RULES

# RACE TO KEPLER

## A DECKBUILDING SPACE ADVENTURE

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## OVERVIEW

*Earth has become a wasteland, but humanity always finds a way. The world's greatest powers have turned their cities into colossal spaceships to launch toward Kepler-452b, the closest habitable refuge. As commander of one of these massive vessels, you must build a robust crew, acquire powerful titanic animal robots, and ensure your people are the first to claim humanity's new home.*

*Will you reach Kepler first and secure the future of your people?*

Race to Kepler is a fast-paced, deck-building race game. Your goal is to be the first to travel the 20 Parsecs needed to reach the nearest Earth-like planet, **Kepler-452b**.

You start with a Personal Deck of 10 basic cards and each turn, you will play cards from your hand to gain various resources and effects. Cards can also be used to bid for Titan cards, which will give powerful bonuses.

Money ( ⬢ ) and Market Actions ( ▣ ) are used to acquire new cards, Energy ( ⬣ ) activates your City's Operations and allows you to jump the Parsecs ( ◉ ) needed to get to Kepler.

# CONTENTS

**146 CARDS**
28 IRON, 30 GOLD, 4 MAFIA, 64 CREW SUPPLY,
16 TITANS, 4 PLAYER-AIDS

**15 CITIES**

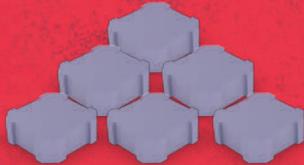**1 SPACETIME BOARD**

**1 MARKET BOARD**

**15 ENERGY TOKENS**

**15 MONEY TOKENS**

**15 MARKET ACTION TOKENS**

**4 PLAYER TOKENS**

**1 PHASE TRACKER**

**7 TITAN ENCOUNTER TOKENS**
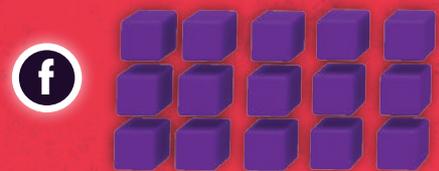
# SETUP

## 1. SETUP THE BOARDS

- Place the Market and Spacetime Boards in the center of the play area. Place one Titan Encounter token on spaces 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17 on the Spacetime board (a). Titan Encounters will trigger as players pass over these tokens.

- Place the phase tracker on the Launch (phase I) space on the Spacetime Board (b). This helps track when you are still in the Launch phase, and the rules are a little different.

- Shuffle the Titan Deck (all of the cards with the Titan icon) and place them face-down onto the Market Board to form the Titan Deck (c). You don't need to turn any over yet, that will happen later.

- Shuffle all the Crew Supply cards (all of the cards with the Crew icon, besides the 4 Mafia cards) and place them face-down onto their space of the Market Board. Lay out the top five cards from the Crew Deck face-up next to the deck (d). This is the Crew Supply.

- Place the Gold cards faceup in their space on the Market Board (e).

- Place the Energy, Money and Market Action tokens below the Spacetime Board (f).

## 2. CHOOSE YOUR CITY

- Deal 3 City cards to each player. Each player chooses 1 City card to use for the game (g) and returns the others to the box. If it's your first game, we suggest choosing cities with a single difficulty point (in the bottom left corner).

## 3. BUILD YOUR DECK

- Each player takes a Player-Aid card and places the corresponding Player Token on the 0 space of the Spacetime Board (h).

- Each player begins the game with a Personal Deck (containing 7 Iron, 2 Gold, and 1 Mafia card) Players shuffle their Personal Deck and place it face down to the left of their city card (i). Leave room to the right of your city card for a Discard Pile.

- Randomly determine which player will go first. Each player then draws 5 cards to form their opening hand and takes 1 market action token.

## Cards (top row)

**FUSER** (4)
Discard a card from Hand:
Gain ● equal to half its cost (rounded up).
If discarded OR ejected:
🂠 Draw a card.

**BIO ENGINEER** (6)
Look at the top 3 cards of your Deck: Pick 1 to 🂠 Draw, 1 to Eject, and 1 to Discard.

**GETAWAY PILOT** (3)
(1) Move a card from the Crew Supply to the Airlock.
OR
Move a card that costs ④ or less from the Airlock into your Discard.

