



Game Contents

- 140 game cards
- 4 reference cards

Introduction

The space race is on!

You are battling to build the biggest, baddest rockets possible and send them soaring into space. Each rocket requires metal, fuel, and the expertise needed for liftoff. As you build your rockets, beware of your opponents, who are eager to steal your goods and sabotage your work—you may even have some tricks of your own to thwart their progress.

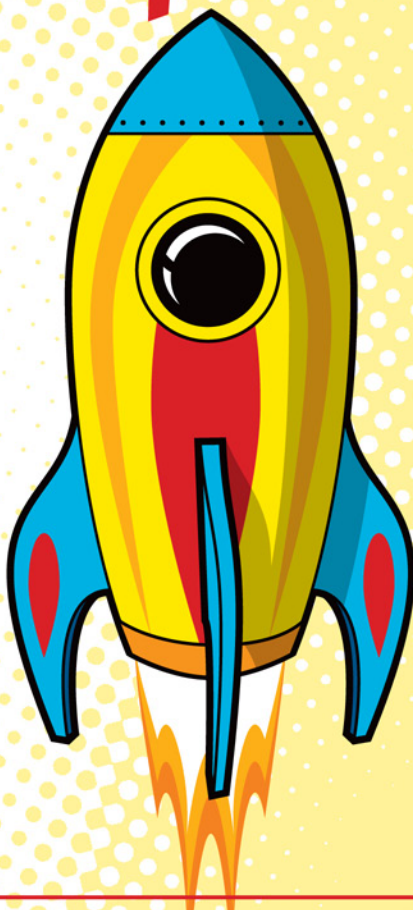
All the while, the launch pad is being constructed—as soon as it's ready, the rockets that are “go” for launch will blast off into space, leaving all others behind!

Do you have what it takes to make your rockets soar before it's too late?

Objectives

- **Build Rockets!** Completed Rockets in the Launch Zone score points when the Launch Pad is constructed. The player with the most points wins.
- **Be ruthless!** Sabotage other players' progress through the clever use of Action cards.

LAUNCH PAD™



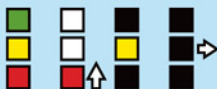
Placement Diagrams

Placement diagrams are included on the left side of every card to indicate where it is played in relation to a player's Game Zones and whether or not it advances (typically with a Rocket).

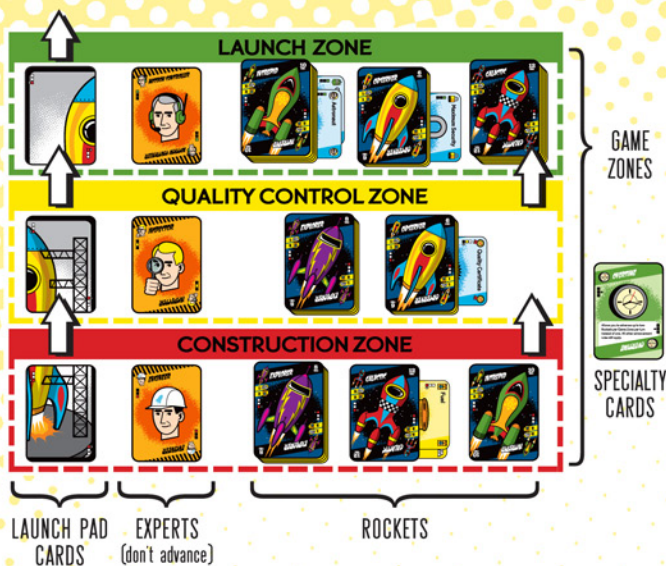


Each diagram has three color-coded square icons, one to represent each Game Zone. The card is played in the Game Zone whose color is indicated in the diagram. Black icons indicate that the card will never be played or exist in that Zone. White icons indicate that the card may exist in that Zone, but only after advancement. Arrows indicate advancement or placement in relation to the Zones.

Examples:



Game Play Diagram



Each player will construct Rockets and advance them through three Game Zones: the Construction Zone, Quality Control Zone, and Launch Zone.

Set Up

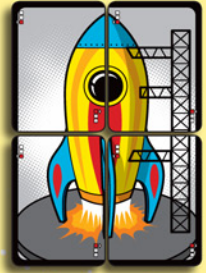
1. Reserve space in front of each player that is sufficient for game play, according to the **Game Play Diagram**. Each player will have his own Game Zones.
2. Reserve space in the center of the table for a draw and a discard pile, as well as for the Launch Pad area.
3. Deal a game reference card to each player.
4. Set the four Launch Pad cards aside.
5. Shuffle the remaining cards and deal six cards to each player.
6. Shuffle the four Launch Pad cards into the bottom half of the remaining deck.
7. Place the deck face down in the center of the table to form the draw pile.
8. The player who is most excited to play goes first!



