RULE BOOK

COUNTDOWN CONFUSION

THE DARK IMP

INTRODUCTION

You are a novice astronaut aiming to make a great first impression. But you'll need a quick hand and a laser-sharp focus to triumph in this relentless countdown test. Quickly decode the confusing symbols and swipe a card before each countdown finishes. Collect high-scoring sets of cards to bag the most points in this game of speed card-drafting and befuddling set collection.

2 - 4* players

10 - 20 minutes

HOW TO PLAY VIDEO

*Download extra card markers
to play with up to 9 players.

TheDarkImp.com/games/
CountdownConfusion

COMPONENTS

72 Playing Cards

1 Counting Card

2 Sets of Player Aids (6 cards total)

10 Bonus Cards

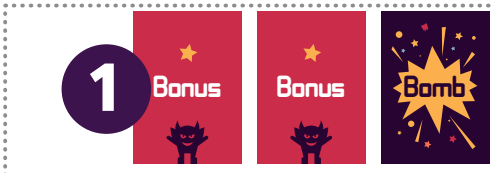
5 Bonus Markers

40 Card Markers

8 score cards
(two for each player)

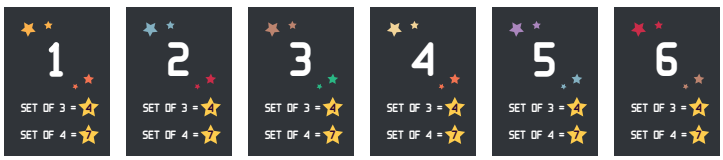
SET UP

CENTRAL SET UP



BONUS AREA

INDIVIDUAL PLAYER SET UP



- Create the *bonus area* using the **bonus markers** ❶ & ❷ as shown.

- Shuffle the **playing cards** ❸ and place them face down in a pile.

- Shuffle the **bonus cards** ❹ and place them face down next to the **playing cards**.

- Space the **player aids** ❺ around the table so that all players can see at least one set.

- Each player takes a set of 10 **card markers**. The *numbered* **card markers** ❻ are placed in a row in ascending order along the top of the player's space. The *coloured* **card markers** ❼ are placed in a column to the left of the player's space, in any order. These **cards markers** create labels for the rows and columns of the player's area.

- Each player takes two **scoring cards** 8 , one showing the 'tens' and one showing the 'units'. To use them, line up the appropriate side of the 'tens' card under the correct digit on the 'units' card. At the start of the game players have 0 points and should line up cards as shown.

- Randomly decide which player will perform the first countdown and give them the **counting card** 9 .

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Score the most points by collecting runs and sets of cards, by scoring bonuses and by avoiding bombs.

HOW TO PLAY

IDENTIFYING CARDS

Cards are numbered 1 to 6 and have one of four coloured backgrounds. But not every card is as it first appears. Look at the circles around each number to identify the card.

Information in this section is also on player aids.

No arrows.

No changes are made to this card.

This is an ORANGE 1.

One arrow on the inside.

Change the NUMBER on this card.
1 ↔ 6
2 ↔ 5
3 ↔ 4

This is a BLACK 4.

Two arrows on the outside.

Change the COLOUR on this card.

