

ILLUMINATI

THE GAME OF CONSPIRACY

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Components

This game includes eight Illuminati cards; 85 cards representing other Groups; 17 Special cards; 160 money tokens, representing megabucks (MB); two dice; eight reference sheets and dossiers, one for each Illuminati group; and this rulebook.

Object of the Game

The object of *Illuminati* is to take control of the world. You start with a single Illuminati card, representing your own secret conspiracy. During the game, you take over other Groups (represented by cards). These Groups are added to your Power Structure and do your bidding – unless a foe takes them from you. You may win either by controlling enough Groups, or by fulfilling the special goal of your own Illuminati. See the Reference Sheets.

Online Resources

Visit **illuminati.com** for lots more hints for taking over the world!

- Articles about strategy, variants, and background.
- PDFs of the game components, in case you lose something.
- Tournament rules.
- 50 Awful Things About the Illuminati.
- The Fnorder – If you have an iPhone, you can get incomprehensible secret messages from the Illuminati. And it's free!
- Frequently Asked Questions About the Real Illuminati.
And much more!

Getting Started

Illuminati is best for four to six players. You can play with three or even two, but this limits the possibilities for diplomacy and negotiation. A seven- or eight-player game really takes too long.

Remove the eight Illuminati cards from the deck; they have dark backs to make them easy to find. Place them face-down on the table. Each player draws an Illuminati card, places it face-up, and draws its indicated Income from the bank, placing it on the card. Leftover Illuminati cards are not used.

Shuffle the remaining cards (including Specials) and place them face-down in the center of the table.

Turn four cards face-up in the center of the table. (If any Special cards are turned over, bury them in the deck and turn over new ones until you have four Groups.) These are the original “uncontrolled Groups.”

Each player rolls two dice; the player with the highest roll plays first. Follow the Sequence of Play, below. Start by collecting more income for your Illuminati Group, turning over one card, and then (probably) trying to take over an uncontrolled Group with your Illuminati. And the race for world control is on!

Sequence of Play

Play proceeds in turns. On his turn, a player does the following:

1. **Collect Income.** For each Group that has an Income, draw that income from the bank. Put the money directly on that card (the Group treasury). Hint: The game will go faster if players count up their Income before their turn starts, and have it ready beside each Group card. Money should not be placed on the card until that player’s turn actually begins.

Players may stack their money so only the top token can be seen, or spread them out to flaunt their wealth.

2. **Draw a card.** If the card is a Group, it is placed face-up in the center of the table, with the other uncontrolled Groups.

If it is a Special card, the player keeps it. They may place it face-down or face-up (whichever they choose) in front of them. However, they must display the card; it can’t be hidden in a pocket. The other players do not have the right to know what the card says, but they do have the right to know how many Specials each player has.

3. **Take two “actions,”** as explained below.

4. **Take any “free actions.”** Free actions (also explained below) do not count against the two actions a player is allowed during each turn. Free actions may be taken before, between, or after a player’s regular two actions.

5. **Transfer money.** Part or all of the contents of two treasuries may be moved to the treasuries of *adjacent* Groups. See p. 6.

6. **Use Illuminati ability.** If you are the Gnomes of Zurich, this is the time when you may redistribute money between treasuries. If you are the Bermuda Triangle, this is the time when you may reorganize your Power Structure.

7. **Add targets.** At the end of each turn, if the uncontrolled area has fewer than three Groups, draw cards until there are three uncontrolled Groups. If a Special is drawn, discard it.