**REFINER** (5)
(1) (1) Move up to 2 Iron / Gold cards from your Discard on top of your Deck. Gain (1) and (1) for each card moved.

**GOLD** (3) 2

## Track

10    15    20

PHASE I **LAUNCH** — Acquired cards go to discard.

After 1st ▲ Titan Encounter

PHASE II **RACE** — Acquired cards go to hand.

...Y TOKENS ▼    ◆ MONEY TOKENS ▼    MARKET ACTION TOKENS ▼

## Bottom

◆●○ Tokens ▲

**TRAIT**
Your Operations can be activated any number of times each turn.

**OPERATIONS**
1 Gain ◆.
3 🂠 Draw a card.
4 Gain 🔩.
4 Jump ②.

Deck ▲    Discard ▲

**IRON** (1) 1
**GOLD** (3) 2
**CREW** (2)
Move a card from the Crew Supply to the Airlock.

×7    ×2    ×1

# CARDS & CITIES

**CARD TYPE/NAME/DEPARTMENT**

**COST/BID VALUE**

**EFFECTS**

IRON

GOLD

3

2

CREW ENERGETICIST

4

◼ Draw a card.
— OR —
Gain 1 for each card you ejected this turn.

TITAN AMPLIFY

1

1

⬇✱ If discarded OR ejected from Hand or Discard: Gain 2.

⬇ If discarded by an effect: Return to Hand.

### RESOURCE CARDS

Iron and Gold used to acquire crew cards.

### CREW CARDS

Crew hired from the Crew Supply to add to your ship.

### TITAN CARDS

Legendary effects that need to be won during a Titan Encounter.

🟣🟡⚪ Tokens ▲

**TRAIT**

**TRAIT**
After you ◼ Discard a card, you may Freeze that card.

**OPERATIONS**
(limit once per turn each)

2 Jump 1. Play a Frozen card.

5 ◼ Discard 2 cards from your hand: Jump 3.

7 ◼ Discard any number of Frozen cards (do not re-Freeze them). For each card discarded: Jump 1.

Freeze: Place a card face up next to your City, it is not moved to your discard at the end of your turn.
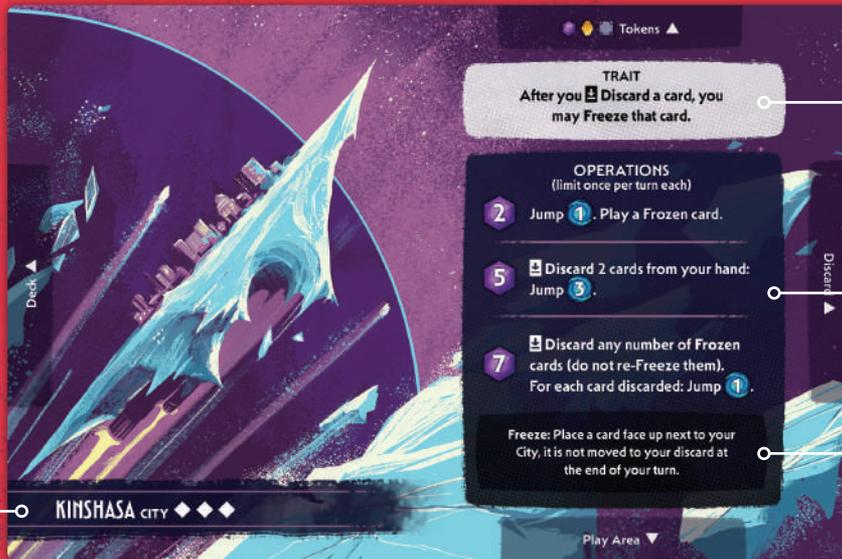
**OPERATION COST/EFFECT**

**KEYWORD DEFINITION**

Deck ▲

Discard ▶

**CITY NAME/ COMPLEXITY**

KINSHASA CITY ◆ ◆ ◆

Play Area ▼

### CITIES

Each City has unique Operations (activated with Energy) and some have Traits (passive abilities).