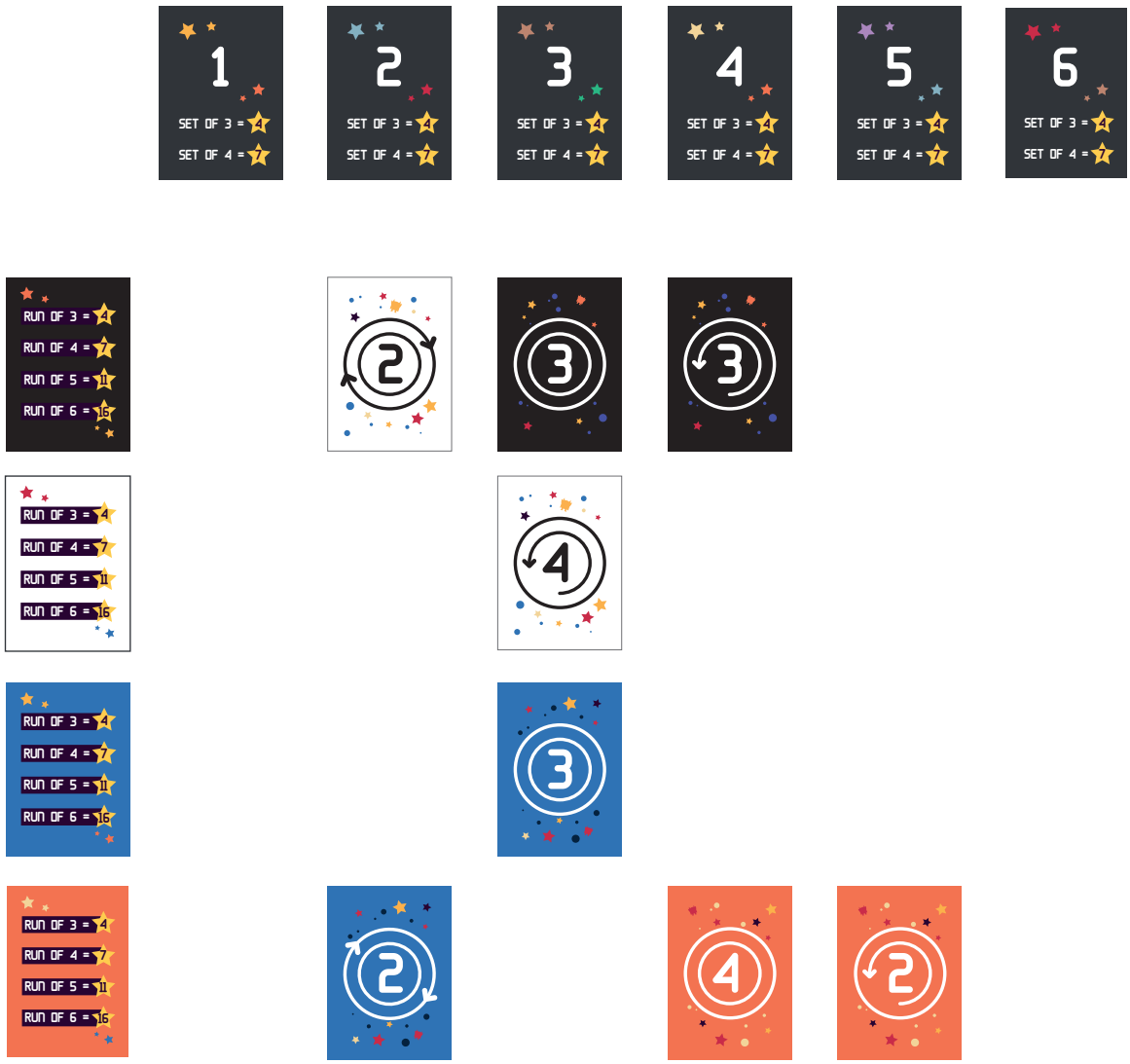
Blue ↔ Orange
Black ↔ White

This is a ORANGE 6.

THE CARD TABLEAU

The **card markers** indicate the rows and columns that **playing cards** can be placed in. Each **playing card** should be placed in the column that corresponds to its number and row that corresponds to its colour. Placing **playing cards** in the *card tableau* helps the players to see runs and sets of cards and to score quickly.

Tableau Example



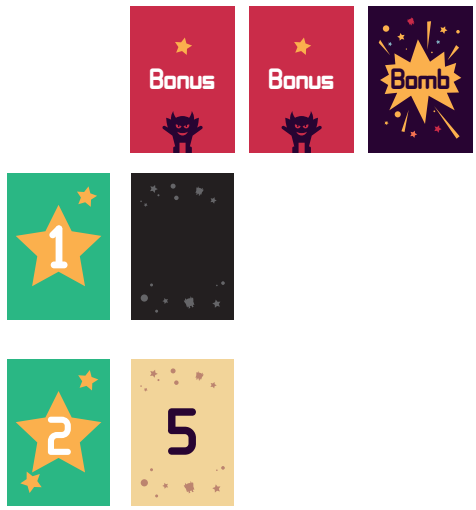
GAME STRUCTURE

The game is played over three rounds. Play is simultaneous.