Play continues *counter-clockwise* until a player (or coalition of players) wins by achieving their Goals – see the reference card. As play develops, a game might look something like this:

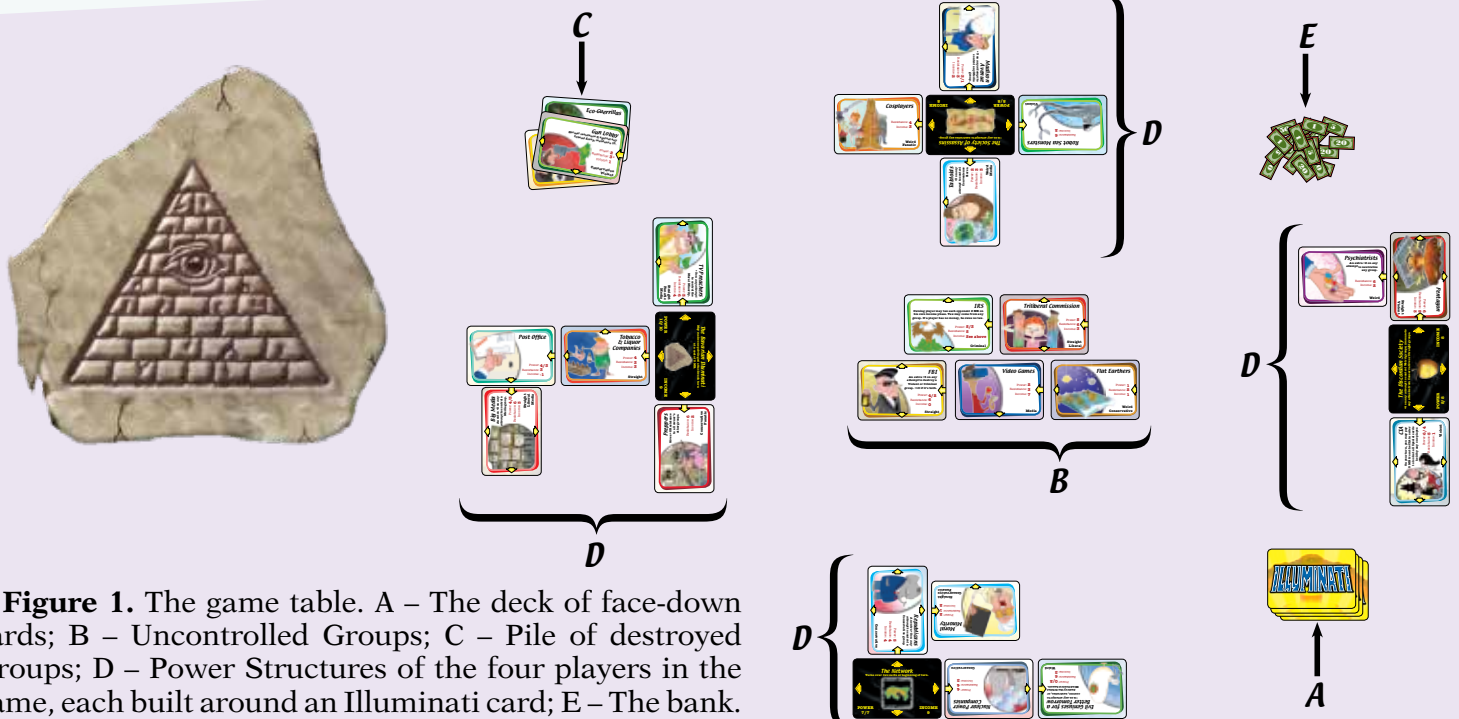


Figure 1. The game table. A – The deck of face-down cards; B – Uncontrolled Groups; C – Pile of destroyed Groups; D – Power Structures of the four players in the game, each built around an Illuminati card; E – The bank.

Illuminati card



Figure 2. A typical Power Structure. The center of any Power Structure is the Illuminati card. Each player starts with one of the eight Illuminati cards; each has its own special abilities. In this example, the Illuminati control three Groups directly: the Democrats, the Congressional Wives, and the CIA. The CIA controls two Groups: the Airlines and the Cycle Gangs. The Democrats control one Group: the Antiwar Activists.

The Groups

The basic elements of Illuminati are the Group cards, ranging from the Illuminati themselves to the Flat Earthers and the Boy Sprouts. (*Any resemblance to real organizations is purely satirical in nature.*) Each Group has certain characteristics. See Figure 3 below.

