

RULEBOOK



THE WAR IS ON!!!

Gather your forces and face off in the air, land, and sea! Outsmart and outplay your opponent to claim your victory!

It won't be easy, but it will be

GLORIOUS!!!

GAME COMPONENTS

- 1 Rulebook
- 3 Theater Boards
- 1 Air (A)
- 1 Land (B)
- 1 Sea (C)
- 20 Cards
- 6 Air (D)
- 6 Land (E)
- 6 Sea (F)
- 2 Supreme Commanders (G & H)
- 14 Score Markers
- 2 Sixes (I)
- 6 Threes (J)
- 6 Ones (K)



▲
Card
Back

▲
Supreme
Commander
Card Back

SETTING UP THE GAME

1. Randomly place the three Theater boards in any order to create a row.
2. Shuffle the two Supreme Commander cards and deal one facedown in front of each player. Players then turn their Supreme Commander cards faceup. The player who received the white Supreme Commander card (1st Player) will take the first turn.
3. Shuffle the remaining 18 cards and deal 6 to each player to form their starting hands. Players should keep their hands secret from each other.
4. Set the rest of the cards to one side of the play area without revealing them.
5. Put all the tokens in a pile on the other side of the play area.



PLAYING THE GAME

Air, Land, and Sea: Critters at War is played over a series of rounds called Battles. To win a Battle, you must either:

- **Control more Theaters than your opponent after both players have played all of their cards; or**
- **Convince your opponent to withdraw.**

If you win a Battle, you earn **Victory Points (VPs)** represented by tokens. The first player to reach 12 VPs wins the game!

STRUCTURE OF A BATTLE

During a Battle, the players take turns playing one card at a time, trying to control more Theaters than their opponent.



Unless instructed otherwise, you do not draw cards during a Battle - so be sure to plan carefully and make the most of the 6 cards you are dealt!

THEATERS

Each of the three Theater boards creates a “column” between the players: one for Air, one for Land, and one for Sea. These columns are called **Theaters**. Cards are always played into these three Theaters. If a card is in a particular Theater’s column, we say that the card is “in that Theater.”

Theaters that are next to each other are called **adjacent Theaters**.

A player owns all of the cards on their side of the Theater boards. During your turn, you will play cards **only** on your side of the Theaters.



Let's examine a typical game in mid-Battle. In this example, there are three cards in the Sea Theater—one owned by the 1st Player and two owned by the 2nd Player. Notice that the Land Theater and the Sea Theater are adjacent to each other, while the Air Theater and the Land Theater are not adjacent.




BATTLE CARDS

Cards are played to advance your war effort and how they are played will ultimately determine who wins the war (the game).

Strength: The large number on each card is the card's Strength (1). If the total Strength of all the cards on your side of a Theater is higher than the total Strength of all the cards on your opponent's side of that Theater, you **control** that Theater.



Tactical Abilities: Most cards have a Tactical Ability (2) next to their Strength, which takes effect as soon as the card is played faceup to a Theater (or a facedown card is flipped up). These abilities are either **Instant** (3) or **Ongoing** (4), which is explained in greater detail on page 7.

Type: There are three types of cards which are represented by color and icon: White and  for Air, Green and  for Land, and Blue and  for Sea, which relate to the three Theaters. Normally, you may only play a card faceup to its matching Theater: Air cards in the Air Theater, and so on.



Facedown Cards: Cards can also be played **facedown** as a "wild card" in **any** Theater. Facedown cards always have a Strength of 2. Facedown cards do not have any Tactical Abilities (see page 7). You may examine your own facedown cards at any time, but you may not examine any owned by your opponent.

Covered Cards: When a card is played to a Theater that already contains cards, the newly played card is placed so that it overlaps the previously played card, while still showing the top portion of it. Any card overlapped by another is called a **covered card**. Similarly, any card that is not overlapped by another card is referred to as **uncovered**.

Example: In the image on the right, Escalation is covered and Redeploy is uncovered.



