



CORE RULES

INTRODUCTION

The basic game of **TGW** uses the Red, Blue, and White decks of cards provided, plus the Bonus and Random Event (RE) cards.

You can also play historical scenarios provided online at **The-Great-War-Game.com** – visit the website for new scenarios and announcements about expansions and additional cards when they are published.

PREPARING TO PLAY

Separate the Red, Blue, and White deck cards into 3 decks: all Central Powers cards, all Entente Allies cards, and all Neutral cards. Place these decks on the **Decks & Discards (D&D)** play mat in the locations indicated.

Place the **Defender This Turn (DTT)** card on the D&D play mat on the space indicated. Place the ten-sided die (1d10) on the DTT card. Keep the six-sided die (1d6) handy to resolve random events when needed.

Place the **Battle Mat** between the players. Use the markers provided to indicate the winner of each turn and the current number of cumulative Battle Points (BP) each side has.

Use the **Quick Play Outline** sheet to help keep track of the steps for each turn.

1.0 DETERMINING THE WINNER

1.1 The basic game ends after 10 turns. Some scenarios have more or fewer turns. The game also ends immediately when one side has no more Nationality cards in their hand or in their draw deck or in their discard pile.

1.2 At the end of the last turn of the game or scenario, count the Battle Points of all enemy Nationality cards you captured and any friendly Nationality cards still in your hand. You capture enemy cards when you win a battle – see section 4.0. Compare the two opposing sides' BP total to determine the level of victory:

A) **MORAL VICTORY.** One side has 10 to 19 more BP than the other side.

B) **TACTICAL VICTORY.** One side has 20 to 39 more BP than the other side.

C) **OPERATIONAL VICTORY.** One side has 40 to 79 more BP than the other side.

D) **STRATEGIC VICTORY.** One side has 80 more BP than the other side.

1.3 The game ends in a draw if a player has only 1 to 9 more points than their opponent at the end of the game.

1.4 Do not count the BP of any cards in your Nationality draw deck or discard pile. Do not count the BP of Neutral or Bonus cards. Random Event cards have no BP.

2.0 BASIC GAME SET UP

2.1 Shuffle the Random Event (RE) cards and set aside one RE card without looking at it. This RE card will not be used in the game. Place the remaining RE cards face down on the "Random Event Draw Deck" location on the play mat.

2.2 Shuffle the Bonus cards and remove one from the game without looking at it, just like you did for the Random Event cards. Deal each player 2 Bonus cards, then place the remaining Bonus cards face down on the "Bonus Cards Draw Deck" location on the D&D play mat.

2.3 Shuffle the Neutral cards from the Red, Blue and White decks together and remove 2 Neutral cards from the game without looking at them. From the remaining cards of the Neutral deck deal each player 6 Neutral cards. Each player will then examine their 6 cards and choose one or two of these 6 Neutral cards and place them in their hand. Each player then sets aside their remaining 4 to 5 Neutral cards face down — you may use these in future turns.

2.4 Separate the red, blue and white Nationality cards into two decks: one for the Central Powers player and one for the Entente Allies player. Shuffle each Nationality deck and remove 2 cards from each deck without looking at them. Do not use these cards in the game. Each player counts the number of cards (Bonus and Neutral) that they kept during steps 2.2 and 2.3. They each then draw 6 or 7 cards to fill their starting hand up to 9 cards. A player only reveals their cards to their opponent during a turn (section 3.0), or when called for by a card effect (section 6.0).

2.5 Place the Neutral deck and two Nationality decks on the spaces indicated on the D&D play mat. The Central Powers player and Entente

Allies player may never draw or use cards from the other player's Nationality draw deck. Both players may draw and use cards from the top of the Neutral and Bonus draw decks.

2.6 A player may never have more than 9 cards in their hand unless a scenario permits it. If a player has more than 9 cards at the start of a turn, they must immediately discard cards until they have only 9 cards in their hand.

2.7 Flip the **Defender This Turn** card on the D&D play mat to show which side is the Defender in Turn One. In the basic game, the Central Powers player is the Defender in the first turn of the game. Place the yellow ten-sided die with "1" up to show that it is Turn One.

3.0 TURN SEQUENCE

3.1 The game is played in a series of turns, with the basic game consisting of 10 turns. Keep track of the current turn using the yellow ten-sided die (1d10) provided. On the d10 the 0 equals 10.

3.2 Each side alternates as the Defender every other turn. The Defender plays the first card(s) during each round of that turn. In the basic game, the Central Powers player is the Defender in the first turn of a game.

3.3 Each turn consists of the following steps:

Random Event Phase: The Defender draws one Random Event (RE) card and reads it aloud. The card is resolved immediately and any effects can apply to the entire turn.

Optional Bonus Card Phase 1: Beginning with the Defender, each player may play one Bonus or Joker card. This action is not mandatory for either player. Any cards played will stay in effect for the rest of the turn unless canceled by another effect.