Alignment

There are nine different political alignments. It is generally easier for a Group to *control* or *neutralize* Groups with similar alignments, and to *destroy* those of opposite alignments. Some cards have one alignment, some have several, and a few have none. Meanings of the alignments, for the purposes of this game, are:

Liberal – Politically “left,” whatever that means; its opposite is *Conservative*.

Conservative – Usually mad at the Liberals; its opposite is *Liberal*.

Peaceful – Philosophically opposed to the use of force; its opposite is *Violent*.

Violent – Armed and/or dangerous; not necessarily vicious; its opposite is *Peaceful*.

Straight – Emphatically middle-of-the-road; its opposite is *Weird*.

Weird – Peculiar, offbeat, notably different from the neighbors; its opposite is *Straight*.

Criminal – Extorting money from citizens through force or threat, and/or breaking the law as a profession; there is no opposite.

Fanatic – Adhering to a limited system of beliefs in defiance of all others; any two Fanatic Groups are considered “opposite” to each other.

Media – Politically significant groups in the business of selling news, entertainment, opinion, and lies. Media groups have no “opposite,” not even each other.

Power

The Power number is a measure of the Group’s ability to dominate other Groups. The higher the number, the greater the Power. If a Group has two numbers (for example: 7/4), the first number is its regular Power and the second represents the portion of that Power which can be used to assist *another* Group in an attack (transferable power).

A card with no Power cannot attack. A few Groups have transferable power only (Power 0/1, for instance). This means they cannot attack, but can help *another* Group attack.

Resistance

This is a measure of a Group’s ability to resist domination. The lower its Resistance, the easier it is to take over . . . and the harder it is to protect when you control it.

The Illuminati Groups have no Resistance number, because they cannot be attacked directly.

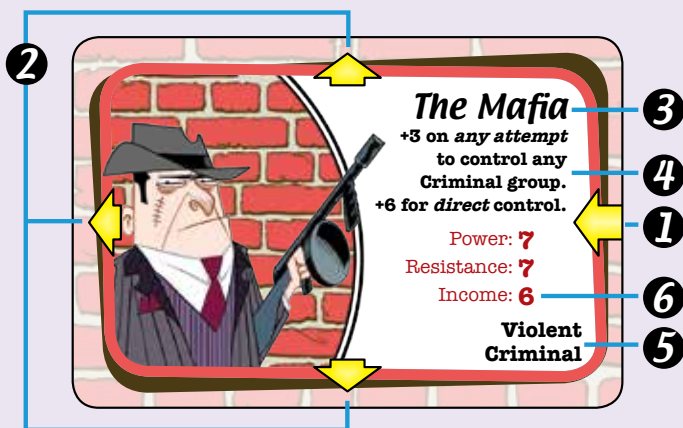


Figure 3. The Mafia card. Each card, except for Illuminati, has an arrow pointing inward (1). When a card becomes part of a Power Structure, this arrow is placed next to an outgoing arrow of the Group that controls it. A group may also have one to three arrows pointing outward (2). These arrows show the potential to control other Groups. The Mafia, with three arrows pointing outward, is a very useful group. If a Group has no arrows pointing outward, it will have no Power at all.

The Group’s name (3) is at the top of the card. If it has a special ability, it will be shown just below (4). Its political alignments are at the lower right (5). Its characteristics – Power, Resistance, and Income – are shown in red (6).

Income

Money is measured in Megabucks (MB). At the beginning of your turn, each Group you control collects the amount listed on its card. This income is placed directly on that card, becoming part of the Group's treasury. If a card has no Income, it gets no money. Uncontrolled Groups never get Income.

Two cards have a special Income. The IRS gets its Income by taxing each of the other players 2 MB on the owning player's turn. The Post Office *costs* 1 MB per turn to control (paid by their master or their Illuminati).

Special Abilities

All Illuminati, and some other Groups, have "special abilities" shown on their cards.

