

THE EMPIRE ENGINE

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Matthew Dunstan

2–4 players • 30 minutes

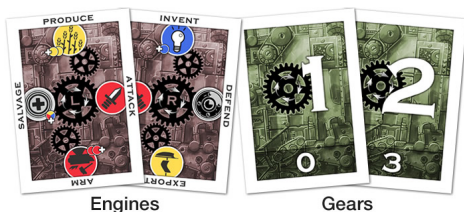
EUROPE, 1888

In a dystopian alternate reality, four great powers vie for control of the continent. Each Empire's soldiers lay siege to opposing cities, while their war efforts are funded by exotic exports and ingenious inventions. Only one state will orchestrate their limited resources into an Empire Engine powerful enough to lead them to victory.

COMPONENTS

The game contains the following 18 cards:

- 8 Engines (marked 'L' & 'R' for left & right)
- 8 Gears (with values '1'/'0' & '2'/'3')
- 1 round track
- 1 action summary



You will need to find the following components:

- **45 resources:** 15 counters in each of three different kinds, representing Soldiers, Goods and Inventions. The ideal colours are red, yellow and blue, since these match the colours of the icons on the cards.
- **2 markers:** for start player and round track.

SETUP

Put all the resources in the middle of the play area as a common stock. Put the round track beside the play area with a marker on the '1' space. Each player takes the following:

- 2 Engines: 'L' and 'R'
- 2 Gears: '1' and '2'
- 1 Soldier and 1 Good from the stock.

Place your Soldier and Good into your **ready pile** on the left of your play area. You must be careful to keep the resources in your ready pile separate from those in your **score pile**.

We recommend that you play with hidden score piles. Use any other suitable method to hide the resources in your score pile from the other players. You may always check the number of resources in your own score pile.

Give one player the start player marker.

AIM OF THE GAME

The player who scores the most points for the Goods, Soldiers and Inventions in their score pile at the end of the game is the winner.

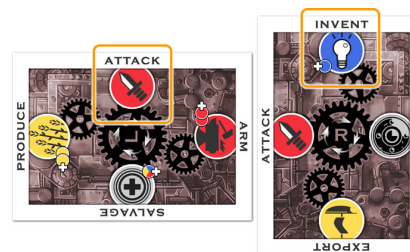
HOW TO PLAY

The Empire Engine is played over 8 or 9 rounds, depending on the number of players. You compete to collect resources, and will score points at the end of the game for the Goods, Soldiers and Inventions in your score pile. Resources in your ready pile will only be counted in the case of a tie.

Engines & actions

Your Engines are marked 'L' for left, and 'R' for right. Always keep your left Engine on the left, and your right Engine on the right.

Each Engine carries four actions. You will use your Gears to rotate your Engines, and in each round you will perform the actions on the **top** edges of your Engines.



Playing a round

Each round consists of two phases, performed in order: Plan & Execute.

- **Plan:** Use your Gears to plan your actions, then reveal them and rotate your Engines.
- **Execute:** Perform Engine actions.

The Plan phase in the 1st round is performed differently than in later rounds.

At the end of each round, pass the start player marker clockwise and move the round marker along the round track, then start a new round.

Running out of resources

The stock is not intended to be limited. If any type of resource runs out during the game, all players should return an equal number of that type from their score piles to the stock. This will not affect the relative scores of the players.

PLAN: 1ST ROUND

In the 1st round, you do not use your Gears to control your Engines. Instead, you initiate your Engines and freely choose two actions to perform in the Execute phase.

All players take their Engines in hand. Starting with the start player and going clockwise, each player chooses an Engine and then chooses the action on that Engine to perform in the Execute phase. Place the Engine **face down** in your play area, with the chosen action on the top edge.

Then, starting with the last player and going anticlockwise, each player places their other Engine to choose a second action.

When all players have placed both Engines, flip your Engines over, keeping the chosen actions along the top edges.

Remember: Your left Engine must be on the left, and your right Engine on the right!

PLAN: LATER ROUNDS

After you initiate your Engines in the 1st round, leave your Engines face up on in your play area for the remainder of the game and use your Gears to control them.

All players take their Gears in hand. Starting with the start player and going clockwise, each player chooses a Gear and places it **face down** below one of their Engines. Then, starting with the last player and going anticlockwise, each player places their other Gear below their other Engine.

Each Gear's large value (1 or 2) indicates how many clockwise quarter-turns you will rotate the Engine when the Gear is revealed.

When you play a Gear face down, you may put 1 Soldier or 1 Good from your ready pile onto the back of the card. This indicates that you will use the alternate value of the card when you rotate the Engine, changing the '1' Gear to '0', or changing the '2' Gear to '3'. If you wish to change both Gears, you must use 1 resource for each card.

When all players have placed both Gears, everyone flips their Gears over, and turns their Engines the appropriate number of clockwise quarter-turns.

See the card play example on the next page.

If you put a resource on the Gear, you must return the resource to the stock and turn the Engine the alternate number of quarter-turns; you cannot change your mind.

EXECUTE

The Engine actions always resolve in the order shown on the summary card. Every action chosen **must** be fully resolved, if possible.

There are three groups of actions. Actions in each group can be performed simultaneously by all players.