Round 1 – Defender: Defender plays one card. If it is not canceled by a Bonus or Joker card, the Defender may play additional Plus cards that may link to that card. If a Bonus or Joker card cancels the card as it is played, the linking cards may not be played and the round ends immediately. See **Section 4.0** for more information on actions taken during each round.

Round 1 – Attacker: Attacker plays one card, as shown above for Defender.

Round 2 – Defender: Defender plays one card as in Round 1. Additional Plus cards may be played that link to any card previously played by the Defender.

Round 2 – Attacker: Attacker plays one card as in Round 1. Additional Plus cards may be played that link to any card previously played by the Attacker.

Optional Bonus Card Phase 2: Beginning with the Defender, each player may play one Bonus or Joker card. This action is not mandatory for either player. Resolve these cards immediately.

Battle Resolution Phase: Each side totals their Battle Points (BP) for ALL their face-up cards. The side with the highest total wins the battle for that turn, and captures all of the loser's Nationality cards.

Discard and Draw Phase: Players may discard cards and must draw back up to 9 cards if possible. See Section 3.4 through 3.6 below for more details.

3.4 At the end of each turn, players may keep any of the cards in their hand for the next turn. They may choose to discard one or more of them in order to draw additional cards with the following exceptions:

3.4.1 A player may not discard Jokers, Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks, or Fortifications from their hand. The player may only remove them by playing these cards face up during a turn.

3.4.2 Jokers and any other cards may be held in the player's hand until the end of the fifth turn. Then the players reshuffle all the discards and cards in their hands into the proper draw decks before the start of the sixth turn.

3.5 Before the beginning of the next turn, both sides must draw one Bonus card (either from the Bonus card draw deck or from the Bonus cards they set aside at the start of the game), and one or two Neutral cards from the Neutral cards they were dealt at the start of the game (see 2.3). If a side has drawn all the Bonus or Neutral cards that they set aside at the beginning of the game, they must draw one from the appropriate deck. Next, they must draw enough cards from their Nationality draw deck so they have nine total cards in their hands. (This may not be possible toward the end of the game as enemy captures reduce the number of those cards in a draw deck.)

3.5.1 At the end of the fifth turn, each player must discard all the cards from their hands (along with any remaining Neutral or Bonus cards that they chose not to use at the start of the game) into the proper discard piles. Reshuffle all discard piles into their respective

draw decks. Do not reshuffle captured enemy cards back into the draw decks. Captured cards remain in the appropriate box on the play mat until the end of the game or scenario. Both sides then refill their hands with Bonus, Neutral, and Nationality cards as outlined in Section 2 or as specified by the scenario being played.

3.6 As soon as any draw deck has no more face down cards, immediately shuffle any discards so there is a face down draw deck. Never shuffle captured cards back into the draw decks during the game.

3.6.1 When a player's Nationality draw deck is depleted and there are no discarded Nationality cards to replenish it, the player must reveal a Nationality card from their hand. If they cannot, the game ends immediately. Count BP to determine the winner. Note: The card does not have to be fully revealed. Just reveal enough of the card to verify that it is a Nationality card.

3.7 At the end of the turn, flip the **Defender This Turn** card to show the other side as Defender for the next turn. Rotate the next number up on the yellow ten-sided die to keep track of the current turn. Return to Section 3.3 to start the next turn.

4.0 FIGHTING A BATTLE

4.1 Players capture enemy cards by playing cards from their hands during each turn. Each player has four opportunities during the turn to play cards as shown in the sequence of play in Section 3.3.

4.2 The Attacker and Defender must both play at least one Nationality card in the turn. They may not play only Neutral or Bonus cards unless the turn ends before they can play a Nationality card or they have no Nationality cards in their hand.

4.3 In a round, each player may play any one card from their hand. If that card is not immediately canceled by a Joker or Bonus card, they may then add any Plus cards that link to that card just played, or to any previous card not canceled and still in play.

4.4 During each round, the Defender must take at least one Neutral or Nationality or Bonus card from their hand and place it face up in front of them.

4.5 The Defender may play more than one card as long as:

4.5.1 That card allows for additional cards (such as a Jack or Joker or some Bonus cards), or

4.5.2 The cards played are Plus cards that link to a card already played.

4.6 The Attacker then takes at least one card from their hand and places it face up in front of them. At least one of the Attacker's cards played in this turn must have an Attack icon.

4.6.1 If Attacker has no cards with an Attack icon, they must immediately discard the Nationality cards from their hand, one card at a time. As they do, they draw a Nationality card following each discard until they have an Attack arrow card that they must play in the first or second round.