"Any attempt" abilities give an extra power to the holder of the card. Any attempt by that *player* to do that thing, regardless of which Group tries it, will receive the indicated bonus. For instance, if you control the Cycle Gangs, any attempt you make to destroy another Group *with any of your Groups* will get a +2 bonus. This ability comes to you as soon as you take over the Cycle Gangs, and is lost as soon as you lose them. A Group may give a bonus on "any attempt to control," even if it has no outgoing arrows.

For other special abilities like that of the IRS, follow the instructions on the card.



Actions and Free Actions

There are three types of regular actions: an attack, a money transfer, and moving a Group. A player gets two regular actions per turn.

Some things may be done during the "action" part of a turn without counting as actions. These free actions include:

Dropping a Group – removing a Group from your Power Structure and returning it to the uncontrolled area. (Its puppets must also become uncontrolled.)

Aiding an attack – using transferable power to assist another Group. This counts as part of the attack being aided.

Giving away a Special card or money – this may be done at any time, not just during your turn. Money may be transferred only between Illuminati treasuries when it goes to another player.

Using a Special card – follow the instructions on the card. (*Exception:* Using the *Bribery* card is a regular action.)

Each action must be completed before beginning another. A player may elect to take no actions (not even free actions, free money transfers, or Illuminati abilities) and collect 5 MB for their Illuminati treasury instead.

Actions cannot be saved for later turns.

Attacks

The most important actions in *Illuminati* are attacks. In an attack, a Group uses its Power, and probably its money, in an attempt to either *control*, *neutralize*, or *destroy* another Group.

Illuminati cards themselves can attack, but cannot be attacked. No Group, except the UFOs, can attack more than once per turn.

Attack to Control

This attack may be made against any other Group in play except another Illuminati or a Group you *already* control. The attacking Group must have at least one outward-pointing arrow free. If a Group has no open outward-pointing arrow (either because all are being used or some are blocked), it cannot attempt to control another Group.

To attack, the player announces which Group is attacking, which one is being attacked, and the type of attack. (*Example:* "The International Drug Smugglers, assisted by the CIA, will attempt to control the Boy Sprouts.")

The success of the attack is determined by rolling two dice. For a successful attack, subtract the defending Group's Resistance from the attacking Group's Power. *Example:* If a Power of 6 attacks a Resistance of 2, it can succeed only on a roll of 4 or less. If a Power of 10 attacked that same Resistance of 2, it would succeed on an 8 or less, giving it a much better chance.

Automatic Failure. A roll of 11 or 12 results in automatic failure of the attack, no matter how much Power was involved.

Aiding Attacks. All Illuminati, and some other Groups, have *transferable power*. If a Group has two Power numbers separated by a slash (like 5/2), the *second* number is its transferable power. If a Group does not attack during a turn, it may use its transferable power to *aid* an attack made by any other Group in its Power Structure.

Any number of Groups may aid one attack by adding transferable power. However, no Group may participate in more than one attack per turn. (*Exception:* The Special Ability of the UFOs lets them participate in two attacks per turn.) *Example:* A Group with a power of 6, aided by another Group with a transferable power of 4,

is attacking a Group with a resistance of 3. The attacker has a total power of 10 (6 plus 4), and will have to roll a 7 or less (10 minus 3) to succeed.

When an attack is announced, all transferable power to be used in that attack must be announced *before* any money is spent (see below) to support the attack. No transferable power may be added in the middle of the attack.

Alignment of the Group(s) transferring power does not matter.

Power Structure Position. If a Group is already controlled by an opponent, it may be harder to control. The closer it is to the Illuminati who control it, the more of a bonus it gets to Resistance (or to Power if someone tries to destroy it). If it is adjacent, it gets a +10! If it is one Group away, it gets a +5. If it is two Groups away, it gets a +2.

