

Run the Gauntlet

Build. Advance. Contend.
Capture.

The operating guide for Influence, Proposals, Diplomat Leaders, and the diplomatic path through the Gauntlet.

GAUNTLET.RUN



Gauntlet v0.7.2 · Diplomats Guide

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A field guide to institutional power

Gauntlet

Diplomats Guide

Modular Rules Publication

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TACTICAL CARD-AND-TERRITORY GAME

GAUNTLET.RUN

At the table

Rules and Reference

Keep the **Diplomat Reference Card**, **Influence Tracker**, and your nine **Proposal/Treaty Article cards** visible. They carry the information you need most often during play: Stakes, Requirements, accepted and refused outcomes, and public Peace Treaty progress.

Use the **Player's Guide** for the shared Onset, battle, movement, Occupation, Capture, and victory rules. When an unusual Proposal, Sanction, mirror-match, or timing interaction comes up, ask the **Rules Arbiter**. Use the **Comprehensive Gauntlet Rules** when you want the exact technical procedure behind the ruling.

You do not need every Proposal memorized before your first game. Learn the Influence loop, understand what acceptance and refusal do, keep the Proposal cards in view, and negotiate from the battlefield in front of you.



8 Your First Game

For your first Diplomat game, keep four ideas in mind:

- 1. **Choose a Proposal for both answers.** Do not look only at what happens if the opponent accepts. Before offering Terms, ask whether the Refused effect also helps if the opponent says no.
- 2. **Leave room for Leverage when it matters.** A high Stake can consume most of your available Influence. If you expect refusal, consider whether you want Influence left to strengthen the battle.
- 3. **Keep playing the Gauntlet.** Peace Treaty progress does not replace position. Battles create the moments when Terms happen, and running the Gauntlet remains a complete victory route.
- 4. **Track new ratifications, not offers.** Offering the same Proposal repeatedly can still be tactically useful, but only six different ratified Proposals satisfy the Peace Treaty.

Choosing your first Leader

Choose the **Ambassador** if you want to encourage agreement and turn accepted Terms into extra card flow.

Choose the **Senator** if you want more freedom to stake Influence aggressively and are willing to trade cards for protection when a refused Proposal ends in defeat.

Common mistakes

Do not spend staked Influence on Leverage. The Stake is unavailable until the Terms resolve.

Do not gain the normal ratification reward merely because you offered a Proposal. The reward comes only when an **unratified** Proposal becomes ratified by acceptance or imposition.

Do not check the Peace Treaty the instant your sixth Proposal becomes ratified. Check after Capture and before Draw at the start of your turn.

Begin here

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Reading guide. Start with the opening sections, then use chapter headings to find the procedure you need. Exact edge cases belong in the Complete Rules.

Diplomats

Make the enemy agree.

The Diplomats make every impending battle a negotiation. Before the fight proceeds, you can offer **Terms** by choosing a **Proposal** and staking **Influence**. Your opponent then chooses: accept the bargain and avoid the battle, or refuse it and face the Proposal's Refused effect while you retain the option to spend Influence on **Leverage**.

Accepted or successfully imposed Proposals can become **Treaty Articles**. Ratify six different Proposals and you can win through the **Peace Treaty** instead of running the Gauntlet.

The basic Diplomat rhythm is:

Offer Terms → make either answer useful → ratify the Proposal → build toward six Treaty Articles.

The Diplomats still play the battlefield. Position matters because Terms happen when a battle is about to occur, and refused Terms can still become real fights. Your political game works because it is attached to the same movement, battle, and Territory pressure as everyone else's game.

7 Putting It Together

Suppose you have **4 Influence** and offer **Ultimatum**, which has a Stake of 2.

Move your Influence Tracker from 4 to 2 while the Stake is committed. Your opponent refuses, so Ultimatum gives you its Refused benefit and the battle continues.

Before the dice are rolled, you decide to spend **1 Influence** on Leverage for **+1 to your battle total**. Move your Influence Tracker from 2 to 1. You now have 1 available Influence, with 2 still staked.

You win the battle.