×6

Overview

The first player takes a turn and play continues in a clockwise direction. Players gather Rockets, Components, Experts, and Bonus cards to build Rockets and ready them for launch. Once all four Launch Pad cards are played together, forming a complete Launch Pad, the Countdown begins and each player gets one additional turn. After the final player takes his turn, the game is over and all players total their points. The player with the most points wins!



Card Types

The cards are divided into seven general types, which dictate how and when the cards are played. The card type is indicated by the background color. The following card types will be described in more detail later:

ROCKET – Rockets are the main scoring mechanism of the game. They are played in the Construction Zone and they advance to the Quality Control Zone, then to the Launch zone. Component and Bonus cards are played with a specific Rocket.



COMPONENT – Components consist of Metal and Fuel and are the elements with which each Rocket is built. Each Rocket requires varying amounts of both. Components are played with specific Rockets in the Construction Zone and remain with them as they advance through higher zones.



EXPERT – Experts consist of Engineers, Inspectors, and Mission Controllers. A Jack of All Trades can serve as any Expert. Each Game Zone has a corresponding Expert that is necessary for Rocket advancement and successful launch.



BONUS – Bonus cards consist of Quality Certificates, Astronauts, Oxygen, and Maximum Security. These cards give added protection to Rockets or score additional points at the end of the game. They are optionally added to the completed Rockets in the Launch Zone or Quality Control Zone, depending on the card. Each Rocket can have up to one of each type of Bonus card.



LAUNCH PAD – There are four Launch Pad cards, which collectively form the completed Launch Pad. When these cards are drawn, they are immediately played to the left of the player's Construction Zone. On each subsequent turn, they are advanced to the next Zone and finally onto the Launch Pad area.



ACTION – Action cards describe various actions that a player can take, such as sabotaging another player's Rocket or drawing extra cards. They are played by placing the card on the discard pile and carrying out the action described on the card.



SPECIALTY – Specialty cards describe an added ability or protection that is given to the player who plays them. They are played to the right of a player's Game Zones. The ability granted by the Specialty card remains in force as long as the card is in play.



Game Play — Turns

Each player's turn consists of the following steps, *in order*:

1. Advance all Launch Pad cards in the current player's Game Zones (required).
2. Advance completed Rockets to the next Game Zone (optional). Only one Rocket per Game Zone may be advanced.
3. Draw as many cards as are needed to reach the hand limit (six cards). One card may be drawn from the top of the discard pile, but the rest must be drawn from the draw pile. If any Launch Pad cards are drawn, they are immediately placed to the left of the player's Construction Zone and a replacement card is drawn.
4. Play as many playable cards as desired. A playable card consists of any card that can be placed according to standard placement rules or for which an action can be fully carried out.
5. If all cards in the hand are played, immediately draw up to the hand limit from the draw pile and continue playing (maximum of once per turn).
6. Discard as many cards as desired. A player's hand cannot exceed the hand limit at the end of his turn.

If the draw pile runs out of cards, the discard pile is shuffled and becomes the draw pile.

Rockets

Rocket building is the main focus of the game and the main scoring mechanism. Rockets are readied for launch by advancing through the Game Zones. Component and Bonus cards are played with individual Rockets during the various stages of their advancement. There are four different types of Rockets, each with varying point values and Component requirements.



OBSERVER
1 Metal, 1 Fuel
6 Points



EXPLORER
1 Metal, 2 Fuel
8 Points



INTREPID
2 Metal, 2 Fuel
10 Points



GALACTIC
3 Metal, 2 Fuel
12 Points

Building Rockets

Rockets are built by playing Rocket cards in the Construction Zone—see **Game Play Diagram**. Each Rocket is labeled with the required number of Components (Metal and Fuel) needed to complete it.



Once a Rocket card has been played, Component cards may be added to it by placing them horizontally underneath the Rocket card. Component cards can only be played with a Rocket. Once played, they remain permanently attached to that Rocket and cannot be moved or removed, except as the result of a “Sabotage” Action card—see **Card Reference**. There are precisely enough Component cards included in the deck to complete all of the Rockets.