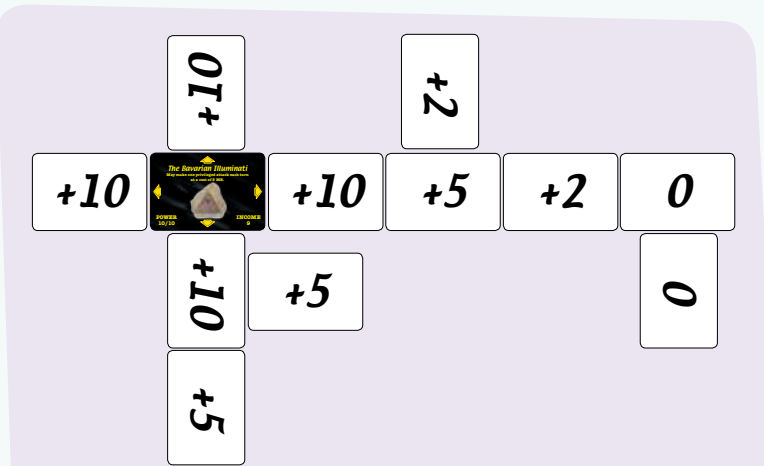


Figure 4. Resistance bonuses for location in power structure. Note that Groups more than 3 away from the Illuminati get no bonus at all.

Alignments. The alignments of the attacking and defending Groups are also important. Identical alignments make control easier; opposed alignments make it harder. If the Groups have any *identical* alignments, add 4 to the attacker’s effective Power for each identical alignment. If they have any *opposite* alignments, subtract 4 for each. *Example:* A Weird, Liberal Group is trying to control a Straight, Conservative Group. Two sets of opposite alignments subtract 8 from the attacking power on this attack. (*Exceptions:* A Fanatic group is opposite to all other Fanatics. Criminal has no opposite. Media has no opposite, and Media gets a +4 either to control OR to destroy other Media.)

Special Powers. Some Groups’ special powers (shown on the card) will help them attack or defend against certain opponents.

Spending Money to Attack. The attacker may also improve his chances by using some of his money in the attack. Each MB spent (returned to the bank) adds one point of Power to that attack. However, all transferable power to be used must be added and announced *before* any money is spent.

Attacking money may be spent from both the attacking Group’s treasury and the Illuminati treasury. Other Groups in the Power Structure cannot spend money to aid the attack. *Example:* In the instance above, the attacker was afraid he might not roll a 7 or less. So he spent 3 MB. Now he needs to roll a 10 or less, which is much easier.

Once the roll needed to succeed has reached 10, additional spending will not improve the attacker’s odds; an 11 or 12 always fails. But additional money or power can still be useful. For instance, if an attacker uses enough money and power to exceed the target’s Resistance by 20, the defender would have to spend 20 MB to get the attacking roll back down to zero again!

Spending Money to Defend. If the defending Group is controlled by another player, the defender may counter an attack by spending some of his own money. Resistance to that attack will increase by **two** for each MB spent from the defending Group’s treasury, and by **one** for each MB spent from his Illuminati treasury. Other Groups cannot participate. All money spent goes immediately to the bank. *Example:* In the instance above, the defender has 3 MB on the defending Group. He spends it all. It counts double, so instead of a 10, the attacker now needs to roll a 4. The attacker may then commit more money to offset the defender’s spending.

Continued Spending. The attacker and defender can each go back and forth, putting in more money, as long as they are able. When no player is willing to spend more money to affect the attack, the dice are rolled to determine the result. Remember: a roll of 11 or 12 results in automatic failure, no matter how much power or money is used in the attack.

Results of the Attack. If the attack fails, the defending Group remains where it was.

If an Attack to Control is successful, the target Group is captured and added to the attacking player’s Power Structure. It is placed next to its captor, with its inward-pointing arrow next to an outward-pointing arrow of the capturing Group, which becomes its new “master.” The controlled Group is now called a “puppet.” Puppets may then capture puppets of their own, and so on!

It does not matter if a card is upside-down or sideways, as long as the arrows line up properly.

If the captured Group already had puppets of its own, they are also captured. When placed in the attacker’s Power Structure, they should keep the same position, relative to their own master, that they had originally. If that is not possible because of overlaps with cards the attacker already has, he may rearrange any new cards that overlap, as long as they are still controlled by the same Group. New Groups that still cannot fit are dropped and become uncontrolled.

