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**PRICE**

**OF**

**INFLUENCE**

**INTRODUCTION**

*Price of Influence* is a competitive strategy game for 2–4 players where rival courts test the true cost of power. Recruit Jacks, Queens, and Kings to your banner, arm them with steel and strategy, and manage limited resources to outmaneuver opponents amid shifting momentum and hidden information.
Victory is never singular. Dominate through battlefield strength, economic mastery, or a flawlessly timed tactical gambit. In the end, only one court’s influence will endure. *“Power weighs most on those who know its cost.”*

**Table of Contents**

* **HOW TO PLAY (AT A GLANCE)**
* **GAME COMPONENTS**
* **GAME SETUP**
* **CORE TERMS**
* **WINNING AND LOSING**
	+ **Victory Conditions**
	+ **Defeat Conditions**
	+ **Out of Time**
* **TRIBUTE PAYMENT OPTIONS**
* **TURN STRUCTURE**
	+ **Council Stage**
	+ **Playing Cards Stage**
		- **SUIT EFFECTS**
	+ **Combat Stage**
	+ **Resupply Stage**
* **OUT OF CARDS**
* **REFERENCES**
	+ **Noble Table**
	+ **Play Space**
	+ **Game Play Examples**
* **3 & 4 PLAYER RULE MODIFICATION**

**HOW TO PLAY (AT A GLANCE)**

**TURNS BEGIN**

**GAME SETUP**

**TURN STRUCTURE**

Council Stage

Playing Card Stage

Resupply Stage

Combat Stage

♞/♛/♚ **Nobles:** Your Nobles are your frontline. Their Strength and Cost are tied to their **Rank**. Place them into your Court, choose their stance: **STRIKE** to enter battle or **GUARD** to hold back. Build your **Influence** (♠♥♣♦)∑ by keeping them active.

**⚔️+🛡️Equipment:** Power up your Nobles by equipping them with **♠Weapon** and **♥Armor**. Matching pairs trigger **[⚔️🛡️] Set Bonuses** that shift momentum and can turn the tide of combat, forcing your opponent into unfavorable combat scenarios.

**💎 Economy:** Manage your resources. Use **♦Diamonds** to pay **Tribute**, refill your hand, remove penalties, and keep your Court functioning. **Leverage🔒** cards in-hand when you're pressed for options; but beware the cost.

**♣ Tactics:** Play **♣Clubs** to target and disrupt cards from anywhere: discard pile, equipment, gems, and even your own locked hand. A well-timed Tactic can reset the board or set up a win condition.

**See Play Space in References for Example Layout**

**There are multiple paths to victory/defeat**

**Review them in detail in the WINNING AND LOSING section**

OUTMANEUVERED, FLAWLESS STRATEGY, DEFEAT IN BATTLE, ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, ANNIHILATION, and Endgame Armistice

**GAME COMPONENTS –** Full Deck of Standard Playing Cards

* **Main Deck**: **40** suited cards (**Ace–10** in ♠♥♣♦) and **2** **⍟Jokers**
	+ Note the Numerical Value of each, these will play a role in how cards are played and resolved. **⍟Jokers** Value is **0**.
* **Court Nobles**: **12** total (**Jack** ♞, **Queen** ♛, **King** ♚ in ♠♥♣♦)
	+ Each noble has a Rank, which determines is Base Strength, Tribute Cost, and Combat Limits.
		- Jack♞=1, Queen♛=2, King♚=3

**GAME SET UP (2 Players)** For 3 & 4 Player casual Games note the rules with (👥+), modifications listed at end of rulebook

1. **Choose First Player**: Any fair method (dice, coin, etc.).
2. **Separate Nobles**: Remove all Court Nobles (J/Q/K of all suits) and place face-down in the In-Council pile.
3. **Deal Main Deck**: Shuffle remaining cards (**Ace–10** in ♠♥♣♦ + **⍟Jokers**). Each player receives 9 cards.
4. **Deal Nobles**:
	* Shuffle the In-Council pile
	* Deal 6 Noble cards to each player, face-down in round-robin (👥+)
5. **Review Hand + Nobles**
6. **Discard Cards**:
	* Each player discards 2 cards (👥+)
	* Discards made face-down, then revealed simultaneously to form Discard Pile
	* All future discards are face-up
7. **Select Noble**:
	* Each player chooses 1 Noble to keep; return rest face-down to In-Council pile
	* Place chosen Noble face-down in **STRIKE** or **GUARD** stance
		+ **STRIKE**: Vertical on the play space, may be forced into combat on your turn as **Active Player**
		+ **GUARD**: Horizontal on the play space, may be excluded from combat on your turn as **Active Player**
8. **Reveal**:
	* Flip all chosen Nobles face-up (now In-Court)
	* Flip In-Council pile face-up