Once all of the required Components are played with a Rocket, the Rocket is complete and no additional Component cards may be played with it. The Component cards are then rotated and stacked underneath the Rocket card and the Rocket is ready for advancement.



Rockets may be built even if an Engineer is not yet in play.

Advancing Rockets

Rockets Advance from the Construction Zone to the Quality Control Zone, then to the Launch Zone. To advance a Rocket, the Rocket card and all of its Component and Bonus cards are moved from one Zone to the next. In order for a Rocket to advance, it must meet the following criteria *at the beginning of a player's turn*:

- It is complete (has all of the required Components)
- The Expert for the current Game Zone is in place

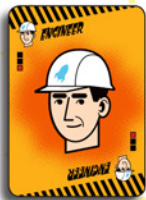
Only one Rocket may advance per Game Zone, per turn (i.e., in a single turn, one Rocket may advance from the Construction Zone to the Quality Control Zone and a *different* Rocket may advance from the Quality Control Zone to the Launch Zone).

Rockets can be advanced in any order, regardless of the order in which they were built. There is no limit to the number of Rockets that can exist in any Game Zone.

Experts

Each Game Zone has a corresponding Expert that must be in place for Rockets to advance from that Zone or for full points to be scored at the end of the game.

Expert cards are played on the left side of their corresponding Game Zone—see **Game Play Diagram**.



ENGINEER
Construction
Zone



INSPECTOR
Quality Control
Zone



MISSION CONTROLLER
Launch Zone



JACK OF ALL TRADES
Any Zone

Experts may be played in any order. Once an Expert is played, it cannot be replaced or moved to a different Game Zone for any reason. It can only be removed as the result of a “Recruitment” Action card—see **Card Reference**.

Bonus Cards

Bonus cards are optional. They are played with specific Rockets in order to offer additional protection or score bonus points at the end of the game.

Each Rocket can have up to one of each type of Bonus card, for a maximum of four Bonus cards per Rocket. They are played by placing the card horizontally underneath the Rocket and should remain visible to all players (they are never hidden beneath the Rocket).

Once played, Bonus cards remain permanently attached to a Rocket and cannot be moved or removed, except as specified by an Action card. Also, if a Rocket is moved back to a lower Game Zone or discarded as the result of an Action card, *all Bonus cards must immediately be discarded.*



QUALITY
CERTIFICATE



ASTRONAUT



OXYGEN



MAXIMUM
SECURITY

Quality Certificate

A Quality Certificate is played with a single Rocket located in the Quality Control Zone. When the Rocket advances to the Launch Zone, it remains with the Rocket. While in play, the Quality Certificate protects the Rocket from the “Quality Check” Action card—see **Card Reference**. At the end of the game, Rockets in the Launch Zone with a Quality Certificate score bonus points.



Astronauts and Oxygen

An Astronaut is played with a single Rocket located in the Launch Zone. Oxygen is also played with a Rocket in the Launch Zone. Astronauts require Oxygen to survive, but the cards can be played in any order. At the end of the game, Rockets in the Launch Zone that have an Astronaut *and* Oxygen score bonus points. Rockets that have an Astronaut but *no* Oxygen lose points. No points are scored or lost for Rockets that only have Oxygen.



Maximum Security

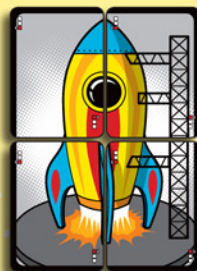
Maximum Security is played with a single Rocket located in the Launch Zone. While in play, Maximum Security protects the Rocket from the “Sabotage,” “Abort Mission,” and “Vacuum” Action cards—see **Card Reference**. Rockets do not score any additional points for having Maximum Security.



Launch Pad

The Launch Pad is constructed in parallel with Rocket construction and advancement. There are four independent Launch Pad cards that form a completed Launch Pad when placed together.

At the beginning of the game, The Launch Pad cards are shuffled in with the bottom half of the draw pile. When a player draws a Launch Pad card, he must immediately place it in his Construction Zone, to the left of the Engineer—see **Game Play Diagram**. This card does not count toward a player's hand limit and may be replaced by another card from the draw pile.



At the beginning of each turn, all Launch Pad cards in play in the current player's Game Zones must be advanced to the next Game Zone, even if no Expert is in place. From the Launch Zone, the Launch Pad cards advance to the Launch Pad area in the center of the table. If multiple Launch Pad cards are drawn by a player in a single turn, they are all placed in the Construction Zone, but only one will advance per Game Zone, per turn (similar to Rocket advancement).

