used.

- **Action:** play during an Action Opportunity.
- **Gambit:** set only as a Gambit.
- **Tactic:** choose only as a Tactic.
- **Battle:** use as either a Gambit or Tactic.
- **Mission:** use only as instructed by Intelligence rules.

Faction guides and individual cards may define additional printed headings, such as **Terms**, **Asset**, **Overlay**, **Loan**, or **Effect**. Those headings use the timing and procedure stated by their governing text. They do not make a card eligible as a Gambit or Tactic unless the card also has an eligible Gambit, Tactic, or Battle effect.

Playing a card for one printed effect does not activate its other printed effects unless a rule says otherwise.

Setting a Gambit or choosing a Tactic places the card in battle. It does not resolve immediately unless stated. A face-up Gambit or Tactic still waits for its normal reveal timing unless an effect says otherwise.

1. Components

How it works

Each player brings one complete Deck, one Player Token, and a six-sided die. A Deck contains a faction, one Leader, a Playable Deck of cards, three Territories, and any faction-specific components.

The players place their three Territories together to form the six-position battlefield.

Complete rules

Each player needs:

- one **Deck**;
- one **Player Token**; and
- one six-sided die.

The players may share a die.

A **Deck** consists of:

- one **Faction**;
- one **Leader Card**;
- one **Playable Deck**;
- three different **Territory Cards**; and
- any required faction- or Leader-specific supplemental cards or components.

Supplemental cards, reference cards, trackers, Deeds, Proposals, Rites, and similar components are part of the Deck but are not part of the Playable Deck unless a rule explicitly says otherwise. Missions and Special Operations are eligible cards from the Intelligence player's Playable Deck, not supplemental cards.

Together, both players' Territory Cards form the **Gauntlet**, a single six-Territory column.

Faction supplemental cards and trackers

Faction supplemental components keep each faction's public resources, progress, choices, and special procedures visible. Place them beside the Leader before play begins. They are game aids and state records, not cards that can normally be drawn or played.

Reference cards summarize the faction's procedures. Trackers record changing public values. Double-sided cards record whether a Proposal or Rite has changed state. Other components, such as Deeds and the Capital Ledger, remain on the table as instructed by their faction rules.

General use

- Keep every supplemental component face up and visible unless its own rules say otherwise.
- Begin each tracker at the faction's stated starting value and update it immediately whenever that value changes.
- For a sliding tracker, place the indicated Leader or Reference Card over the tracker. Fully cover the tracker at 0, then slide the covering card until its bottom edge aligns with the current value.
- A counter, dial, written record, or other substitute may be used when it shows the same public information clearly and unambiguously.
- A reference card is a reminder, not a separate rules authority. If its shortened text omits a detail, follow this rulebook and the definitive faction guide.
- A double-sided supplemental card changes state only when its governing rule tells you to flip it. Keep any attached or bound cards with it so both players can identify the relationship.
- Supplemental components have no deckbuilding value and are not eligible as Gambits, Tactics, costs, collateral, Transmutation cards, Treasury cards, or other playable cards unless a rule explicitly says otherwise.
- Each player supplies and controls their own faction package unless a faction rule identifies a shared supply. In a mirror match, keep the two players' components separated and oriented toward their owners.

Military package

Use the selected Leader Card and the **Command Tracker**. Begin at 0 Command with the tracker fully covered by the Leader. Slide the Leader to 1 or 2 whenever Command changes. The Leader Card lists that Leader's three Orders; spend Command only at an Order's stated timing.

Diplomat package

Use the selected Leader Card, **Influence Tracker**, double-sided **Diplomat Reference Card**, and nine double-sided **Proposal / Treaty Article cards**. Begin at 1 Influence and place every Proposal with its Proposal side up. Lower the tracker when Influence is staked or spent and raise it when Influence returns or is gained. Flip an unratified Proposal to its Treaty Article side only when it is ratified. Leave ratified Articles face up so progress toward the Peace Treaty is public.

Financier package

Use the selected Leader Card, **Financier Reference Card**, public **Capital Ledger**, and eight identical **Deed Cards** in a shared supply. Begin with 0 Capital and an empty Treasury. Record every Capital gain, spend, loss, and end-turn reduction as a new Ledger transaction with a running Balance. When a Deed is bought, place one Deed Card beside its Territory on the owner's side; move it during a buyout and return it to the supply if it becomes unowned. A Deed is not an Asset or Overlay.