The rules for 3+ players follow on the next few pages. Modifications for the 2-player game follow.

Round 1

- Draw two **bonus cards** from the deck and place them in the first column of the *bonus area*. Players will score bonus points for choosing **playing cards** of the same types as those on the **bonus cards**.



- Deal a hand of 8 **playing cards** face down to each player.

- The player who is holding the **counting card** counts down from 10 to 0. The countdown must be loud, clear and consistently paced, but can be at any speed the player chooses. On '10', when the countdown begins, each player pick up their hand of **playing cards** and look at them. Before the countdown reaches 0, you **must**:

- Select a **playing card** from your hand that you'd like to score.
- Place the selected **playing card** on the table. If you don't have time to place the **card** in the correct position in the *tableau*, you may leave it to the side of your player area and move it into your *tableau* later on.
- Pass the rest of the **playing cards** in your hand to the player on your left.
- If you have the **counting card**, you must place it on top of the playing cards you are passing.

- As soon as the countdown has finished, the player who now holds the **counting card** counts down from 10 to 0 as before. Again, this player may count down at whatever speed they choose. Now, each player selects one **playing card** from the new set of cards that have been passed to them. Again they pass the remaining **playing cards** on before the countdown runs out.

- Play continues in this fashion. Each player performs the countdown when they are holding the **counting card**. This is repeated until each player is just passed a single **playing card**.

- After the 8th countdown, each player score the **playing cards** in their *card tableau* (see *End of Round Scoring*) and adjust the position of their **scoring cards** accordingly. All **playing cards** are collected and returned to the deck.

Notes:

- Any player who hasn't completed the required actions by the time the countdown reaches zero, loses the **playing card** that they have selected this turn. This **playing card** is removed from the game. If the player hasn't selected a **playing card** by the time the countdown finishes, a **playing card** is taken at random from the hand and removed from the game.

- Once you have selected your **playing card**, you may choose to

place it in the correct space in your card *tableau*. This will help you to track the **playing cards** that you have taken and see which are still needed to complete runs and sets. You do not have to place your **cards** in the *card tableau* if you choose not to or if you don't have enough time. If you gain extra time later on, because you've made a quick decision on a **card**, you may then choose to place any playing cards that haven't yet been placed within your *card tableau*.

- Unless the player is about to take the **counting card**, they may look at the next set of **playing cards** as soon as they are passed to them, even if the new countdown hasn't yet begun. However, the player receiving the **counting card** must start their countdown from 10 as soon as they pick up their new set of **playing cards**.

Round 2

- Place two new **bonus cards** face up in the second column of the *bonus area*. Leave the **cards** from Round 1 in place. Players will score bonus points for choosing playing cards of types in both "Bonus" columns.

- Shuffle the **playing cards** and deal a new hand of 8 **playing cards** face down to each player.

- The player who is currently in last place starts with the **counting card**.
- Round 2 then follows the same format as Round 1.

Round 3

- Place two new **bonus cards** face up in the third column of the *bonus area*. Leave the cards from Round 1 and 2 in place. Players will score bonus points for choosing **playing cards** of types in the "Bonus" columns (as before), but will score negative points

for choosing **playing cards** of types in the new "Bomb" column.

- Shuffle the **playing cards** and deal a new hand of 8 **playing cards** face down to each player.

- The player who is currently in last place starts with the **counting card**.

- Round 3 then follows the same format as previous rounds.

Modifications for 2 players

When playing with 2 players, each time you pick up a hand of cards, while the countdown is being performed, do the following:

- Draw a new card from the top of the top of the pile.
- Select one card to play in your tableau.
- Select one to discard to a central discard pile.
- Pass the remaining cards to your opponent.