**Maximum Hand Size: 7 Cards** including **🔒Leveraged** (👥+)

**TURNS BEGIN**

**GAME SETUP**

**CORE TERMS (CARD STATES)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Meaning** |
| **In-Hand** | Cards in your hand (non-leveraged are hidden, **🔒Leveraged** are face-up). Can be **Leveraged🔒**to pay **Tribute.** |
| **Leveraged🔒** | Face-up cards in-hand. Visible to all, cannot be played or discarded. Can be removed from hand with **♦Gems** & **♣Tactics**. Count towards **Maximum Hand Size**. |
| **Gem Pile💎** | Your personal face-up **♦Diamond** pile. Public information. Can be **Liquidated💎** to pay **Tribute.** |
| **Equipped⚔️+🛡️** | **♠Weapon**/**♥Armor** attached to a Noble (adds Strength). Can be **Dismantled⚔️/🛡️** to pay **Tribute.** |
| **In-Court** | Active face-up Nobles. Max **1** of each **Rank**. Must be in **STRIKE** or **GUARD** Stance. **Disgraced** Nobles don't count as In-Court. |
| **Disgraced** | Defeated Noble. Flipped face-down in place. Must be **Retired** to **Recruit** again. |
| **In-Council** | Unclaimed Nobles. Face-up public pile. |
| **Suit Influence** (♠♥♣♦)∑ | Each face-up Noble in your Court gives you 1 **Influence** in their suit (♠♥♣♦). **Suit Influence** determines how many cards of that suit you may play each turn (**1 + Influence)** and increases the value for many suit-based effects. *Does not affect the Max # of cards played each turn, only the mix of suits, the* ***MAX CARD LIMIT*** *is* ***4*** *in a 2-player game (👥+).* Will be denoted with the ∑ throughout the rulebook. ♠∑ = **Spade Influence**♥∑ = **Heart** **Influence**♣∑ = **Club** **Influence**♦∑ = **Diamond** **Influence**(♠♥♣♦)∑ = The **Influence** of your Court. |
| **STRIKE Stance** | In-Court Noble placed Vertically on the Play Space. **MUST** enter **Combat** unless **Tribute** is paid **(💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️) [Active Player Only]** |
| **GUARD Stance** | In-Court Noble placed Horizontally on the Play Space. **CANNOT** enter **Combat** unless **Tribute** is paid **(💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️) [Active Player Only]** |

**WINNING AND LOSING**

**🏆 Victory Conditions**

**(Check at end of Active Player's turn)**

**OUTMANEUVERED**

* Active Player has all 3 Nobles (♞♛♚) In-Court
* Each is equipped with a **♠Weapon** or **♥Armor** equal to its **Rank** value (♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3) [**Ace**♠/♥ = **1**]

**FLAWLESS STRATEGY**

* Active Player holds 5 consecutive non-leveraged **♣Tactics** (e.g., **Ace–5**, **3–7,** etc.)
	+ **Ace♣** = **1** and **⍟Joker** = **0**
* Must reveal hand to claim
* ***Counterplay***: Any opponent may immediately **🔒Leverage** a ♣**Club** or a **⍟Joker** to cancel this win
* If canceled, Active Player may not claim again until their next turn as Active Player

**💀 Defeat Conditions**

**(Check at end of Active Player's turn)**

**DEFEAT IN BATTLE**

* Active Player has no In-Court Nobles at end of their turn

**ECONOMIC COLLAPSE**

* Active Player has **3** or more **🔒Leveraged** cards In-Hand

**ANNIHILATION**

* Any Player has ALL of: no In-Court Nobles, no **♦Diamonds** in **Gem Pile**, and only **🔒Leveraged** cards in-hand

**🕰** **Endgame Armistice (see Out of Cards)**

After the **12th** reshuffle of the deck **the game ends** and each player total’s their **Tableau Score:**

* In-Court Nobles: rank value each (♞ 1 / ♛ 2 / ♚ 3)
* Equipped ♠/♥ cards: face value
* ♦**Diamonds** in Gem Pile: face value
* **Subtract** **🔒Leveraged** cards in hand: face value
* **Subtract** Disgraced Nobles: rank value each (♞ 1 / ♛ 2 / ♚ 3)

Highest score wins; if tied, player with fewer**🔒Leveraged** cards wins, otherwise the result is a draw.