Half of the money remaining in the captured Groups’ treasuries (round down) goes with them to the new owner; the rest is returned to the bank.

The Group that attacked may immediately transfer any or all of its treasury to the Group it just captured. This is not a separate action, but is considered part of the attack. Such a transfer is often a good idea, either to protect the new Group from attack or to let it mount an attack of its own.

If a player's first action is an attack, and it fails, the player may attack the same Group again as their second action. However, *no individual Group (except the UFOs) may attack twice in a turn.*

A newly controlled Group may attack (or aid an attack, or use its special ability) on the same turn in which it was acquired.

Attack to Neutralize

This is identical to an "Attack to Control" except:

1. The target must be a Group that is already controlled by another player.
2. The attacker gains an additional +6 bonus.
3. The attacker does not need an open control arrow.
4. If the attack succeeds, the target Group and any subordinates are placed in the *uncontrolled* area. All their money is returned to the bank.

Attack to Destroy

This is identical to an "Attack to Control" except:

1. Instead of rolling "Power minus Resistance," the attacker rolls "Power minus Power." In other words, the defending Group defends with its Power rather than its Resistance. (Its closeness to its Illuminati, as shown on p. 5, still counts for defense.)

A Group with no Power *cannot be destroyed* except by the Special card *Whispering Campaign*. The factors that keep powerless Groups from organizing enough to control other Groups also make them too diffuse to wipe out.

2. Groups with different philosophies destroy each other more easily. An Attack to Destroy gets a +4 bonus for every *opposite* alignment, and a -4 for every *identical* alignment. (*Exceptions:* A Fanatic group is opposite to all other Fanatics. Media has no opposite, and Media gets a +4 either to control OR to destroy other Media.)

3. A Group does not need an open control arrow in order to attempt destruction.

4. If the attack succeeds, the target Group goes to the "dead pile." Its subordinate Groups are not destroyed, but become uncontrolled. It can be revived only by the Special card *Media Blitz*.

5. You may try to destroy a Group you already control.

In this case, the target's closeness to its Illuminati does not protect it. But no Group may attack *itself*, or aid an attempt to destroy itself!



Interference

A player may *interfere* in an attack, either by helping the attacker or by opposing him. To do so, he announces who he will help, and then contributes money *from his Illuminati treasury only*. This money goes to the bank. It affects the needed die roll by 1 for each MB spent.

An attacker may prevent Interference by declaring an attack "Privileged." To do this, the attacker must discard any one Special card and call "Privilege!" *when first declaring the attack*. No one can interfere either for or against a Privileged Attack.

The Bavarian Illuminati has the Special Ability to declare one attack per turn Privileged, at the cost of 5 MB payable from their Illuminati treasury. If that player wishes to use their Special Ability, they must declare the Privilege and pay the 5 MB when they first announce the attack.

Privilege may be abolished by use of the Special card *Deep Agent*, or by discarding any two Special cards (see p. 7). If the Privilege is abolished, it cannot be reinstated on that attack.

Calling Off an Attack

After a player announces an attack, they *can* change their mind and call it off – *until* they put some money down. Once the attacker actually takes money from the treasury and puts it in the bank, the attack is *committed*. It must be played out, and it does count as an action.

If the attacker spends no money, the attack is committed when another player spends money (either for or against the attack) or when the attacker rolls the dice.

Transferring Money

A Group may, as an action, transfer any of its money to an adjacent Group – either its master or a puppet. Each player may make two money transfers as part of their turn (*Sequence of Play*, p. 2). But if necessary, he can also make a transfer as a regular action. By successive transfers, the same money may be moved two or more Groups in one turn.

Moving a Group

A player may, as an action, reorganize their Power Structure by moving a Group to a vacant outgoing control arrow. The new control arrow may be on the Group's master, or any other Group the player controls. If the moving Group has any puppets, then they (and their own puppets, and so on) are also moved.

Cards may not overlap. If moving a Group would cause some of its puppets (or theirs) to overlap, any of them may also be moved to different control arrows, *as long as they are still controlled by the same master*. Any puppet that cannot be prevented from overlapping is lost. It, and its own puppets, are returned to the uncontrolled area.

