

The History of the Book: The Game

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Description

The year is 1450. Johannes Gutenberg is printing a book, one of the first in the world. When he is finished, the printed book is born. Follow the history of the book through the next six centuries, through technological advancements, scientific breakthroughs, artistic triumphs, shifts in the socio-political climate, and the fluctuating financial market.

Each player represents a national library aiming to collect the most valuable printed books of Western civilization. Choose to be:

- The British Library or BL (England)
- Deutsche Nationalbibliothek or DN (Germany)
- Bibliothèque Nationale de France or BNE (France)
- Biblioteca Nacional de España or BN (Spain)
- Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma or BNC (Italy)
- Library of Congress or LOC (United States/Americas)

As each century passes, your country will gain and lose power. When you gain power, you will be issued more credits with which to build your collection. When you lose power, you will lose credits – and you might even have to sell your books to stay financially afloat. So be strategic when you decide to buy and sell.

Your objective is to create one of the following collections:

- National Canon: Collect six books from a country;
- Most Valuable Books: Collect four of the most valuable books in the game;
- Specialty: Collect six books within the genre.

The first player to amass one of these collections before the end of the twentieth century, or holds the most valuable collection as designated by the amount of credits at the end of the twentieth century, wins!

To Play

Set Up

Lay out the playing board in the center of the table.

Each player chooses a modern-day library to represent. The game can be played with a minimum of three and a maximum of six players. Players can also be groups, with a group representing one player.

Double check that all EVENTS cards are sorted according to their century. Shuffle each century's EVENTS cards and place them into their designated spot on the board. There should be individual shuffled stacks

for the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries so that as the EVENTS cards are drawn, players are moved through the social, political, and economic activities of history.

Double check that all BOOK cards are sorted according to their century. Shuffle each century's BOOK cards and place them into their designated spot on the board. There should be individual shuffled stacks for the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries so that as the BOOK cards are drawn, players are moved through the history of the book.

Shuffle the CHANCE cards. They do not have a designated order. Place the shuffled CHANCE cards in their designated spot on the board face down.

CREDITS stay in the bag. Credits are distributed as each player takes a turn at the dice.

Rules

This game can be played with a minimum of four players or up to the recommended six. DN, or Germany, always takes the first turn, because the inventor of the printing press, Johannes Gutenberg, was from Germany. The game begins in the 15th century.

Roll the Dice

DN rolls the dice. The number on the dice corresponds to the amount of credits the country gets in order to start its collection, so DN can receive anywhere from 1 to 5 credits. DN retrieves the number of credits it is given from the bag.

Make a Purchase

If the dice lands on a number between 1 and 5, after the credits are withdrawn from the bag, DN can choose either to purchase a book or save their credits. DN can buy as many books as he or she likes as long as DN has enough credits available to make the purchase.

If DN chooses to purchase a book, he or she must select from among the books available in the current century with a price equivalent or lesser than the amount of credits DN currently owns.

If DN decides to save his or her credits, and not make a purchase, the turn moves to the next player: BN. It can be useful to save credits as the winds of chance, or of world events, may weaken your economy; however, gambling can pay off as you may also benefit by unseen opportunities!

Books are marked with their: title, author, year of printing, cost, country of origin, genre, and most valuable book status (MBV).

When a book is purchased, the player must read the title, genre, country of origin, and price out loud so that the other players can hear what is bought.

Gamble with Chance

Or, if the dice lands on a 6, DN chooses a CHANCE card. Follow the CHANCE card's instructions completely before moving to the next player.

Exception: When the game is in its first round (each player's first turn/the 15th century), if the dice lands on a 6, re-roll to get a number between 1-5 rather than selecting a CHANCE card.

Alternatively, if you wish to make another country gamble with the winds of CHANCE, you can buy that country an opportunity to pull from the deck by paying five CREDITS or placing an equivalent value of books back on the market. A player also can gamble by spending the equivalent number of books or credits in order to buy themselves a round of CHANCE.

Compete to Create a Collection

After DN, each library takes its turn in the following order, which corresponds to the relative global dominance of that country during that century: BNC (Italy), BN (Spain), BNE (France), BL (England), and then LOC (the Americas).

At each turn, each library can choose to purchase one of the books remaining on the market, offer to make a trade to obtain a book already held by another country, or issue an educational challenge.

Trading can occur when one player has a book the other player wants. The book's price is now determined by the owning library, who can choose to make the book worth more or less than its original value to facilitate a trade, keep it at the current market value and accept a trade, or refuse to negotiate entirely. If a library refuses to negotiate, a player can issue an educational challenge.