# GAMEPLAY

## TURN STRUCTURE

Starting with the first player, players take turns clockwise one after another until someone reaches the 20 space on the Spacetime Board and wins the game. Each turn has 3 steps:

### 1. ACTIONS
### 2. CLEANUP
### 3. TITAN ENCOUNTER

## GAME PHASES

Race to Kepler has two phases: the **Launch Phase** and the **Race Phase**. During the Launch phase, at the start of the game, cards acquired from the Gold/Crew Supply go to your discard pile. After the resolution of the first Titan Encounter, the Race phase begins and all cards acquired go to hand. Move the Phase Tracker token to the Race (Phase II) space on the Spacetime Board as a reminder of this.

After 1st ⚔ Titan Encounter

PHASE II
RACE    Acquired cards go to hand.
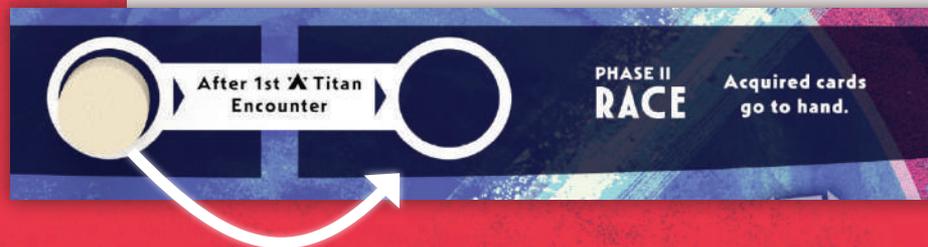
## 1. ACTIONS

During the Actions step, you may do the following in any order and as many times as you want:

   A.  **PLAY A CARD FROM YOUR HAND**

   B.  **ACQUIRE GOLD OR CREW CARDS FROM THE CREW SUPPLY**

   C.  **ACTIVATE ONE OF YOUR CITY'S OPERATIONS**

## A. PLAY A CARD FROM YOUR HAND

In order to play a card from your hand, do the following:

1) Place it face-up in your play area,

2) Resolve the effect of the card

3) Add any Money, Market Actions or Energy to your available resources for the turn.

Use the Energy, Money and Market Action tokens to track how many resources you have available during your turn. Any unused resources are lost at the end of your turn.

**PLAY EXAMPLE**

## TRIGGERED EFFECTS

Some card effects trigger when certain things happen to the card they are on (usually when it is Discarded or Ejected). These effects are denoted by a white effect box and do not resolve when the card is played from hand.

If ejected: Gain 2 OR + Draw a card.

## B. ACQUIRE GOLD OR CREW CARDS FROM THE CREW SUPPLY

Spend money equal to the cost of the card you wish to acquire and add it to your Discard (Phase I) or Hand (Phase II). Refill the Crew Supply when needed following the end of an action (the crew supply should always have 5 cards) from the Crew deck.

In order to take this action, you must spend a market action token. Each turn, you gain one Market Action Token you can use. Any unused Market Actions will expire at the end of your turn. Once Phase II has started, cards acquired this way are added to your hand and can be played that turn.

**ACQUIRE EXAMPLE**

## C. ACTIVATE ONE OF YOUR CITY'S OPERATIONS

Spend Energy equal to the cost of one of your City's operations and trigger its effect. Each Operation can only be used once per turn, but you may use multiple different Operations.

**OPERATION EXAMPLE**

## 2. CLEANUP

During the Cleanup step, do the following:

1) Move all cards in play and hand to your discard pile.
   Note: This does NOT trigger "when discarded" effects

2) Return unused energy and money tokens to the supply and ensure you have one market action token for your next turn.

3) Draw 5 cards

## 3. TITAN ENCOUNTER

If you entered or moved through a space on the Spacetime board during your turn with an unclaimed Titan Encounter token on it, a Titan Encounter occurs! Remove the token (if you crossed multiple tokens, remove the one closer to the start of the Parsec track) and reveal the top 3 cards from the Titan Deck to form the Titan Row.

Players will then choose their bid starting with the player who has traveled the most Parsecs and proceeding backwards until the player who has traveled the fewest Parsecs (in case of a tie, proceed to the player closest clockwise).

When choosing your bid, place any number of cards from your current hand face-down in front of you. Once you have chosen cards they cannot be changed and the number of cards chosen (but not their specific value) will be known to players later in the bid sequence.

Once all players have selected their bid, all players simultaneously reveal their bidded cards (if any were bid).