Other rules remain the same as for higher player counts.

END OF ROUND SCORING

- Place all **cards** in the correct place in the *tableau*, if you've not already done so.

- If you have more than one **playing card** of the same value and colour, remove the duplicate(s). These are not scored.

- Score points for every set of **playing cards** of the same number but different colours:
  - Set of 3:

  - Set of 4:

- Score points for every run of **playing cards** of the same colour and **consecutive** numbers:

- Run of 3: 4
- Run of 4: 7
- Run of 5: 11
- Run of 6: 16

- Score 1 or 2 bonus points for every **playing card** that matches a bonus category.

- Score 1 or 2 negative points for every **playing card** that matches a bomb category.

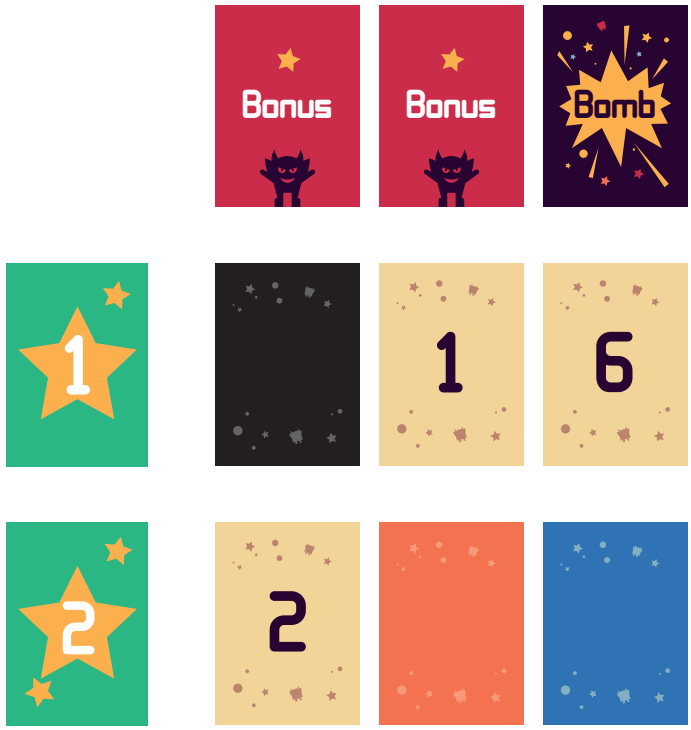
Bonus scoring example

In the layout on the next page:

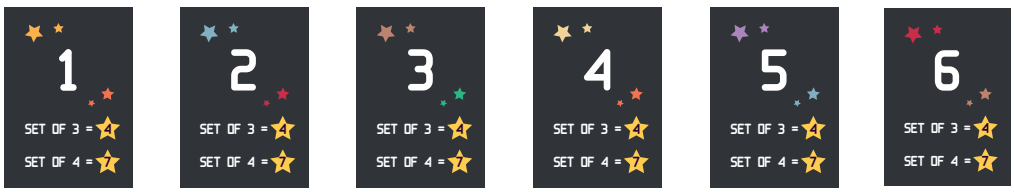
- In Round 1, BLACK cards score 1 and TWO cards score 2.

- In Round 2, BLACKS and ONES each score 1 and TWOS and REDS each score 2.

- In Round 3, BLACKS, TWOS, ONES and REDS continue to score as before. In addition, SIXES score -1 and BLUES score -2.



Let's look at this Bonus example with the hand of cards in the Tableau example.



4 **Run** of three black cards - Black 2, Black 3 and Black 4

4 **Set** of three 3s - Black 3, White 3 and Blue 3.

3 **Bonus** for three black cards

4 **Bonus** for two 2s

No bonuses for 1s

6 **Bonus** for three orange cards

No penalties for 6s

-2 **Penalty** for the single blue card.

TOTAL 17

END GAME

The game ends after Round 3 has been completed.

The player with the most points after three rounds wins. In the case of a tie, tied players share the victory.

COUNTDOWN CONFUSION

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