Intelligence package

Use the selected Leader Card, **Mission Reference Card**, **Operations Reference Card**, **Intel Tracker**, and **Operation Progress Tracker**. Both tracked values begin at 0 and have no maximum. Place the Intel Tracker beneath the Operations Reference and the Operation Progress Tracker beneath the Mission Reference, then slide the covering card to the current value. Record values beyond the printed track separately. An Active Mission or Special Operation is an eligible card from the Playable Deck placed face down near the Leader; the reference cards themselves never become Missions.

Mystics package

Use the selected Leader Card, **Mystics Reference Card**, and the three double-sided **Rite cards**: Rite of Echoes, Rite of Blood, and Rite of Crossing. Begin with every Rite incomplete-side up. Keep a begun Rite and any cards bound to it together. Flip the Rite when it is completed; reset it to the incomplete side when its rules say it is interrupted. After all three are complete, keep the three cards bound to the Ritual of Ascendance together in a clearly marked area near the Leader. Mystics use no resource tracker.

Inquisition package

Use the selected Leader Card, **Inquisition Doctrine Reference Card**, **Purge Reference Card**, and **Conviction Tracker**. Begin at 0 Conviction with the tracker fully covered by the Leader. Slide the Leader to show the current value, to a maximum of 4. Use the Doctrine Reference to remember Condemnation, Blasphemy, and Purification; use the Purge Reference to choose and pay for a Purge.

2. Building a Deck

How it works

Choose one faction and one of its two Leaders. Build a Playable Deck of at least 30 cards with no more than 60 total deckbuilding value. Use Neutral cards and cards from your chosen faction. Then choose three different Territories.

Complete rules

Choose a faction and Leader

Choose one faction, then choose one Leader belonging to that faction. Both players may choose the same faction or Leader.

The Leader Card begins face up and remains available throughout the game.

Build the Playable Deck

A Playable Deck must contain:

- at least **30 cards**;
- no more than **60 total deckbuilding value**; and
- only Neutral cards and cards belonging to the selected faction.

Unless marked **Unique**, a card may appear in any quantity permitted by the available card pool. A Unique card is limited to one copy in the Playable Deck.

Choose Territories

Choose exactly three different Territory Cards.

- No more than one may be an **Arena**.
- Territory Cards are not part of the Playable Deck.
- Territories do not count toward the 30-card minimum or 60-value maximum.
- Both players may choose the same Territory titles.

Supplemental components

Prepare all components required by the chosen faction and Leader.

Unless a rule says otherwise, supplemental components:

- are not part of the Playable Deck;
 - are not shuffled into the Draw Pile;
 - cannot be drawn, played, discarded, banked, or placed in the Graveyard; and
 - do not count toward deck size or deckbuilding value.
-

3. Setup

How it works

Shuffle your Playable Deck, arrange your three Territories secretly, then join them to your opponent's three Territories. Reveal the full Gauntlet, place your token just before your end, draw three cards, and roll to see who goes first.

Keep your permanent Hand, temporary battle cards, discard pile, Graveyard, Assets, and faction components in clearly separate areas.

Complete rules

Prepare the game in this order:

1. **Prepare the Draw Pile.** Shuffle the Playable Deck and place it face down. Leave room for the Discard Pile and Graveyard.
2. **Arrange Territories.** Secretly arrange the three Territory Cards in a line facing their owner.
3. **Form the Gauntlet.** Join both Territory lines to create one six-Territory column.
4. **Reveal Territories.** Reveal all six simultaneously. They remain face up unless an effect says otherwise.
5. **Prepare faction components.** Place Leaders, trackers, references, and supplemental components according to their rules.
6. **Place Player Tokens.** Place each token immediately before the Territory at that player's end.
7. **Draw opening Hands.** Each player draws three cards.
8. **Determine first player.** Each player rolls one die. Higher result goes first; reroll ties.

Recommended play areas

Each player should maintain distinct areas for:

- Draw Pile;

- Discard Pile;
- Graveyard;
- Hand;
- Asset Bank;
- Leader and supplemental components;
- Reserve;
- Gambit; and
- Tactic.

Cards in different zones must remain visibly separate even when space is limited.

4. Turn Structure

How it works

On your turn, first capture an opposing Territory you held through the opponent's turn. Then draw a card. You may take one Action either before or after movement. During movement, advance, hold, or withdraw. Resolve any battle immediately. Finally, discard down to three cards.