Your 2 staked Influence returns, so move the tracker from 1 to 3. If Ultimatum was not already ratified, you choose to impose it, flip it to its Treaty Article side, and normally gain **2 Influence** for the new imposed ratification. Move the tracker to **5 Influence**. You finish with 5 Influence and one more Treaty Article than you had before the battle.

The opponent's refusal did not merely cause a fight. It gave you a tactical bonus, access to Leverage, and a chance to turn the victory into Peace Treaty progress.

If you had lost instead, the 2 staked Influence would be lost, so the tracker would remain at 1. A Senator who had not already used Political Capital that turn could instead trade cards from Hand to recover some or all of that stake, moving the tracker up by 1 for each Influence recovered.

Senator

Procedure endures.



Playstyle: risk management, refusal pressure, and resilient high-stake Terms.

- **Political Capital — No Action · Once per turn · After losing following refused Terms.** When you would lose staked Influence, put up to that many cards from your Hand in your Graveyard. Recover 1 staked Influence for each card you put there; lose the rest of the stake.

Political Capital protects the **stake**, not Influence you already spent on Leverage. If you stake 2 Influence, spend other Influence on Leverage, and then lose, the Senator can recover up to the 2 staked Influence by sacrificing up to two cards from Hand. The Leverage cost is already gone.

The Senator can therefore take political risks that would be more dangerous for the Ambassador, but the protection is not free. Saving Influence may cost the cards you need for future battles or Actions.

1 How the Diplomats Change Gauntlet

The Diplomats add one decision before many battles: **can this conflict be settled on Terms that help me?**

You track **Influence**, from 0 to 10. During Onset, when Terms are available, you may offer an eligible Proposal and stake its listed Influence. The opponent accepts or refuses.

- **Accepted Terms** end the battle during Onset. Apply the Proposal's Accepted effect. If it was not already ratified, it becomes a Treaty Article and normally gives you 1 Influence.
- **Refused Terms** apply the Proposal's Refused effect and the battle continues. Before the dice are rolled, you may spend available Influence on Leverage. Leverage is optional: whether or not you use it, if you win the resulting battle, return the stake and you may impose the Proposal if it is unratified; a newly imposed Proposal normally gives you 2 Influence. If you lose, you lose the stake.

This means a Proposal is not simply a request for peace. It is a fork in the game state. A strong offer gives you a useful result whether the opponent accepts or refuses.

Terms and Leverage are **No Action** features. They do not spend your normal Action for the turn.

2 Your Faction Components

You need:

- one Diplomat Leader: the **Ambassador** or the **Senator**;
- one **Influence Tracker**;
- one **Diplomat Reference Card**;
- nine double-sided **Proposal/Treaty Article cards**; and
- the Diplomat cards included in your Deck.

Place your Leader and Reference Card face up where both players can see them. Put the Influence Tracker beside them and set it to **1 Influence**. Place all nine Proposal cards with their **Proposal** sides face up.

Use the Influence Tracker to show your **available Influence**. Move it up when you gain or recover Influence and down when you stake, spend, or lose Influence. A stake is not spent: moving the tracker down shows that the staked Influence is temporarily unavailable. Keep that amount committed to the Proposal while the Terms are unresolved. If the stake returns, move the tracker back up by that amount; if the stake is lost, leave the tracker where it is. Influence spent on Leverage is spent and does not return with the stake.

Each Proposal shows three things that matter when you offer it:

- its **Stake**;
- its **Requirement**; and
- what happens if the opponent **Accepts** or **Refuses**.

When a Proposal becomes ratified, flip it to its Treaty Article side. Leave ratified Treaty Articles visible so both players can see your Peace Treaty progress.

6 • YOUR LEADERS

Ambassador

Words first. War last.



Playstyle: agreement, card flow, and making acceptance attractive.

- **Cordiality — No Action · Once per turn · After accepted Terms.** After the opponent accepts your Terms, draw one card.

The Ambassador gets extra value when the opponent says yes. Cordiality works even when the tactical benefit of the Proposal itself is modest: acceptance can progress the Peace Treaty, return your stake, give the normal new-ratification reward when applicable, and draw you a card.

The Ambassador therefore likes offers the opponent might genuinely accept. You are not trying to make every Proposal threatening; sometimes the strongest political move is presenting a deal that is good enough for both players that the opponent chooses the Treaty Article for you.