**Tribute Payment Options**

**(💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️) (for Recruit/Retire/Combat):** Use any combination of the following methods, each counting as a single payment.

Cost is equal to the Noble **Rank** (♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Description** |
| **Liquidate💎** | Move a **♦Diamond** from your **Gem Pile** to Discard Pile |
| **Leverage🔒** | Flip a non-Leveraged cards from hand face-up, it becomes **🔒Leveraged.** Cannot be played or discarded. Counts towards **Maximum Hand Size**. |
| **Dismantle⚔️/🛡️** | Discard an Equipped **♠Weapon** or **♥Armor** from your Nobles |

**TURN STRUCTURE**

Each turn proceeds through **four stages**, with the **Active Player** taking the lead. After each turn ends, the opposite Player becomes the **Active Player. (👥+)**

Council Stage (Active Player)

Resupply Stage

(ALL)

Playing Cards Stage

(ALL)

Combat Stage (Active Player)

**1. COUNCIL STAGE (Active Player Only)**

Take up to **2** actions from the list below. You may repeat actions.

**✅ Council Actions**

**RECRUIT NOBLE**

* Select from In-Council pile
* Pay **Tribute (💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️)** (**Rank** value: ♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3)
* Place In-Court in the stance of your choice (**STRIKE** or **GUARD**)
* Cannot Recruit if you already have that **Rank** (In-Court or Disgraced)

**RETIRE NOBLE**

* Return Disgraced Noble to In-Council pile (face-up)
* Pay **Tribute (💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️)** (**Rank** value: ♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3)
* Required before recruiting same **Rank** again

**CHANGE STANCE**

* Change stance of one In-Court Noble (**STRIKE** ↔ **GUARD**)

**CHANGE SUIT**

* Swap an In-Court Noble with a matching-rank Noble from In-Council pile
* Equipment transfers. No Set Bonus triggered

**2. PLAYING CARDS STAGE (Both Players)**

Starting with the Active Player and alternating back and forth, players take turns playing **one card at a time** in rotation. This continues until each player reaches their **Max Card Limit** or passes (👥+)

* **Play Limits – Per Player**
	+ **Suit Limits:** **1** card per suit + (♠♣♥♦)∑
	+ **Max Card Limit:** **4** Cards total per turn. (👥+)
		- (♠♣♥♦)∑affects the mix of cards that can be played, not the **Max Card Limit**.
	+ **Example:** If a player has a **Jack**♞**♠ & King**♚**♣** In-Court**,** they can play up to **4** cards of the following mix: **2♠**,**2♣**,**1♥**,**1♦**.
* Cards resolve **immediately** when played.
* Once a player passes, they forfeit remaining plays this turn and are skipped for the rest of the rotation.

**SUIT EFFECTS** (♠♥♣♦)∑ = the influence of your Court

**♦ Diamonds (Gems)**

* Choose One:
* **Save:** Place this card in your **Gem Pile**, then target player Draws 2 cards.
	+ If Deck runs out during draw, see **Out of Cards**, under Special Rules.
	+ Can be **Liquidated💎** to pay **Tribute**
* **Spend:** Place this card in the Discard Pile. Then:
	+ **Target** up to **2** **🔒Leveraged** Cards in any players Hand.
	+ Total **value of** all **targets** must be ≤ **(spent♦ value +** your **♦**∑**)**
	+ **All targeted cards are moved to your Hand, un-leveraged and hidden.**

**♠ Spades (Weapons)**

* Equip to one of your In-Court Nobles
* Strength bonus = (**Equipped♠** **value** + your **♠**∑)
* Can be **Dismantled⚔️/🛡️**to pay **Tribute**
* If Noble gains matching ♥**Armor** (same value), trigger **Set Bonus [⚔️🛡️]**

**♥ Hearts (Armor)**

* Equip to one of your In-Court Nobles
* Strength bonus = (**Equipped♥** **value** + your ♥∑)
* Can be **Dismantled⚔️/🛡️**to pay **Tribute**
* If Noble gains matching ♠**Weapon** (same value), trigger **Set Bonus [⚔️🛡️]**