Gifts and Trades

Groups, special cards, and money may be transferred between players: traded, sold (that is, traded for money), or given away. Cash or special cards may be transferred any time (except when a privileged attack is under way). This does not count as an action. When cash is transferred, it must come from an Illuminati card and go to another one. Other Groups cannot give their money to another player, or receive money from another player.

Transferring Groups

Groups may only be transferred if it is the turn of one of the players involved. On your turn, you may give a Group away (even if you get nothing in return), sell or trade it, or trade something (cash, cards, or Groups) to get a Group or Groups in return. Each Group exchanged counts as an action for the player whose turn it is, whichever way the Group moves. So if you trade a Group for a Group on your turn, that counts as two actions – one to move the first Group, one to move the second one!

You may only *give* a Group away with the permission of the player who receives it!

When a Group is transferred to another player, its puppets (if any) must go with it, along with all treasuries involved. The player receiving the Group must immediately fit it, and its puppets, into their power structure, exactly as for moved or captured Groups – see above. If overlaps cannot be avoided, the player must eliminate them by choosing one or more overlapping card, new or old, to become uncontrolled.

Throwing the Game

No player may simply “throw” the game to another by giving them enough Groups, money, etc., to let them win. A trade that lets *both* players win is perfectly legal. It is also legal to trade with another player at the beginning of your turn and *then* surprise everyone, including the person you traded with, by revealing a special card or pulling off an unexpected attack.

This prohibition requires a certain amount of interpretation and honor among players. The intent is just to keep any one player from, for whatever reason, giving away the game in one fell swoop. A losing player cannot necessarily just decide who will win. (On the other hand, by attacking someone, they may very well decide who *loses*.)

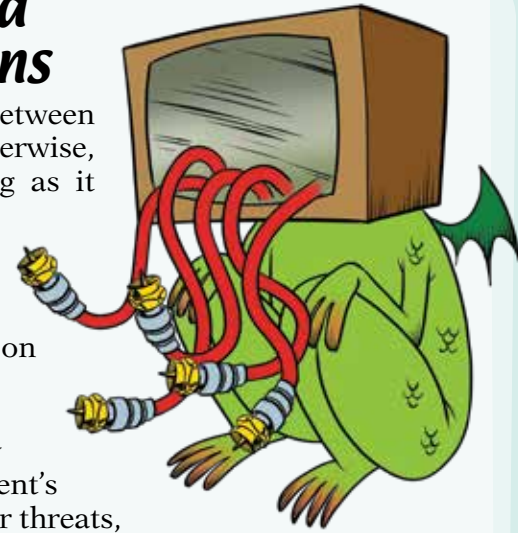
When Is a Deal Binding?

When two players agree to a deal, it is binding if they make the exchange immediately. A deal is *not* binding if it involves an exchange of one thing now for something in the future. *Example:* If you say “I’ll give you 10 MB for the Boy Sprouts, right now,” and the other player gives you the Boy Sprouts, you have to pay. But if you say “If you give me the Boy Sprouts, I’ll pay you 10 MB next turn,” and they give you the Group, you don’t *have* to pay next turn, unless you feel like it!

Threats and Negotiations

Any agreement between players, secret or otherwise, is permitted as long as it does not actually violate the rules of the game. For some suggestions, see the **Strategy** section on the next page.

In particular, it is perfectly legal to try to change an opponent’s mind, by promises or threats, about a planned action.



Special Cards

Each of these cards gives an advantage to the player who draws it. They may be kept face-down or shown, as the player wishes – but he must keep them spread so other players can see how many specials he has. Special cards may be traded, sold, or given away at any time; this is a free action.

Each Special may be used only once. Some may be used at any time; others have restrictions, stated on the card. Playing a Special is not an action unless the card says it is. After a card is used, it is discarded.