4.7 The Attacker may play more than one card as long as:

4.7.1 The first card allows additional cards (such as a Jack or Joker or some Bonus cards), or

4.7.2 The cards played are Plus cards that link to a card already played.

4.8 It is possible for a player to use all nine cards in their hand before the second round. For example: after the Defender places a card face up, the Attacker may play all nine cards from their hand using a Jack and Bonus and Plus cards. The Defender must play one additional card in their second round even if they know they will lose this turn. The Attacker cannot play any more cards since their hand is now empty. The Defender must play a Nationality card for their second round if they did not already play a Nationality card in the first round.

4.9 For examples of canceled cards and interrupting an enemy card play with a Joker or Bonus card, see the **FAQs** on the back of the **Quick Play Outline** sheet.

5.0 SCORING THE TURN

5.1 At the end of the turn, each side totals the Battle Points for ALL their face up cards, including all Nationality, Neutral and Bonus cards. Compare the Attacker's BP total to the Defender's BP total.

5.2 The player with the highest Battle Point value is the winner of that turn. Defender wins ties. The winner captures all the enemy Nationality cards played, including any Jokers with a Nationality insignia and enemy canceled (face down) Nationality cards. Captured cards are placed in the appropriate location on the D&D play mat.

5.3 The turn winner may immediately choose one of their Nationality cards or one of the Neutral cards played by either side and place it into their hand.

This is optional. The winner may never choose a Joker, Jack, Queen, King, Ace, Fortifications, Naval, Heavy Bombers, Zeppelin Raids, or Bonus card. (All these cards have white BP numbers inside a black circle.)

5.4 Discard all remaining Neutral and Bonus cards played by both sides, including Neutral Jokers. Place discarded Neutral cards face up in the designated space on the D&D play mat. Any Bonus cards played during the turn are shuffled back into the Bonus card deck.

5.5 Discard all remaining face up cards belonging to the winning side.

5.6 Place the appropriate Nationality marker on the **Turn Winner** track of the Battle Mat to indicate the winner of the turn, and choose markers to update the **Cumulative Captured Battle Points** on the Battle Mat.

6.0 SPECIAL CARD PLAY

6.1 Players may use Bonus cards and Jokers at any time, even to interrupt the enemy's round.

6.2 Playing a Joker or Bonus card to cancel an enemy card during a round ends that round. A canceled card still counts as a Nationality card or Attack card for that turn, but its BP are not counted if it is still canceled at the end of the turn.

Example #1: As soon as the Random Event card **Trench Raid** is revealed, the Central Powers player immediately plays a **Night Barrage** Bonus card. This takes place even before the Optional Bonus Card phase. Therefore the CP player does not roll a 1d6 but the Entente Allies player still must do so to see if the CP player may look at one card in the Allies player's hand.

Example #2: When the Attacker plays a leader (Jack) card, the Defender may immediately play a **Lions Led by Donkeys** Joker card. This Joker cancels (flips) that Jack. This happens before that leader may use its ability to bring two more cards into play. It also cancels that leader's 10 Battle Points for that turn. Flip the leader card face down and rotate the face up Joker 180 degrees to show that it has used its cancel effect for the turn. In addition, the round immediately ends.

6.3 The **Trench Raid**, **Prisoner Interrogations**, **Reconnaissance Aeroplane**, **Russian Cavalry** and **Cavalry Reconnaissance** cards enable a player to randomly choose one or two cards from the enemy player's

hand and look at them. These cards are then immediately placed back in the enemy player's hand. Rotate the **Raid/Zeppelin/Reconnaissance** card 180 degrees to show it has used its effect that turn.

6.4 An Ace played by the Defender cancels one Attacker's Ace played after it that round unless the Attacking Ace also has a Bonus **Improved Weapon** or **Improved Doctrine** card.

Example: If the Defender plays an Ace with the **Improved Weapon** card, the Attacker can only cancel the Defender's Ace if it also has an **Improved Weapon** and **Improved Doctrine** Bonus card.

6.5 Fortifications can cancel enemy cards the entire turn and therefore are never rotated 180 degrees during a turn. They cancel all enemy cards with Attack icons until an enemy card is played that cancels **Fortifications** such as **Flamethrowers** or certain Artillery (King) cards.

6.6 Trenches cards can cancel enemy **Field Artillery** cards the entire turn and therefore are never rotated 180 degrees unless an **Exposed or Poorly Prepared Trenches** RE card is played.

6.7 A Naval Blockade or **Submarine Blockade** card may cancel and discard any one enemy Nationality card previously played unless it is canceled by an enemy card. The enemy Nationality card to be discarded is chosen by the player with the blockade card. A discarded card's BP are not counted at the end of the turn. Discarded cards are not captured.

6.8 A Heavy Machine Gun (HMG) is considered Infantry for linking purposes. It may only be played by Attacker if it is played with an **Improved Weapon** or **Improved Doctrine** card.

For more examples of special card play, canceled cards, and interrupting an enemy card play with a Joker or Bonus card, see the **FAQs** on the back of the **Quick Play Outline** sheet.

Updates, additional Q&A, historical scenarios, and more will be posted at **The-Great-War-Game.com**

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