Each player adds up the cost (in the upper right corner) of the cards they bid. Note that Titan cards do not have costs and are therefore count as a value of 0. Whoever bid the highest total value gains one of the three Titan cards in the Titan Supply, adding it to their Hand immediately. Shuffle the two unchosen Titans back into the Titan Deck.

All players (winners and losers) move the cards they bid into their discard piles (you do not gain "when discarded" effects on cards). In case of tie, whoever bid earlier in this Titan Encounter wins.

Note: You do not redraw up to 5 cards in hand after a Titan Encounter

If no players bid any cards, no one gains a Titan.

After checking for (and potentially resolving) a Titan Encounter, play proceeds clockwise to the next player's turn.

**TITAN ENCOUNTER EXAMPLE**

# WINNING THE GAME

The game ends once any player reaches the **20 parsec space** on the spacetime board. This can happen during the action step of a player's turn or as a result of a Titan encounter. In either case, the game ends immediately and the player that reached the 20 parsec space has reached Kepler first and is the winner!

# KEYWORDS

## MONEY

Resource cards (Gold and Iron), some Crew cards, and some City abilities give you money. When you gain money, it goes into a pool which you may use during your turn to purchase Gold or Crew cards from the Crew Supply. A card's cost is found in the upper right-hand corner of the card. Money is lost at the end of the turn.

## MARKET ACTIONS

When a card or City grants you an additional Market Action, which allows you to buy one more card that turn as long as you also have enough money for that card. However, any unused Market Actions do go away at the end of the turn.

## ENERGY

When a card or City grants you additional energy, add that energy to your pool for the turn. Energy can be spent to activate your city's Operations during your turn. Any unused energy will be lost at the end of your turn.

## GAINING CARDS

When an effect tells you to Gain a card, you may acquire that card and add it to your hand. This does not consume any Money or a Market Action.

## EJECT

When an effect tells you to Eject a card, move it into the Airlock and resolve any "when ejected" effects on it. This card can only be retrieved by effects that specifically allow you to retrieve cards from the Airlock.

## DISCARD

When an effect tells you to Discard a card, move it into your discard pile and resolve any "when discarded" effects on it.

## PARSECS

Parsecs are how you win the game. When an effect tells you to Jump a number of Parsecs, move your Player Token that many spaces to the right on the Spacetime Board.

# DEPARTMENTS

A key attribute of all Crew cards is their Department. In Race to Kepler, this is shown by their color, the crew featured, and the subtitle on the card.

### SCIENTISTS
Specialize in Ejecting cards for benefits.

### ENGINEERS
Gain bonuses when cards are Discarded.

### MINERS
Generate extra Money and Market Actions.

### SMUGGLERS
Manipulate the Crew Supply and Airlock.

# COMING FROM OTHER DECKBUILDERS?

## KEY DIFFERENCES

**Cards go to hand:** Unlike many other deckbuilders, purchased cards go directly to your hand and can be played immediately (once the Race Phase has begun). This means late comebacks involving your hand, the crew supply, and some deep strategies are possible.

**Launch Phase:** Turns before first Titan Encounter have special rules (aquired cards go to discard).

**Two resources:** Money buys cards, Energy powers your city to advance Parsecs.

**Bidding:** The highest value cards are not going to randomly show up in the market on your player's turn. Instead these cards are Titans, and you'll have to bid against your opponents for them.

**City = Player Board:** Your city provides persistent abilities and asymmetric play.

**Race, not points:** First to 20 Parsecs wins - no victory point cards in your deck or counting at the end.

## FAMILIAR CONCEPTS

**Departments:** Cards have color-coded synergies like many deckbuilders, although Kepler is designed for deck building creativity across Departments as well.

**Trash = Eject:** Remove cards permanently to the Airlock like many games, although Kepler has more access to the Airlock than most games.

**No attack cards:** Interaction is through bidding, city abilities, and market denial.

## QUICK STRATEGIC TIPS

- Titan bidding is high-risk/high-reward - sometimes it's better to keep your cards

- City choice shapes your strategy - read traits carefully

- Guide beginners to start by targeting a single Department of crew they think matches their city well, but veterans will rapidly find many cross Department synergies.

# CREDITS

**Game Design:** Kaden Hyatt, Liam Hyatt, Nabeel Hyatt & Lance Haugh

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