RESOLVING A BATTLE

During a Battle, players take turns starting with the player who has the 1st Player Supreme Commander card.

1ST PLAYER

On your turn, you must take only one of these three actions:

Deploy, Improvise, Withdraw.

Deploy: Play one card from your hand, **faceup**. When you play a card, you must follow these **deployment restrictions**:

- You can only play cards on your side of the Theater boards.
- The card must be the same type as the Theater you play it to (so an Air card can only be played to the Air Theater).
- If you have other cards in that Theater already, you must place the new card so that it covers (partially overlaps) those cards.



Remember: When you play a card faceup, any Tactical Ability of that card takes effect immediately (see page 7 for more info on Tactical Abilities).



Example: For your turn, you decide to play the Strength 3 Sea card from your hand (1), placing it faceup in the Sea Theater (2). You already had two cards in that Theater, so you must play the Strength 3 card so that it covers the Strength 2 and Strength 1 cards. Then, you immediately use the Tactical Ability on the Strength 3 card, which allows you to flip over one card in an adjacent Theater (3).

Improvise: Play one card from your hand, **facedown**, to *any* Theater. Facedown cards are treated as “wild cards,” and can be played to any Theater regardless of which type they are.

Example: On your next turn, you play a Strength 5 Land card facedown to the Air Theater. You can do this because a facedown card can be played to any Theater. You do not get to use your card's Tactical Ability, and it only counts as a Strength of 2 instead of a Strength of 5.



Withdraw: If you think your chances of winning the current Battle are low, you may withdraw. If you do, your opponent wins the Battle (see page 9).



Strategy Tip: Sometimes, it may be best to withdraw in order to deny your opponent Victory Points!

Once you have finished your action, your opponent begins their turn. The players continue to alternate taking turns until one of them withdraws or both players have played all of their cards (see page 9).



Remember: You **DO NOT** draw cards from the Battle deck during a Battle unless a Tactical Ability allows you to do so.



TACTICAL ABILITIES

Most cards have **Tactical Abilities** described on the card. When you play a card faceup from your hand, or if a facedown card is flipped over, its Tactical Ability takes effect immediately. There are two kinds of Tactical Abilities: **Instant** and **Ongoing**, indicated by the symbol next to the ability.



Instant Abilities: These take effect immediately after the card is played or if the card is revealed by being flipped faceup. Once the Instant Ability is resolved, it has no further effect (unless somehow that card is played or revealed again).

Example: The Transport Tactical Ability allows you to move any card you own to a different Theater immediately after you play or reveal the Transport card.



Note: Because instant abilities take effect when flipped faceup, it is possible for multiple instant abilities to take effect around the same time. In these situations, always resolve the instant abilities in the order they happened and fully resolve each ability before moving on to the next.



Once an instant ability begins taking effect, it always resolves fully, even if it gets flipped facedown before completing.



Ongoing Abilities: These are always in effect as long as the card is faceup. If a card with an Ongoing Ability is flipped facedown, the ability no longer has any effect (unless that card is revealed again).

Example: The Escalation Tactical Ability increases the Strength of all of your facedown cards to 4 as long as the Escalation card remains faceup. If that card were flipped over by another Tactical Ability, your facedown cards would go back to being Strength 2.

You **must** carry out the effects of a Tactical Ability unless they contain the word "may."

If a Tactical Ability is impossible to perform, that ability is ignored and has no effect.

TACTICAL ABILITY KEY TERMS

Flip: Many Tactical Abilities allow you to flip a card. Flipping a card means either turning a faceup card so it is facedown or turning a facedown card so it is faceup.

Unless the ability states otherwise, you may flip any card—yours or your opponent's.

Example: The Maneuver card reads "Flip an uncovered card in an adjacent Theater." Since it doesn't specify, you could use this ability to flip over one of your own cards or one of your opponent's.

Uncovered/Covered: Many Tactical Abilities only affect uncovered or covered cards (see page 4). If an ability does not specify uncovered or covered, such as on Transport or Redeploy, assume the ability can affect any card.