A battle ends the movement that started it. You move again afterward only when a rule or card specifically permits it.

Complete rules

Complete each turn in this order:

1. **Capture**
2. **Draw**
3. **Action Opportunity before movement**
4. **Movement**
5. **Action Opportunity after movement**
6. **Cleanup**

Capture

At the start of the turn, if the active player occupies a Territory they do not control, they capture it by rotating the Territory to face them.

Resolve effects and victory checks that occur after the Capture step before drawing.

Draw

Draw one card.

If the Draw Pile cannot complete a draw, shuffle the Discard Pile to form a new Draw Pile and continue. If the Draw Pile and Discard Pile cannot provide the full draw, draw as many cards as possible. Cards already drawn during that draw are not shuffled back.

Action Opportunities

The active player has one normal Action Opportunity each turn. It may be used before movement or, if unused, after movement.

During an Action Opportunity, the player may:

- play one card for its Action effect; or
- perform one rule or faction action that explicitly uses an Action Opportunity.

An additional Action Opportunity permits one additional qualifying action at the stated timing. It does not grant movement unless stated.

Movement

Advance, hold, or withdraw. Resolve any battle caused by movement immediately. When movement begins a battle, that movement ends and all unused movement is lost.

Cleanup

Resolve end-of-turn effects. If the active player has more than three cards in Hand, they discard until they have three. The turn ends.

5. Movement

How it works

During movement, you may move one position toward the opponent, remain where you are, or move one position toward your own end. Entering the opponent's position starts a battle.

A battle stops the current movement. Winning does not automatically let you continue moving; follow-up movement must come from an Order, card, or other specific effect.

Complete rules

A **position** is any location a Player Token may occupy:

- each Territory;
- the position immediately before either end of the Gauntlet; and
- the position immediately beyond either end.

During the Movement step, choose one:

- **Advance:** move one position toward the opponent's end.
- **Hold:** remain in the current position.
- **Withdraw:** move one position toward your own end.

A player cannot voluntarily withdraw beyond their own end. Player Tokens cannot move through or past one another.

If an effect grants additional movement, resolve it one position at a time unless stated otherwise. Entering an occupied position begins a battle. When that happens, the current movement sequence ends and any remaining movement is lost.

Entering an occupied Territory

Move the attacking token into the contested Territory before the battle. During the unresolved battle, the defender remains the occupant. If the attacker wins, the defender retreats and the attacker becomes the occupant.

Movement after battle

A player moves after a battle only when a rule or effect explicitly permits it. That movement is a new movement sequence and may start a new battle if the effect allows it.

6. Battles

How it works

A battle begins when one player enters the other's position. The moving player is the attacker and the other player is the defender.

First resolve effects that happen as the battle opens. Each player may then set one card from their Hand as a **Gambit**. Gambits are costly because they normally go to the Graveyard afterward.

Next, each player sets their Hand aside and draws three temporary cards to form a **Reserve**. Reveal Gambits, then each player may choose one Reserve card as a **Tactic**. Reveal Tactics, resolve the card effects, and roll dice. The higher battle total wins. If the totals are tied while the defender controls the contested Territory, Defender's Advantage means the defender wins the tie. Defender's Advantage is a tie rule, not the ordinary advantage mechanic that changes how dice are rolled.

Complete rules

The player whose movement or effect starts the battle is the **attacker**. The other player is the **defender**. Those roles remain fixed through the Aftermath of the battle.

Resolve each battle in this order:

1. Resolve opening effects.
2. Set Gambits.
3. Set Hands aside and form Reserves.
4. Reveal Gambits.
5. Choose Tactics.
6. Reveal Tactics.
7. Resolve the battle.
8. Resolve the Aftermath of the battle.

1. Opening effects

Establish the attacker, defender, and contested position. Resolve effects that occur when a battle would begin, when a battle opens, or before Gambits are set.

A mechanic such as Terms may prevent the pending battle. If no battle is fought, battle, victory, loss, and Aftermath triggers do not occur.

2. Set Gambits

Unless an effect changes the order:

1. the attacker sets up to one eligible Gambit face down or passes;
2. the defender sets up to one eligible Gambit face down or passes.

A card with a **Gambit** or **Battle** effect is eligible. Setting a Gambit is optional.

3. Form Reserves

Each player sets their Hand physically aside, then draws three cards to form a **Reserve**.

