

Teaching a board game can be a challenge. But in my experience, you can break down every game's rules into four distinct pieces of information that new players can digest and then be basically ready to (at least) start playing. Set up the board, explain the rules necessary to get started, and begin.

TEACHING THE RULES OF PANDEMIC

IN 4 EASY STEPS

1 THE GOAL

Together discover the cures for all four diseases, using teamwork and every player's special abilities, before too many outbreaks have occurred or you run out of disease cubes or player cards.

2 THE GAMEPLAY

On your turn, take four of the available actions, from

- movement by car/ferry (from one point on the map to an adjacent one) or plane (discard a card of the destination or departure city to fly to the destination or charter a flight anywhere from your departure city, respectively), to
- shuttle flights from research station to research station,
- building a research station by discarding a card that matches the city you are in,
- treating a disease by removing a cube from the city you are in,
- sharing knowledge (i.e., taking or giving cards that match the city you and another player are in)
- or discovering a cure by discarding 5 cards of the same color while at a research station,

then **draw two player cards** (discarding down to the hand limit of 7 if necessary) and **resolve infections** by flipping over as many infection cards as indicated by the current infection rate and placing one cube of the city's color there.

3 RESOLVING EPIDEMICS

When one of the two drawn player cards is an Epidemic, **a) increase the Infection Rate** by 1, **b) draw a card from the bottom of the Infection Deck**, put 3 cubes on that city and **c) shuffle** the card together with the discard pile and place the pile back on top of the Infection Deck.

4 RESOLVING OUTBREAKS

When, as you resolve infections, you put a cube on a city that already has its maximum of 3, an outbreak occurs and, instead of placing a 4th cube, **you place 1 cube on every city connected** to the outbreak (possibly resulting in a chain reaction of further outbreaks) and move the outbreak marker 1 space for each outbreak.

JUST BEFORE YOU START ...

Explain everyone's roles and special abilities.

STUFF TO EXPLAIN LATER

When and how to play event cards (any player can use them for no action at any time); playing event cards instead of discarding down to the hand limit; drawing 2 Epidemic cards at once; eradicating a disease; Introductory game vs Standard game (keeping your player cards hidden)

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE

People often criticize the game for its alpha player problem, meaning that one player can basically play the game alone while everyone follows what they say. It's true, experienced players know more strategies and are more aware of the dangers that come with drawing another infection card or ignoring another possible outbreak. **That's thematic.** Some people will always know better, others will always think they know better. If you are a more experienced player, why not sometimes let others learn how to deal with a disease and come up with great ideas. And if you are a new player, take the advice from experienced players every now and then. It may just help listening to an expert.