5 Your Path to Victory

The Diplomats can win in either of two ways.

Run the Gauntlet

You can always win through the shared battlefield victory: control the entire Gauntlet, or force the opponent to make a Last Stand and win the resulting battle.

Terms can support this route directly. An accepted Proposal can change position without a battle, while a refused Proposal can improve the fight that follows.

Peace Treaty

Your faction victory is the **Peace Treaty**.

At the start of your turn, **after Capture and before Draw**, check your ratified Proposals. If **six different Proposals** are ratified, you win.

The timing matters: reaching six Treaty Articles does not immediately end the game in the middle of the opponent's turn. You must reach your next Peace Treaty check.

This creates a visible race. Your opponent can see how close you are, and you still have to survive the battlefield long enough for the Treaty to take effect.

At the table: Once you reach five Treaty Articles, both players should be very aware that the next successful ratification may create a win at the start of your next turn.

3 Influence

You begin with **1 Influence** and can have no more than **10**.

Influence has two main jobs:

1. **Stake it to offer Terms.** The Proposal tells you how much Influence must be staked. Lower your available Influence by that amount while the Terms are unresolved.
2. **Spend it on Leverage after refused Terms.** Leverage increases your battle total before dice are rolled.

Staked Influence is tied up in the negotiation. You cannot spend it as Leverage.

What happens to the stake depends on how the Terms conclude:

RESULT	WHAT HAPPENS TO THE STAKE?
Opponent accepts	Return it.
Opponent refuses and you win	Return it.
Opponent refuses and you lose	Lose it.
Battle ends without a winner	Return it.

A new ratification then normally adds Influence on top of the returned stake:

- **accepted new Proposal:** gain **1 Influence**;
- **imposed new Proposal after you win:** gain **2 Influence** unless that Proposal says otherwise.

If the Proposal was already ratified, you can still offer it for its tactical effects, but it does not become a new Treaty Article and gives no normal ratification reward.

Remember: Stake and Leverage are different commitments. The stake may come back. Influence spent on Leverage is spent.

Leverage

After your Terms are refused and before battle dice are rolled, you may spend available Influence to increase your battle total.

BATTLE-TOTAL BONUS	INFLUENCE COST
+1	1
+2	3
+3	6
+4	10

INFLUENCE · CONTINUED

The cost grows by one additional Influence for each step: the first +1 costs 1, the next costs 2 more, the next 3 more, and so on.

Leverage is optional. Sometimes the better choice is to preserve Influence for a later Proposal rather than turn all of it into one battle bonus.

4 Terms, Proposals, and Diplomat Features

Terms

Terms — No Action · During Onset. When a battle has been initiated and Terms are available, choose one eligible Proposal whose Requirement is satisfied and stake its listed Influence. Your opponent accepts or refuses.

Terms happen before Gambits. If the opponent accepts, the battle sequence ends during Onset: no Gambits are set, there is no battle winner or loser, and there is no Aftermath.

If the opponent refuses, apply the Proposal's Refused effect and continue toward the battle. The refused Proposal remains the Proposal tied to that battle; if you later win, you may impose it if it is not already ratified.

Your Proposal cards contain the exact offers. You do not need to memorize all nine. Read the board state, look through the eligible Proposals, and choose one whose accepted and refused outcomes both matter.

Ratification and Treaty Articles

An unratified Proposal can become a Treaty Article in two normal ways:

- the opponent **accepts** it; or
- the opponent **refuses**, then you win the resulting battle and **impose** it.

Flip a newly ratified Proposal to its Treaty Article side. Each different ratified Proposal counts once toward the Peace Treaty.

A Proposal that is already ratified remains usable. Ratification changes your victory progress, not whether the Proposal can ever be offered again.

Sanctions

Some Diplomat cards are **Sanctions**. Their titles begin with **Sanctions:** and they can punish an opponent for refusing Terms.

When a Sanction enters play because an opponent refused your Terms, that opponent remains associated with it. Unless the card says otherwise, the Sanction remains until that opponent later accepts your Terms, then goes to your Discard Pile.

You do not need the technical Sanctions rules to start playing. The important first-game idea is simple: repeated refusal can leave lasting political consequences on the table.