- The set-aside cards remain in Hand.
- A player may inspect and arrange their own Reserve freely.
- The Reserve is hidden from the opponent and separate from the Hand.
- Effects may modify the number of cards drawn.

4. Reveal Gambits

Reveal all Gambits simultaneously.

Effects that expressly resolve before other Gambit effects resolve first. After that, resolve remaining Gambit effects using the shared-timing rule below.

A face-up Gambit that was revealed early remains in battle and resolves at this stage unless its text says otherwise.

5. Choose Tactics

Unless an effect changes the order:

1. the attacker chooses up to one eligible Tactic from Reserve face down or passes;
2. the defender chooses up to one eligible Tactic from Reserve face down or passes.

A card with a **Tactic** or **Battle** effect is eligible.

6. Reveal Tactics

Reveal all Tactics simultaneously. Resolve their effects using the shared-timing rule.

A face-up Tactic revealed early remains in battle and waits for this stage unless its text says otherwise.

7. Resolve the battle

Resolve all effects that occur before dice are rolled. Then each player normally rolls one six-sided die.

Advantage and disadvantage

Combine all instances of advantage and disadvantage. They cancel one-for-one.

- For each net advantage, roll one additional die and use the highest result.
- For each net disadvantage, roll one additional die and use the lowest result.

After selecting the die result, resolve rerolls and changes to the die result in their specified order. Then apply numerical modifiers to determine the battle total.

Determine the winner

The higher battle total wins.

Defender's Advantage: This is a tie rule, not an instance of the ordinary advantage mechanic. If battle totals are tied and the defender controls the contested Territory, the defender wins. Defender's Advantage does not grant an additional die. It also applies during a Last Stand battle, so the defender wins tied Last Stand battle totals even though no Territory is contested there.

If a tie is not resolved by Defender's Advantage or another effect, both players reroll. Cards and effects already in use remain active.

Shared-timing rule

When multiple controlled effects resolve at the same time:

1. the attacker resolves one effect they control;
2. the defender resolves one effect they control;
3. continue alternating until no effects remain at that timing.

Each player chooses the order of effects they control. Simultaneous reveal does not mean simultaneous resolution.

Multiple and additional Gambits or Tactics

An effect may allow a player to set or choose more than the normal limit. Unless stated otherwise, that permission is optional.

When a player may choose more than one Tactic, they choose all of them simultaneously. Each remains a separate Tactic.

When an effect permits an **additional Tactic** after the normal choice:

- the card must have an eligible Tactic or Battle effect;
- if Tactics are already revealed, play it face up;
- resolve only effects whose timing remains available;
- do not reopen Tactic choices, reveal timing, Surveillance, or Interference; and
- follow the normal Tactic destination unless stated otherwise.

Replacements and revisions

A replacement takes the same role as the card it replaces.

- A replacement Gambit must be Gambit-eligible.
- A replacement Tactic must be Tactic-eligible.
- Place it in the face state instructed by the replacing effect.
- Replacement does not reopen an earlier timing window.
- Only unresolved effects whose timing remains available can resolve.

When an effect lets a player revise a choice, the revised choice does not create another reveal, Surveillance, Interference, or replacement opportunity unless stated otherwise.

Reveal and information

To reveal a face-down card, turn it face up and leave it face up.

To reveal a Hand or Reserve, its owner shows the entire zone to the opponent. The cards remain in that zone.

Negation

A negated card has no effect but remains in battle and keeps its role and normal destination unless stated otherwise.

An effect cannot be negated after it resolves.

Copied effects

When instructed to resolve another card's printed effect:

- resolve only the specified effect;
 - treat **you** and **your** as the player resolving it;
 - treat **this card** as the card whose text is being resolved;
 - pay all costs and satisfy all requirements, targets, and timing restrictions;
 - do not move the source card unless instructed;
 - do not reopen an earlier timing window; and
 - do not choose another effect that itself resolves another effect unless expressly allowed.
-

7. The Aftermath of the Battle

How it works

After the dice determine a winner, resolve the consequences of the battle. The loser retreats, the winner takes or keeps the contested position, and any additional retreat or capture effects occur. Then battle cards go to their normal destinations.

Gambits go to the Graveyard. Tactics and cards left in Reserve go to the Discard Pile. Remember: **Gambits go to the Graveyard.**

Complete rules

Resolve the Aftermath in this order:

1. Determine the battle result.
2. Apply effects that replace losing with withdrawal.
3. If the battle still has a winner, resolve immediate result triggers.
4. Resolve normal retreat and occupation, including replacements.
5. Resolve additional retreats and final-position effects.
6. Resolve other Aftermath effects that occur before cards leave battle.
7. Move battle cards to their destinations.
8. Resolve effects triggered by those destinations.
9. Resolve effects at the end of the Aftermath, including follow-up movement.