**[⚔️🛡️] Set Bonus**

* Triggered when a Noble gains both ♠ and ♥ of same numerical value or both **⍟**
* **Immediately** change stance of **any 1** In-Court Noble
* Triggers when second matching card is equipped
* Can trigger again if set is broken and reformed
* Only triggers once per matched pair, not once for each suit

**♣ Clubs (Tactics)**

* Target up to **2** face-up cards
* Total **value of** all **targets** must be ≤ **(played♣ value +** your **♣**∑**)**
* Valid targets:
	+ Equipped (♠**Weapon**/♥**Armor**) on any Noble
	+ Any card in Discard Pile
	+ **♦Diamonds** in any player's **Gem Pile**
	+ **🔒Leveraged** cards in any player's hand
* **All targeted cards are moved to your hand, un-leveraged and hidden.**
* **Played♣** goes to Discard Pile

**⍟ Joker (Writs)**

* Counts as any suit (♠♥♣♦) when played, resolves exactly like the chosen suit.
* Has a numerical value of **0**
* If Equipped to a noble, is affected by both ♠/♥∑
* If played as a **♦Diamond** can be **Spent** or **Saved.**
	+ If **Saved** will be placed in your **Gem Pile** and counts as a **♦Diamond**
* If played as a **♣Club** can target another **⍟Joker** or a higher value depending on your **♣**∑

**3. COMBAT STAGE**

**Part 1: Declare Combat (Active Player only)**

**Stance Rules,** apply to **Active Player’s** Nobles **only:**

* **STRIKE** Nobles **MUST** enter **Combat** unless **Tribute** is paid **(💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️)**
* **GUARD** Nobles **CANNOT** enter **Combat** unless **Tribute** is paid **(💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️)**

**Tribute Payment (💎/🔒/⚔️/🛡️)** = **Rank** value (♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3) using **Liquidate** / **Leverage** / **Dismantle** (see **Tribute Payment Options**)

**Combat Assignments:**

* The **Active Playe**r may have each of their In-Court Nobles **Combat** Opposing Nobles.
* Each **Combat** is a separate, one-on-one engagement.
* Each Noble may enter multiple **Combats**, up to a number equal to its **Rank** (♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3).
	+ This limit applies only to the **Active Player’s** Nobles — opposing Nobles may be involved in multiple **Combats**.
* Uneven matchups are allowed (e.g., 1v2, 3v1, etc.).

**Part 2: Resolve Combat**

**Strength Calculation:**

* Noble **Rank** value (♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3) **+** Equipped **♠Weapon** bonuses **+** Equipped **♥Armor** bonuses
	+ Do not forget ♠/♥∑ when calculating Strength

**Combat Result**:

Compare the Strength of Each Noble against each opponent **simultaneously** but **individually**. Lower Strength is **Disgraced**. **Tie Resolution: Higher** **Rank** Noble is **Disgraced.** If both Nobles are of equal **Rank**, both are **Disgraced**.

**Disgraced Nobles**:

* Flip face-down in place, no longer considered In-Court
* Lose all Equipment immediately (discard to Discard Pile)
* Must be **Retired** before new Noble of same **Rank** can be **Recruited**

**4. RESUPPLY STAGE (Both Players)**

* **Remove from Combat**: All remaining In-Court Nobles exit combat
* **Draw Cards** (Both Players, Starting with **Active Player**) (👥+):
	+ Each player draws (**4 minus** (♠♥♣♦)∑) cards
	+ If Deck runs out, see **Out of Cards**
* **Equipment Check** (Both Players, Starting with **Active Player**) (👥+):
	+ Each Noble retains Equipment in quantity up to their **Rank** (♞=1, ♛=2, ♚=3)
	+ Disgraced Nobles cannot retain Equipment
	+ Controller chooses which Equipment to discard if over limit
* **Hand Limit Check** (Both Players, Starting with **Active Player**) (👥+):
	+ Must discard non-leveraged cards to reach **Maximum Hand Size** (**7** Cards, including**🔒Leveraged**)
		- If your entire hand is **🔒Leveraged** do not discard
	+ All discards face-up to Discard Pile
* **Check Victory/Defeat Conditions** (in order listed in rules)
* **Pass Turn**: Other player becomes Active Player (👥+)

**📉 Out of Cards**

If you must draw but Deck is empty:

1. Take highest-numbered card from Discard Pile → add 🔒**Leveraged** to your hand
2. If tied values, you choose between tied cards
3. If no valid cards available: 🔒**Leverage 1** from your hand (if possible); otherwise skip
4. Reshuffle remaining Discard Pile into new Deck
5. Track the # of Reshuffles (can be done with a D12 dice), after the **12th**, see **Endgame Armistice** in **WINNING AND LOSING** section.