Play: Some Tactical Abilities instruct you to play a card, or only take effect in response to a card being played. The word "play" describes any time a player takes a card from their hand and places it in a Theater. Unless otherwise specified, playing a card as a result of an ability follows all normal rules: you must play on your own side, you must play faceup cards to their matching Theater, and you must cover any previous cards in that Theater.

Non-Matching Theaters: It is possible that, as a result of Tactical Abilities, a card may end up in a Theater that does not match the card's type. When this happens, the card does not suffer any penalty for being in the "wrong" Theater. The card remains where it is, and its Strength is counted towards control of that Theater.

Destroy: Some Tactical Abilities instruct you to destroy a card. Destroyed cards are always placed facedown on the bottom of the deck. If a card is destroyed immediately after it is played, such as by Blockade, then that card does not get to use its Tactical Ability.

Occupied: Some Tactical Abilities, such as Blockade, only take effect when a theater is occupied by some number of cards. When determining how many cards occupy a Theater, always count both players' cards towards the total.

Move: Some Tactical Abilities allow you to **move** a card to a different Theater. When a card moves, it stays on the same side of the Theaters it was already on and remains owned by the same player. Always place the moved card on top of any other cards already in the Theater it was moved to, so that it covers those cards.



Note: Moving a card is not the same as playing a card, so cards such as Blockade that affect the playing of cards do not affect the moving of cards.

ENDING BATTLES

There are two ways that a Battle can end:

If either player withdraws.

If you withdraw, your opponent wins the Battle.

- OR -

If both players have played all of the cards in their hands.

At this point, the player who controls the most Theaters wins the Battle.

In order to control a Theater, you must have a higher total Strength than your opponent has in that Theater. If your Strengths are tied, the 1st Player wins the tie and controls that Theater. If there are no cards on either side of a Theater, the 1st player controls that Theater.



Example: 1st Player controls the Air Theater because they have a higher total Strength there (6 to 3). The 2nd Player controls the Land Theater thanks to their Strength advantage (4 to 1). Both players have the same Strength in the Sea Theater (3), leaving them tied. Since the 1st Player wins ties, they control two Theaters and win the Battle!

★ ★ ★ SCORING VICTORY POINTS ★ ★ ★

If you win a Battle, you score Victory Points, which are tracked with Score Markers. The number of VPs you score depends on if and when your opponent withdraws:

- If **neither** player withdraws before both players have played all of their cards, the winner of the Battle scores 6 VPs.
- If **one** of the players withdraws, the other player scores the VPs shown on the withdrawing player's Supreme Commander card, based on how many cards the withdrawing player has left in their hand. The longer you wait to withdraw, the more VPs your opponent will score!

After scoring, check to see if the victor has enough VPs to win the game (see page 10). If not, set up and fight another Battle.

SETTING UP FOR THE NEXT BATTLE

1. Collect all of the cards and shuffle them together to create a new deck. Deal each player a new hand of six cards, and set the rest of the deck off to the side of the play area, just like you did at the beginning of the game.
2. Next, rotate the position of the Theater cards as shown below:



3. Finally, the players exchange Supreme Commander cards. The player who was the 1st Player will be 2nd Player in the next Battle.

WINNING THE GAME

After each Battle, you must check if the winner of the Battle has enough Victory Points to declare victory. The first player to reach a total of 12 VPs wins the war (and the game).



Playing Hint: You can adjust the length of the game by changing the number of points you need to win. If you want to play a longer game, play until one player reaches 18 points.

BEGINNER MODE

When you are first learning how to play *Air, Land, and Sea: Critters at War*, you can use this simplified method of scoring:

- The winner of each Battle scores 1 VP.
- The first player to reach 3 VPs wins the game.

Ignore the Withdraw chart on the Supreme Commander cards when you are playing Beginner Mode.



Playing Hint: Playing in Beginner Mode allows you to concentrate on learning how all of the Tactical Abilities of the cards work, without worrying about giving your opponent a lot of VPs by withdrawing "too late."

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This game is dedicated to Meems.

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