Normal result

Unless an effect says otherwise:

- a losing attacker returns to the position from which they entered;
- a losing defender retreats one position toward their own end;
- a winning attacker occupies the contested position; and
- a winning defender remains there.

Additional retreats resolve one position at a time. A player cannot retreat through the opponent. A player on their final Territory may retreat beyond the Gauntlet normally.

Normal card destinations

During the destination step:

- Gambits go to their owners' Graveyards;
- Tactics go to their owners' Discard Piles; and
- cards remaining in Reserve go to their owners' Discard Piles.

A card-specific instruction overrides the normal destination.

A card returned to its **source** returns to the zone from which it entered battle unless another rule gives it a different destination.

Result and destination triggers

Immediate victory triggers occur before retreat unless the effect states otherwise. Effects that require the final occupied position occur after retreat and occupation. Effects triggered by cards entering a destination occur after the cards move there.

Effects at the **end of the Aftermath** occur after normal destinations and destination-triggered effects.

8. Withdrawal and Retreat

How it works

Withdrawal is leaving a battle without determining a winner. **Retreat** is forced movement after losing. They are not the same.

When an effect causes withdrawal, the battle ends immediately. No one wins or loses, so win, loss, and retreat effects do not happen. The players still clean up their battle cards normally.

Complete rules

Voluntary movement withdrawal

During the Movement step, a player may move one position toward their own end. This is ordinary movement and does not begin a battle.

Effect-caused withdrawal from battle

Unless the effect says otherwise, withdrawal ends the battle immediately.

- Do not resolve remaining Battle effects.
- Do not roll dice.
- There is no winner or loser.
- Win, loss, and retreat triggers do not occur.
- Resolve withdrawal movement, then normal battle destinations and cleanup.

Movement:

- an attacking player returns to the position from which they entered;
- a defending player moves one position toward their own end, and the attacker occupies the contested position;
- if both withdraw, move the attacker first, then the defender.

Withdrawal during opening effects

If an effect causes one or both players to withdraw during opening effects and prevents the pending battle, use the same attacker and defender movement above. Because no battle is fought:

- no player wins, loses, or retreats;

- no battle or Aftermath triggers occur; and
- no battle-card destinations or cleanup occur.

The established attacker and defender roles are used only to determine the withdrawal movement. Resolve any remaining instructions from the effect or accepted Terms after that movement.

If a battle following refused Terms ends through withdrawal, return the Stake and do not impose or ratify the Proposal unless a specific rule says otherwise.

Retreat

Retreat is forced displacement after losing a battle. It is not movement or withdrawal.

Effects that trigger from movement or withdrawal do not trigger from retreat unless they say so.

9. Territory Control

How it works

Your token shows where you are. A Territory's orientation shows who controls it. Winning a battle lets you occupy an opposing Territory, but you normally do not capture it immediately. You must still be there at the start of your next turn.

This gives the opponent a chance to counterattack before control changes.

Complete rules

Control

The player a Territory faces controls it. Control does not require occupation.

Each player begins controlling the three Territories on their side. Control changes only through capture or an effect that explicitly changes it.

Occupation

A player normally occupies the position containing their token. During an unresolved attack, the defender remains the occupant until the result is resolved.

A player may occupy a Territory controlled by the opponent.

Capture

At the start of a player's turn, if they occupy a Territory they do not control, they capture it by rotating the Territory to face them.

A captured Territory remains under that player's control until the opponent captures it or an effect changes control.

Counterattack window

Because ordinary capture occurs at the start of the occupying player's next turn, the current controller normally receives one turn to drive the occupier away.

10. Running the Gauntlet

How it works

To win normally, push the opponent beyond their final Territory, capture that Territory, then advance beyond the column. This begins a **Last Stand battle**. Win that battle to run the Gauntlet and win the game.

The defender is harder to defeat in a Last Stand: Defender's Advantage means they win tied battle totals, and they separately add +1 to their battle total.

Complete rules

Forcing the opponent beyond the Gauntlet

When a player loses while occupying the final Territory at their end, they retreat beyond the Territory column. The winner occupies the final Territory.