1. **Arm, Produce & Invent:** Use your Engines to gain resources for your Empire.
2. **Attack & Defend:** Use Soldiers to attack neighbouring Empires. You may also defend your Empire from possible attacks by your neighbours.
3. **Export & Salvage:** Export all your Goods, or salvage a Soldier, Good or Invention, to your score pile. These actions are risky and will fail if you were successfully attacked by at least one of your neighbours.

1. Arm, Produce & Invent

- **Arm:** Take 2 Soldiers from the stock and add them to your ready pile.
- **Produce:** Take 2 Goods from the stock and add them to your ready pile.
- **Invent:** Take 1 Invention from stock and add it directly to your score pile.

2. Attack & Defend

- **Attack:** Return 1 Soldier from your ready pile to the stock to support the attack on your neighbour. Do this immediately, before any attacks against you are resolved.

If you choose to attack and have a Soldier, you must attack; you cannot change your mind. Your Attack action is successful only if you have a Soldier to support the attack and the targeted opponent did not block your attack with the Defend action, otherwise the action is wasted.

The Attack action on your left Engine attacks your left neighbour. The Attack action on your right Engine attacks your right neighbour. In a 2-player game, both your Attack actions target your single opponent.

- **Defend:** Block 1 attack. The Defend action is on your right Engine but can block a single

attack from either of your neighbours. Your Defend action is successful only if you are attacked, otherwise the action is wasted.

Resolve the different combinations of possible Attack and Defend actions as follows:

- **Attack: Undefended**
If a player successfully attacks an opponent, the attacking player takes 1 Soldier or 1 Good from the targeted opponent's ready pile and adds it to their score pile. If the opponent's ready pile is empty, the attacking player takes 1 Soldier from the stock and adds it to their score pile.
- **Attack: Defended**
If a player successfully blocks an attack, the attack fails and the attacking player receives nothing. Instead, the defending player takes 1 Soldier from the stock and adds it to their score pile.
- **Double attack: Undefended**
If a player is attacked by both neighbours in the same round and did not defend, the attacked player loses 1 Soldier or 1 Good to each attacking player. If the attacked player only has one resource in their ready pile, it goes to the attacking player who is first in the turn order, and the other attacker takes a Soldier from the stock.
- **Double attack: Defended**
If a player is attacked by both neighbours in the same round and chose to defend, only **one** of the attacks is blocked. The other attack still succeeds. The attacked player may choose which attack is blocked.

It is possible to use the Attack actions on both of your Engines in the same turn, but you must use 2 Soldiers — 1 for each attack — to do so, otherwise **both** actions are wasted. If you try to use both attacks but have only 1 Soldier, both attacks fail, and you must return the Soldier to the stock.

3. Export & Salvage

You may only Export or Salvage if you were either not attacked, or were attacked once but successfully defended the attack. If at least one of your opponents successfully attacked you, these actions are wasted.

- **Export:** Move all of the Goods in your ready pile to your score pile. You must export all your Goods.
- **Salvage:** Take any 1 Good, 1 Soldier or 1 Invention from the stock and add it directly to your score pile.

End of round

At the end of each round, pass the start player marker clockwise and move the round marker one space on the round track. The game ends after the following number of rounds:

- **2 or 4 players:** 8 rounds
- **3 players:** 9 rounds

END OF THE GAME

The game ends once the agreed upon number of rounds have been played.

Each player scores 1 point for each resource in their score pile. In addition, the player with the most resources of each type scores an additional 3 points. If 2 or more players tie with the most resources, all tied players receive 3 points.

The player with the most points wins. If there is a tie, the tied player with the most resources in their ready pile wins. If still tied, all tied players share victory.

VARIANT & HINTS

Playing a longer game

If all players agree, you can play a longer game of 12 rounds with 2, 3 or 4 players.

Hints from the designers

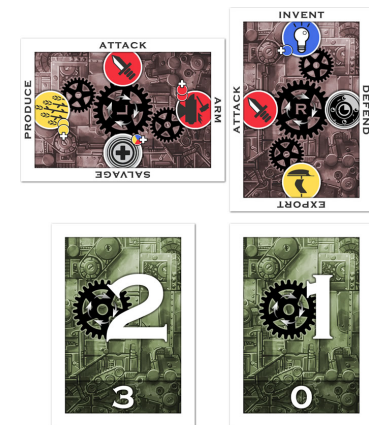
The Empire Engine is a game of limited resources. Carefully choosing actions to balance the production of resources and their effective use is the key to success.

- Resources in your score pile are safe and cannot be stolen, but cannot be used to change your actions or attack other players.
- The game can seem harsh at times, especially in your first few games. However, you are only directly punished by the game if you do

not have the resources needed to complete particular actions. Try and think one turn ahead, so that you're not forced to take actions that don't benefit you.

- Try not to run out of resources in your ready pile at the end of a round. This will not only limit the actions available to you in the next round, but will tell your opponents what you can and cannot do. With no resources in your ready pile, only four of the eight actions on your Engines are available.

CARD PLAY EXAMPLE



Example: The player played the '2' Gear below the left Engine, and the '1' Gear below the right. After the Gears are revealed, the left Engine is rotated 2 quarter-turns clockwise, bringing the Salvage action to the top, and the right Engine is rotated 1 quarter-turn clockwise, bringing its Attack action to the top.

Illustrations: **Sebastien Antoniou**

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