

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.

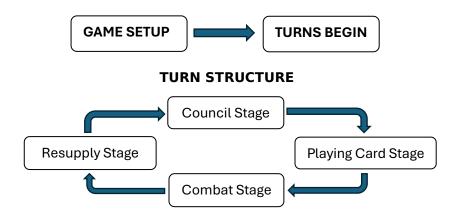
Victory is never singular. Dominate through battlefield strength, economic mastery, or a flawlessly timed tactical gambit. In the end, only one court's influence will endure.

"Power weighs most on those who know its cost."

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HOW TO PLAY (AT A GLANCE)



1 Mobles: 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.

- **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** = 1, Queen **2** = 2, King **2** = 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.
- 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
 (22 +)
- 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



CORE TERMS (CARD STATES)

<u>Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>		
In-Hand	Cards in your hand (non-leveraged are hidden, î Leveraged are face-up). Can be Leveraged î to pay Tribute.		
Leveraged (1	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 ♠∑ = Club 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

X Victory Conditions

(Check at end of Active Player's turn)

OUTMANEUVERED

- Each is equipped with a <u>*Weapon</u> or <u>*Varmor</u> 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.)
 - O Ace♣ = 1 and 分 Joker = 0
- Must reveal hand to claim.
- 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 in 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 / 2 / 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 / 2 / 3)

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

Tribute Payment Options

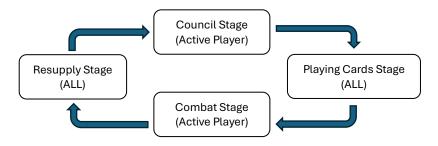
(♥ / ♠ / ¾ / ♥) (for Recruit/Retire/Combat): Use any combination of the following methods, each counting as a single payment.

Cost is equal to the Noble Rank (▲=1, 当=2, 当=3)

<u>Method</u>	<u>Description</u>	
Liquidate 💎	Move a ♦Diamond from your Gem Pile to Discard Pile	
Leverage 1	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**. (*** +)



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 (♥ / n / x / 1) (Rank value: 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 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)
- 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 \$\delta \& \text{King} \delta \delta \text{In-Court, they can play up to 4 cards of the following mix: 2\delta,2\delta,1\delta.1\delta.
- 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 $(\checkmark \lor) \Sigma =$ the influence of your Court

♦ Diamonds (Gems)

- Choose One:
- Save: Place this card in your Gem Pile, then target player Draws 2 cards.
 - o 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** ¼ / to pay **Tribute**
- lf Noble gains matching **∀Armor** (same value), trigger **Set Bonus** [弑 **1**]

♥ Hearts (Armor)

- Equip to one of your In-Court Nobles
- Strength bonus = (Equipped♥ value + your ♥∑)

[XX 1] 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:
 - o Equipped (**♠Weapon/♥Armor**) on any Noble
 - Any card in Discard Pile
 - ◆Diamonds in any player's Gem Pile
 - <u>i</u> 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 (♥/ 1 / 1 / 1 / 1 / 1)
 - GUARD Nobles CANNOT enter Combat unless Tribute is paid (💎 / 🔒 / 💥 / 🌓)

Tribute Payment (♥ / ♠ / 爲 / ♥) = Rank value (♠=1, ≝=2, ≝=3) using Liquidate / Leverage / Dismantle (see <u>Tribute Payment Options</u>)

Combat Assignments:

- The Active Player 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** =1, **1** =2, **1** =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 = 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**: <u>Higher Rank Noble is Disgraced</u>. 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, 当=2, 当=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 **a** Leveraged do not discard
 - o All discards face-up to Discard Pile
- Check Victory/Defeat Conditions (in order listed in rules)
- Pass Turn: Other player becomes Active Player (## +)

Value of Cards

If you must draw but Deck is empty:

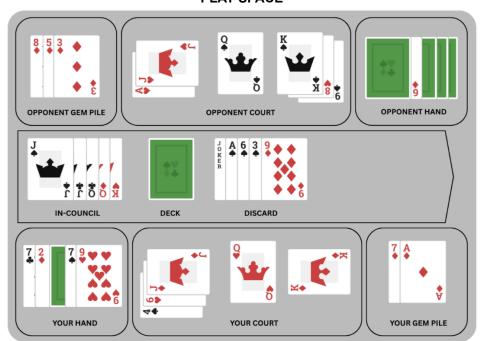
- 1. Take highest-numbered card from Discard Pile \rightarrow add $\widehat{\ }$ Leveraged to vour hand
- 2. If tied values, you choose between tied cards
- 3. If no valid cards available: Leverage 1 from your hand (if possible); otherwise skip
- 4. Reshuffle remaining Discard Pile into new Deck
- 5. 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	lcon	Rank
Jack	4	1
Queen	¥	2
King	*	3

PLAY SPACE



GAMEPLAY EXAMPLES

Tribute Payment Example

Jane wants to Recruit a Queen (<u>#</u>=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 ¼ the ♠ Weapon (moves to discard). Total tribute paid: 2.

Equipment Strength Example

Set Bonus Example

Lisa's Queen **w** 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 ¼**/ **0** triggers immediately. Lisa may change the stance of **ANY** 1 In-Court Noble (her own or opponent's).

Diamond Spend Example

Bob has 2 ২ and plays a 5 ২ Diamond. He chooses "Spend" and can target up to 2 Leveraged \hat{v} cards in any hand, with total value $\leq 7 (5 + 2 2)$. He targets a Leveraged \hat{v} 3 2 in his hand and a Leveraged \hat{v} 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 $1 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} \sum$ and plays a $6 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} Club$. She can target up to 2 cards with total value ≤ 7 ($6 + 1 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} \sum$). She targets a $5 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} Weapon$ equipped to an opponent's Noble and a $2 \stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} Diamond$ in the discard pile. Both cards go to Sue's hand as she played the $\stackrel{\bullet}{\bullet} Club$.

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 **3 combats** Opponent King **5 a** Queen **6 a** laso **combats** Opponent King **5 a** 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 **a** is **Disgraced**, Opponent King **b** is **Disgraced**, Active Player Queen **b** remains In-Court. In a tie, the Higher Rank Noble is **Disgraced**.

Note: if the Opponent had a Jack **a** (strength of **7**), the results would have been Active Player Jack **a** is **Disgraced**, Active Player Queen **w** is **Disgraced**, Opponent Jack **a** 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: $2P \rightarrow 7$, $3P \rightarrow 6$, $4P \rightarrow 5$
- Max Card Play Limit Per Turn: $2P\rightarrow4$, $3P\rightarrow3$, $4P\rightarrow2$

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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