Action Cards

Action cards describe various actions that a player can take that may benefit him or affect other players. Examples include sabotaging another player's Rocket, drawing extra cards, or stealing cards from other players' hands. Action cards are played by placing the card on the discard pile and following the instructions on the card. If the instructions cannot be carried out, the card cannot be played.

If an Action card results in the discarding of one or more players' cards, the player who played the Action card may choose the order in which the cards are placed on the discard pile.

If a player chooses to discard Action cards at the end of his turn, no action is taken.

See **Card Reference** for details on specific Action cards.



Specialty Cards

Specialty cards describe an added ability or protection that is given to a player. They take effect as soon as they are in play and remain in effect until they are replaced by another Specialty card or removed by the "Budget Cuts" Action card—see **Card Reference**. The extra abilities provided by Specialty cards apply only to the individual player who has the card in play.

Specialty cards are played to the right of the Game Zones, face up—see **Game Play Diagram**. Each player may have only one Specialty card in play at a time. A Specialty card may be replaced during the normal course of a player's turn by discarding the old card and immediately playing a new one in its place.

See **Card Reference** for details on specific Specialty cards.



The Countdown

As soon as the final Launch Pad card is advanced onto the Launch Pad area, the Launch Pad is complete and the Countdown begins. During the Countdown, each player takes one final turn, with the last turn taken by the player who completed the Launch Pad. When the Countdown is complete, the game is over and points are scored based on the Rockets in each player's Game Zones—see **Scoring**. The player with the most points is the winner!

Scoring

Only the cards in play at the end of the game are scored for points; players neither score nor lose points for cards retained in their hand. Points are scored for Rockets based on their Game Zone location. The number of points for each Rocket is labeled on the card. Bonus points are scored for Rockets with Astronauts and Quality Certificates, based on their condition and location.

EACH ROCKET (based on location)	in LAUNCH ZONE	+ FULL POINTS
	in QUALITY CONTROL ZONE	0 POINTS
	in CONSTRUCTION ZONE	- FULL POINTS
EACH ASTRONAUT (based on presence of Oxygen)	with OXYGEN	+ 4 POINTS
	without OXYGEN	- 4 POINTS
EACH QUALITY CERTIFICATE (based on location)	in LAUNCH ZONE	+ 3 POINTS
	in QUALITY CONTROL ZONE	0 POINTS
NO MISSION CONTROLLER to ensure launch success		- 10 POINTS

In the case of a tie, the player with the most Bonus cards in play wins.

Optional Rules

Game Length Variations

For a shorter game, place the Launch Pad cards directly onto the Launch Pad area when they are drawn instead of advancing them through the Game Zones. For a Longer game, shuffle the Launch Pad cards into the deck after the entire draw pile has been depleted and replaced by the cards from the discard pile.

Negotiations

Each player may trade or donate as many cards as desired during step 4 of his turn. Donated cards do not have to be accepted by other players. A player may not accept a donated card if it causes him to exceed the hand limit. If a donated card is rejected, it is retained by the player who donated it. On step 5 of his turn, the player may proceed to draw again if all of his cards have been played or donated.

Super Powers

Each player may have any number of Specialty cards in play at a given time, granting him all of the abilities simultaneously. The "Budget Cuts" Action card allows another player to steal *all* of a player's Specialty cards, which may then be played, retained, or discarded.

If you have a creative idea that you would like to share with other Launch Pad™ fans, or you're ready to explore new variations, be sure to visit www.StratusGames.com.

Card Reference

ROCKET CARDS



Observer (x12)

1 Metal, 1 fuel
6 Points



Explorer (x4)

1 Metal, 2 Fuel
8 Points



Intrepid (x3)

2 Metal, 2 Fuel
10 Points



Galactic (x2)

3 Metal, 2 Fuel
12 Points

COMPONENT CARDS



Metal (x28)



Fuel (x30)

EXPERT CARDS



Engineer (x5)

Construction
Zone



Inspector (x5)

Quality Control
Zone



**Mission
Controller (x5)**

Launch Zone



**Jack of All
Trades (x3)**

Takes the place
of any Expert

BONUS CARDS



Astronaut (x5): Played with a Rocket in the Launch Zone. Allows a player to score four extra points if accompanied by Oxygen at the end of the game. If not accompanied by Oxygen, the player loses four points.