The battle ends normally. The winner does not advance beyond the Gauntlet unless another rule explicitly permits it.

If the winner still occupies the final Territory at the start of their next turn, they capture it during the Capture step.

Last Stand battle

After capturing the opponent's final Territory, a player may advance beyond the Gauntlet during movement. If the opponent is there, this begins a Last Stand battle.

During a Last Stand battle:

- Defender's Advantage applies, so the defender wins tied battle totals; and
- the defender separately adds +1 to their battle total.

If the attacker wins, they have run the Gauntlet and immediately win the game.

If the defender wins, the attacker retreats to the final Territory. Play continues.

Territory-specific effects do not apply in a Last Stand battle unless they expressly apply beyond the Gauntlet.

11. Game Zones

How it works

Keep cards in clearly defined places. Your **Hand** is your permanent private set of cards. A **Reserve** exists only during one battle. The **Discard Pile** cycles back into the Draw Pile, while the **Graveyard** normally does not.

Complete rules

Draw Pile

The face-down pile formed from the Playable Deck.

Hand

The private cards held by a player. The normal Hand limit is three at end-of-turn cleanup.

Setting a Hand aside during battle does not move its cards to another zone.

Reserve

A temporary private zone formed during one battle. It is separate from the Hand. Its owner may inspect it freely.

At the end of the battle, cards remaining in Reserve normally go to the Discard Pile.

Gambit area

The area containing cards set as Gambits for the current battle. Gambits normally go to the Graveyard during the Aftermath.

Tactic area

The area containing cards chosen or played as Tactics for the current battle. Tactics normally go to the Discard Pile during the Aftermath.

Discard Pile

A face-up pile of recyclable cards. When a Draw Pile cannot complete a draw, shuffle the Discard Pile to form a new Draw Pile.

Graveyard

A face-up pile outside normal circulation. Cards there are not reshuffled unless an effect moves them.

Asset Bank

The public area containing a player's banked Assets.

Faction zones

A faction may create additional named zones such as Treasury, bound cards, Mission areas, or progress tracks. Follow the rules that create them.

12. Actions and Assets

How it works

During your Action Opportunity, play one card for its Action effect or use a faction action. Most one-time Actions go to the Discard Pile. Some cards become **Assets**, which stay in play and provide later effects.

Your Asset limit equals the number of Territories you control. When banking a new Asset at the limit, you may discard one existing Asset to make room.

Complete rules

Action effects

To play a card for its Action effect:

1. play it from Hand during an Action Opportunity;
2. satisfy all requirements and costs;
3. resolve the Action effect; and
4. put it in the Discard Pile unless it becomes an Asset or Overlay or specifies another destination.

Assets

A card is an Asset only when an effect banks it in the Asset Bank.

A player's Asset limit equals the number of Territories they control.

- A Territory occupied but not controlled does not increase the limit.
- If the limit falls below the number of Assets controlled, immediately discard Assets until within the limit.
- An inactive Asset still counts unless a rule says otherwise.

Replacing an Asset

When banking an Asset at the Asset limit, the player may discard one Asset they control to make room and bank the new Asset during the same Action Opportunity.

An effect that prevents an Asset from leaving play also prevents replacing it this way. Any consequence of the replaced Asset leaving play still occurs.

Activating and discarding Assets

Use **activate** when using an Asset's printed ability. If the effect requires the Asset to be discarded, put it in its owner's Discard Pile unless stated otherwise.

Whenever a player could play a card for its Action effect, they may instead discard one Asset they control. This uses the Action Opportunity.

13. Overlays

How it works

An Overlay sits on a Territory and temporarily replaces the exposed effect beneath it. Only the top Overlay is active, but covered Overlays remain attached.

The player who controls the Territory also controls its Overlays. Ownership does not change, so a removed Overlay still goes to its owner's destination.

Complete rules

An Overlay is a persistent card attached to a Territory. It supersedes the printed effect immediately beneath it while exposed.

Unless an effect says otherwise:

- the top exposed Overlay is active;
- lower Overlays remain attached but dormant;
- a dormant Overlay's effect and expiration timer pause;
- a printed removal condition remains active while dormant;
- when the top Overlay leaves, the next becomes active, or the Territory's effect becomes active if none remain;
- the controller of the underlying Territory controls the Overlay and makes its choices;
- Overlay control changes when Territory control changes;
- Overlay ownership does not change;
- each Overlay faces the same direction as the Territory beneath it and rotates with it;
- an Overlay is not an Asset and does not count toward the Asset limit; and
- when removed, put it in its owner's Discard Pile unless stated otherwise.