Educational challenges are when the current player can correctly cite the four facts listed on the book held by another player's library. If the challenging player is correct on all four facts, the player obtains the book without spending any credits, effectively stealing the book. But, if the player loses the challenge, they have to pay the cost of that book in credits or equivalent holdings from their library to the player they challenged.

Cope with World Events

Once every library has had a turn, each player draws an EVENT card from the shuffled deck for the current century. Each EVENT has positive and negative signs.

EVENT cards can be about any country; if a player pulls an EVENT card relating to their country, the event counts double: events may be doubly positive or doubly negative.

Sometimes EVENT cards relating to war or colonization can include positives for one country and negatives for another. If this happens, the negative country must give the amount of credits specified, or a book worth the corresponding number of credits, to the positive (winning) country.

If your EVENT has a positive sign, add one CREDIT to your holdings; if your EVENT has a negative sign, delete one credit. If you do not have any credits, you've gone into debt! On your next turn, you must sell a book to bring your balance to zero or above.

After the EVENTS cards are completed, the game moves into the next century and the procedure repeats.

Learn from History

Players have two opportunities to gather books, and learn from history, in each century. After everyone has played one round in one century, the game gives everyone a second shot.

Once all players have had two rounds in one century, the game moves into the next century.

Build a World-Class Collection Over Time

The game continues until one of the three winning types of collections is created or through the end of the 20th century. If the game continues to the present day, whoever has the most valuable collection, measured by the total number of credits required to purchase the collection, wins.

Remember: this game rewards players who remember the relative strength of each country through the centuries. Countries, and their libraries, do not have equal opportunities in each century – history isn't fair and neither is the game! Think carefully about when you are likely to encounter the most advantages in the EVENTS card pile and when you may hit the most disadvantages to plan your collecting strategy accordingly. If you don't, you may lose all your credits – and your collection.

Cards

DICE

The dice is used to distribute credits or determine the use of a chance card. The dice used is a standard, 6-sided die. If the dice lands on a number between 1 and 5, players get the according number of credits. If the dice lands on a 6, choose a card from the CHANCE pile.

CREDITS

Credits function as a replacement for money. The number of credits each player holds is dependent on their roll of the dice as well as the dictates of the EVENT cards. Every library begins with zero credits and builds their economy over time as they take turns rolling the dice and choosing EVENT cards.

CHANCE

Chance cards are reshuffled after each draw and remain continually at play throughout the game.

Players can force one another to gamble at chance by spending either five credits, or an equivalent value in books (which go back on the market). Likewise, they can gamble themselves by spending the same amount of credits or books to get the opportunity to pull from the deck.

EVENTS

Each century gets its own stack of cards. They should be shuffled and withdrawn at chance. The events cards are not in date order, only in century order. Each card awards credits to a country.

If a player draws a card listing the country they represent, the events card counts double, which can result in a doubly good result or a doubly worse result.

If the card represents war or colonization, the successful country receives credits while the losing country loses credits. The losing country must give their lost credits to the winning country.

Each country's library has the same number of events per century. These events are not equally weighted in terms of their likelihood to produce positive/negative outcomes. After all, some centuries favor certain countries above others.

If a country does not have enough credits in their holdings to tolerate the loss, then that country goes into debt and has to sell books back to the marketplace at the original value of that book. If the country does not have enough books to pay their debt, they will have to make up this loss through their next turn out of the next round of credits they receive.

BOOKS

Each century gets its own stack of books. Each century should have a roughly equivalent number of books from each country, but numbers are not exact. Books are sorted by century, like the events cards, not by the specific year(s) they were printed. Each book card notes its relative value by the number of credits required to purchase and/or trade it. Five facts can also be found on each book card. When issuing a challenge, players must correctly answer three of the five facts on the book card to win the book.

Educational Booster Options

Blank BOOK cards can be issued so that the books dealt are those in your repository. Students can then research each book to generate the five facts that go on the BOOK cards.

Blank EVENTS cards can be issued so that specific events can be filled in according to the subject focus of a course. More EVENT cards can be generated in one particular century if the course needs to focus on one time period more than another.

Blank CHANCE cards can be issued so that alternative events can take place: for example, instructors might want to sub in information about the degradation of books over time, conservation practices, or other topics.

Each BOOK, EVENT, or CHANCE card can have an assigned corresponding reading. Break the semester up into five units, one for each century. Each classroom session becomes a century – or spread each century over a few sessions. Have students complete the readings that correlate to each game action as they move through the game, and students get a free reading day if they hit a topic previously covered (for example, if they land the same CHANCE card twice).