Maximum Security (x3): Played with a Rocket in the Launch Zone. Protects the Rocket from Sabotage, Abort Mission, and Vacuum.



Oxygen (x5): Played with a Rocket in the Launch Zone. Necessary for an Astronaut to score points. May be played with a Rocket even if an Astronaut has not yet been played. Has no point value of its own.



Quality Certificate (x4): Played with a Rocket in the Quality Control Zone and advances with the Rocket to the Launch Zone. Protects the Rocket from Quality Check. Also allows a player to score three extra points if located in the Launch Zone at the end of the game.

LAUNCH PAD CARDS



Top-Left
(x1)



Top-Right
(x1)



Bottom-Left
(x1)



Bottom-
Right (x1)

ACTION CARDS



Abort Mission (×1): Allows a player to move any Rocket, along with its Component and Bonus cards, to the discard pile. This card cannot be played against a Rocket protected by a Security System or Maximum Security.



Big Red Button (×1): Allows a player to advance any Launch Pad card that is currently in play directly to the Launch Pad area. If it is the final Launch Pad card, the Countdown begins.



Budget Cuts (×2): Allows a player to steal a Specialty card from any player who has one in play. The stolen card may be played, retained, or discarded. If the card is played, it takes effect immediately.



Fast Track (×1): Allows a player to immediately advance any one completed Rocket from his own Construction Zone or Quality Control Zone directly to his Launch Zone. No Experts are required.



Parts Supplier (×2): Allows a player to immediately draw three extra cards from the draw pile, regardless of the number of cards currently in hand. No cards may be drawn from the discard pile. The new cards may be played, retained, or discarded. The player may not retain more cards than the hand limit at the end of his turn.



Quality Check (×1): Allows a player to move one of any player's Rockets from the Launch Zone back to the Quality Control Zone. All Bonus cards in play with the Rocket must be discarded. This card cannot be played against a Rocket protected by a Quality Certificate.



Recruitment (×1): Allows a player to steal any Expert currently in play. The stolen card may be played, retained, or discarded. This card cannot be used on an Expert that is protected by an Employee Contract.



Recycle Bin (×1): Allows a player to shuffle the top ten cards from the discard pile into the draw pile. If there are less than ten cards in the discard pile, only those that are available are shuffled into the draw pile. There must be at least one card in the discard pile in order for this card to be played. After it is played, this card should be the top card on the discard pile.



Sabotage (×1): Allows a player to steal one Component card from any player's Rocket and move the Rocket back to the Construction Zone, if it has already advanced. All Bonus cards in play with the Rocket must be discarded. The sabotaged Rocket must then follow normal Rocket building and advancement rules. The stolen card may be played, retained, or discarded. This card cannot be played against a Rocket protected by a Security System or Maximum Security.



Salvage (x2): Allows a player to retrieve any one card from the current discard pile. The retrieved card may be played, retained, or discarded.



Surplus (x1): Forces all players, including the one playing this card, to immediately discard one card from their hand. Each player may choose which card to discard. No action is taken by a player with an empty hand, but at least one player must be able to discard a card in order for this card to be played.



Thief (x1): Allows a player to steal two cards at random from the hand of any opponent or combination of two opponents. The stolen cards may be played, retained, or discarded.



Vacuum (x1): Allows a player to steal one Oxygen card currently in play. If there is a corresponding Astronaut, the Astronaut remains in play. The stolen card may be played, retained, or discarded. This card cannot be used to steal an Oxygen card from a Rocket protected by a Security System or Maximum Security.

SPECIALTY CARDS



Employee Contract (x2): Protects all of a player's Experts (Engineer, Inspector, Mission Controller, and Jack of All Trades) from Recruitment by other players.



Overtime (x1): Allows advancement of up to two Rockets per Game Zone, per turn. All other advancement rules remain in effect (i.e. Rockets must still be complete, and the necessary Expert must be in play at the beginning of the turn).



Security System (x1): Prevents Sabotage, Abort Mission, and Vacuum that is initiated by an opponent. A player may still choose to play any of these cards against his own Rockets, if desired.



Warehouse (x2): Increases a player's hand limit to eight cards instead of six. The player may draw up to eight cards at the beginning of each turn and retain up to eight cards at the end of the turn. When this card is played, the player may not immediately draw more cards, but must wait until the next time cards are drawn according to the turn order.

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1. Excavate a maze of mine tunnels by placing tiles
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3. Attempt to stop other players by stealing their gold and sending bats their way
4. Race back to the mine entrance with enough gold and you win!