On an Overlay, **you** means its current controller unless the text identifies its owner, the player who placed it, or another player.

14. Factions

How it works

Each faction changes how you approach the same shared game of movement, battle, occupation, and capture. Factions add resources, special procedures, or alternate victory conditions, but they do not replace the normal rules unless they say so.

Read your faction's short introduction before choosing a first-game Deck. The definitive faction guide contains the full rules and exact card text.

Complete rules

Military

The Military gains **Command** from the first battle it wins each turn and spends Command on Leader-specific **Orders**.

- **General:** Onward, Rally, and Rout support attacking and follow-up battles.
- **Commandant:** Entrench, Repel, and Fortify support defense, extra retreat, and immediate capture.

Military has no alternate victory and wins by running the Gauntlet.

Approved movement Orders:

Onward — 1 Command: During your Movement step, before a battle begins, move one additional position. This movement may start a battle.

Rout — 2 Command: At the end of the Aftermath of a battle you initiated and won, advance one position. This movement may start another battle.

Diplomats

Diplomats use **Influence**, **Terms**, and **Proposals**. During opening effects, one Diplomat may offer Terms. The opponent accepts or refuses.

- Accepted Terms prevent the battle and may ratify a Treaty Article.
- Refused Terms continue into battle and may be imposed if the Diplomat wins.
- Five ratified Proposals can produce a Peace Treaty victory at the start of the Diplomat's turn.

Only one player may offer Terms for a pending battle. The attacker has the first opportunity. If the attacker passes, the defender may offer. Once either offers, the other cannot offer for that battle, even after refusal.

Financiers

Financiers gain and spend **Capital**, store cards in a **Treasury**, and buy **Deeds** representing economic ownership of Territories.

A Deed remains owned independently of who controls or occupies its Territory. Financiers may win by running the Gauntlet or through **Controlling Interest** as defined in their faction guide.

Intelligence

Intelligence assigns **Missions**, gains **Intel**, and builds **Operation Progress** toward a Special Operation victory.

During each battle, Intelligence may use Surveillance once during the Gambit stage and once during the Tactic stage. Interference may remove a revealed opposing choice at its specified cost. Revised choices do not reopen the information window.

Mystics

Mystics complete three public **Rites**. The first completed Rite unlocks **Invocation**; the second unlocks **Transmutation**; after all three, the Mystic may begin the **Ritual of Ascendance**.

The Ritual is completed by initiating and winning a battle while its three cards remain bound. Losing a battle before completion interrupts it. Withdrawal neither completes nor interrupts it.

Inquisition

The Inquisition gains **Conviction**, sends opposing Tactics to the Graveyard through **Condemnation**, and spends Conviction on **Purges**.

It may win normally or through **Purification** when the opponent cannot draw at the specified start-of-turn check because both Draw Pile and Discard Pile are empty.

15. Standard Language and Reference Rules

How it works

Use the same verbs and zone names everywhere. Clear language makes card interactions easier to resolve.

Complete rules

Use these verbs consistently:

- **set** a Gambit;
- **choose** a Tactic;
- **play** a card for a printed effect;
- **activate** an Asset;
- **use** an Order, Surveillance, Interference, Leverage, Subsidize, or another named faction ability; and
- **resolve** an effect.

Avoid generic phrases such as “use a Gambit,” “use a Tactic,” or “use an Asset.”

Capitalize the names of game zones and formal procedures when referring to them as game terms: Hand, Reserve, Draw Pile, Discard Pile, Graveyard, Asset Bank, Gambit, Tactic, Aftermath, Territory, and Action Opportunity.

Use **the Aftermath of the battle**, not “the battle's Aftermath.”

Quick Battle Reference

1. Opening effects.
 2. Attacker sets a Gambit or passes.
 3. Defender sets a Gambit or passes.
 4. Set Hands aside; each player draws three to form a Reserve.
 5. Reveal and resolve Gambits.
 6. Attacker chooses a Tactic or passes.
 7. Defender chooses a Tactic or passes.
 8. Reveal and resolve Tactics.
 9. Resolve pre-dice effects, roll, and determine the winner.
 10. Resolve the Aftermath.
 11. Gambits go to Graveyards; Tactics and remaining Reserve cards go to Discard Piles.
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