Any special card may also be discarded to make an attack “privileged” – see p. 6. Any *two* special cards may be discarded together, by the same person, to *abolish* someone else’s privilege. If *Secrets Man Was Not Meant To Know* is used to cancel *one* of those cards, the other one is lost unless the player can replace it! (Remember that no one may exchange or give away Specials after privilege has been declared. And once an attack loses its privilege, it may not get it back.)

If two specials are played and one contradicts the other (for example, *Assassination* and *Murphy’s Law*), the last card played is the one that governs.

Eliminating a Player

A player is eliminated if, at any time after his third turn, he controls no Groups except his Illuminati. His money goes to the bank. *Exception:* If the Servants of Cthulhu destroy their own last Group, and in doing so, achieve their Special Goal (eight Groups destroyed), they are not destroyed themselves . . . they win!

Leaving the Game

If a player drops out, his Groups go uncontrolled and their treasuries go to the bank. His Illuminati card is taken out of play.



Winning the Game

The game ends when, at the end of a turn (their own or someone else's), a player meets one of their Goals. If two or more players both meet their Goals at the same time, they share the victory, dividing the world between them.

The *Basic* Goal is the same for all players: to control a certain number of Groups. This number depends on the number of players at the beginning of the game. If a player leaves or is eliminated, the number of Groups required to win (see reference card) does *not* change.

The *Special* Goal is different for each player, representing a specific objective of that particular Illuminati. You win if you have met your Special Goal at the end of any turn.

All the Goals are listed on the reference cards.

STRATEGY

Conspiring for a shared victory may seem easier than grabbing the whole pie. But be careful who you trust.

When someone leaves the room, plot against him. There is almost always a way you can make your positions a little bit better and his a little bit worse.

Negotiate with everyone. Your foes are less likely to attack you if they think you might make a deal that will help them win.

To avoid being attacked, you should look strong enough to defend yourself, but not so strong that you are a threat.

Watch the other players constantly; keep track of how close they are to their Goals. If they have Special cards, they are more likely to be able to win in a single turn. Don't count on other players to warn you of danger; they may have made a private deal!

The Power Structure

There are many ways to assemble a Power Structure from the Groups you control. The example given earlier in the rules (Figure 2, p. 3) is good because it leaves several control arrows open. Figure 5, to the right, shows another legal Power Structure, using exactly the same Groups. This one, however, is a bad one – or at least, less desirable. The Groups get in each other's way!

Although the Illuminati have one unused control arrow, that arrow is blocked – the Antiwar Activists are in the way. The Congressional Wives have one open control arrow and can take over another Group. The Democrats have two open arrows, but only the end one can be used – the one on the side is blocked by the Congressional Wives!

Also, take care that your Power Structure is balanced. If all your Groups branch from a single Illuminati arrow, you are in great danger of being eliminated in a single attack after the third turn.

Negotiations

Deals can be made either openly or secretly. Some examples:

1. The player who controls the IRS agrees to forego another's taxes in exchange for a promise not to attack him.

2. One player sees that another will achieve her Goal at the end of the turn if he does not interfere. He might agree not to interfere in exchange for a gift that will satisfy his own Goals, thereby sharing the victory.

3. A player threatens to destroy one of your Groups. You think he can. You might try bribing him (in this case, bribery is treated as a gift) to get him to attack someone else instead.

4. Two players agree to cooperate throughout the game so that they both achieve their Goals at the same time – of course, one may stab the other in the back!

5. A player offers to pay anybody who will attack his particular foe.

6. Two or more players form a coalition to bring down a rival who is getting close to victory.

The possibilities are limited only by your own duplicity. Remember, though, that money can be exchanged only between Illuminati treasuries.

Capturing Several Groups at Once

Protecting those Groups that control many puppets is vitally important – you stand to lose greatly if one is taken from you. Equally true: A game can be won by a well-timed strike at a Group that controls several puppets and fits well into your power structure.



Figure 5. The player in this example will need to reorganize his Power Structure – possibly wasting valuable time – before long. The player in Figure 2 (p. 3) is free to expand. Careful attention is necessary when adding or moving groups.