**REFERENCES:**

**NOBLE TABLE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Noble** | **Icon** | **Rank** |
| Jack | ♞ | 1 |
| Queen | ♛ | 2 |
| King | ♚ | 3 |

**PLAY SPACE**
****

**GAMEPLAY EXAMPLES**

**Tribute Payment Example**

*Jane wants to* ***Recruit*** *a Queen (♛=****2****). She has* ***1******♦Diamond*** *in her* ***Gem Pile*** *and* ***1 ♠Weapon*** *equipped to her Jack♞. She* ***Liquidates💎*** *the* ***♦Diamond*** *(moves to discard) and* ***Dismantles⚔️*** *the* ***♠Weapon*** *(moves to discard). Total* ***tribute*** *paid:* ***2****.*

**Equipment Strength Example**

*Tom's King (♚=****3****) has a* ***4♠Weapon*** *& a* ***2♠Weapon*** *equipped. Tom has* ***1******♠***∑ *from his Jack♞ in Court. King♚ Strength =* ***3*** *(****Rank****) +* ***5*** *(****4♠ + 1 ♠***∑*) +* ***3*** *(****2♠ + 1 ♠***∑*) =* ***11 Strength****.*

**Set Bonus Example**

*Lisa's Queen♛ is equipped with a* ***3♠Weapon****. She plays a* ***3♥Armor*** *and equips it to the same Queen. Since both cards have value* ***3****, the* ***Set Bonus****⚔️/🛡️ triggers immediately. Lisa may change the stance of* ***ANY*** *1 In-Court Noble (her own or opponent's).*

**Diamond Spend Example**

*Bob has* ***2 ♦***∑ *and plays a* ***5♦Diamond****. He chooses "****Spend****" and can target up to* ***2 Leveraged🔒*** *cards in any hand, with total value ≤* ***7*** *(****5 + 2******♦***∑*). He targets a* ***Leveraged🔒******3♣*** *in his hand and a* ***Leveraged🔒******4♥*** *from an opponent’s hand (total=****7****). Both are moved to his hand un-leveraged and hidden.*

**Clubs Targeting Example**

*Sue is Active Player and has* ***1******♣***∑ *and plays a* ***6♣Club****. She can target up to* ***2*** *cards with total value ≤* ***7*** *(****6 + 1******♣***∑*). She targets a* ***5♠Weapon*** *equipped to an opponent's Noble and a* ***2♦Diamond*** *in the discard pile. Both cards go to Sue’s hand as she played the* ***♣Club****.*

**Combat Assignment and Resolution Example**

*During Combat, Active Player has Jack♞ (strength of* ***5****) and Queen♛ (strength of* ***7****) in* ***STRIKE*** *stance. Opponent has King ♚ (strength of* ***7****) in Court.*

*Active Player cannot pay* ***tribute*** *and therefore assigns: Jack♞* ***combats*** *Opponent King♚, Queen♛ also* ***combats*** *Opponent King♚. This is legal - each of the Active Player's Nobles entered* ***1*** *Combat (≤ their Rank), and opponent's King can combat multiple enemies.*

*Results: Active Player Jack♞ is* ***Disgraced****, Opponent King♚ is* ***Disgraced****, Active Player Queen♛* ***remains In-Court****. In a tie, the Higher Rank Noble is* ***Disgraced****.*

*Note: if the Opponent had a Jack♞ (strength of* ***7****), the results would have been Active Player Jack♞ is* ***Disgraced****, Active Player Queen♛ is* ***Disgraced****, Opponent Jack♞* ***remains In-Court****.*

**3 & 4 PLAYER RULE MODIFICATIONS (👥+):**

**Player Count Scaling:**

* **Setup Nobles Distribution**: 2P→6 each, 3P→4 each, 4P→3 each
* **Setup Hand Discards**: 2P→2 each, 3P→3 each, 4P→4 each
* **Max Hand Size**: 2P→7, 3P→6, 4P→5
* **Max Card Play Limit Per Turn**: 2P→4, 3P→3, 4P→2

**Turn Order**: Rotate clockwise for all activities and Active Player turns.

**Player Elimination**: When eliminated, all Nobles go to In-Council pile, all Gems and Equipment go to Discard Pile. Winners may continue likewise for placement games.

***“Power isn’t won; it’s paid for.”***



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