



# ILLITERATI

**I**t was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of illiteracy, it was the age of... the Illiterati. The ancients tell of a time when anyone could freely ascend to a mythical building called a "Library" and acquire any book for one's personal literary pleasure. But that all changed when an evil, secret organization called the Illiterati emerged from the shadows and took over the world in the blink of an eye. Their mission: to spread illiteracy. Their means: the destruction of all books. Their motive: because reading is hard.

And yet, it is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good book must be in want of... more books.

You've been inducted into a legendary order known as the League of Librarians, the guardians of truth and knowledge. You have sworn an oath of literacy and thus it is your sacred duty to preserve books for future generations. But the Illiterati will do everything in their power to eviscerate your vowels, confound your consonants, and butcher your books. One wrong move may spell disaster, but we'll see who has the final word.

Semper Lectio Librarians!

## OBJECT OF THE GAME

Illiterati is a cooperative survival word game in which you and your fellow Librarians must work together to spell words that complete specific objectives, all while surviving the onslaught of the Illiterati.

## COMPONENT LIST



## PLAYER COUNT AND GAME DIFFICULTY

Illiterati can be played at 3 levels of difficulty.  
**Note:** We suggest you start with normal mode.

Each level of difficulty changes the number of letters you draw, the maximum number of letters you can burn, and the difficulty of the Illiterati.

### DIFFICULTY LEVELS

	1-2	2-5	NORMAL	HARD	LEGENDARY	
LETTERS PER ROUND	10	7	10	7	10	7
LIBRARY LIMIT	3		2		1	
BURNED LETTERS ALLOWED	3		2		1	
# OF BOOKS PER PLAYER	2		3		4	
CLEAR LIBRARY FOR FINAL CHAPTER	No		Yes		Yes	



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## SET UP



- Library Card:** Deal a Library Card to each player to use as a quick guide if needed.
- Player Chart:** Set to the side for reference.
- Letter Supply:** Put letters in **one** bag. The other bag will be used for discarded letters.
- Book Deck:** Deal one Torched (red) Book face up to each player. Place the remaining books off to the side.  
**Note:** If it is your first time playing, then we recommend that you do not draw books until round 2.
- Letters:** Deal a starting hand of 5 letters to each player. Players will draw more letters at the beginning of each round.
- Library:** Place 3 letters face up in the middle of the table for Normal mode. See chart for higher difficulty levels.
- Illiterati Villain Play Area:** Place the Illiterati Villain Deck facedown next to the Book Decks. As Illiterati Villain cards are played, place them face up here. Cards from the same villain are placed on top of each other so that you can still see all previous villains.
- Burn Tracker:** Place near Illiterati Villain Deck.
- Timer:** Place timer within view of all players.

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## OVERVIEW OF THE GAME

*If we dig through all these torn pages, we can still salvage some of these books before the Illiterati destroy them.*

Illiterati is played simultaneously in real time because in the Battle against Illiteracy... time is of the essence. Each round is composed of 3 phases:

1. **WORD BUILDING Phase:** Draw letters and spell words.

2. **BOOK BINDING Phase:** Burn unused letters and turn in any completed books.

3. **ILLITERATI ATTACK Phase:** Draw an Illiterati Villain and resolve its effects.

**To win**, your team must complete the following:

1. Each player must first complete his/her own books.
2. Then, players must tackle one epic book called the Final Chapter. The Final Chapter must be completed individually by everyone at the same time.

**All players lose** if too many letters are burned (see chart on Page 2) or the Illiterati Villain Deck is emptied.

## GAMEPLAY

### 1. WORD BUILDING Phase

Draw letters and then work together to form words.

*Most of the world's books were destroyed by the Illiterati, but luckily we were able to salvage a few pages here and there.*

#### 1. Draw Letters

- a. Draw letters from the draw bag.  
10 letters (1 player) / 7 letters each (2-5 players)
- b. Later on, if the bag runs out, the discard bag becomes the draw bag. Repeat as necessary.

#### 2. Form Words (3 minutes)

- a. You have 2 objectives in this phase:
  - i. First and foremost, **SURVIVE**. Do this by using all your team's letters without exceeding the Library Limit.
  - ii. Work towards your book's unique objective.

- b. When ready, start the 3-minute timer and form words using your letters. (See page 7 for Valid Words.) You may break up your old words and will often have to!
- c. Players can freely move letters and even entire words amongst one another.
- d. You may not take or touch another player's letters without their consent.
- e. Anyone can store and use letters in the **Library**.

### Library

- The **Library** is a communal area where leftover letters from each round can be stored and used later.
- The **Library Limit** is the maximum number of letters the Library can hold.
- Letters in the **Library** do not belong to any player and are immune to all Illiterati attacks unless otherwise stated.



Leftover letters go in Library

### 2. BOOK BINDING Phase

"Burn" excess letters and "bind" completed books.

*In order to properly reconstruct a book, we need to find all the correct pages so that the story can be salvaged and preserved.*

#### 1. Verify Words

- a. Once time is up, **verify that each player's words are "valid."** (See page 7 for Valid Words.)
- b. If there are any unused letters or misspelled words, move them into the **Library**.

#### 2. Store and Burn Letters (if applicable)

- a. In Normal mode, the **Library Limit** is 3. This means you can store up to 3 of your unused letters in the **Library**.
- b. However, if you exceed the **Library Limit**, then you have been caught...
  - i. **Burn:** Flip over all the letters in the **Library**. Randomly select 1 letter and place it on the **Burn Tracker**. This letter is now permanently removed from the game.
  - ii. **Salvage:** From the remaining letters, randomly select letters equal to the **Library Limit**. These will be saved in the **Library**. Discard the others.
  - iii. If you **exceed** the max burned letters, the Illiterati are victorious and you lose the game.

### Burned Letters Allowed

- **Standard Mode: (Max 3)** Start with no spaces filled
- **Hard Mode: (Max 2)** Draw 1 random letter and fill space 1 before the game begins
- **Legendary Mode: (Max 1)** Draw 2 random letters and fill spaces 1 and 2



#### 3. Bind Books (if applicable)

- a. You may only bind books if you did not burn any letters this round. (This means that you successfully slipped by the Illiterati!)
- b. In order to bind books, you must form words that meet your book's requirements. When you are ready to bind a book, turn in the required words by placing them into the discard bag.
  - i. Ignore the right side (Final Chapter) until the end.



- ii. In order to bind Mammal Menagerie, you need to spell different "animals", using 8 or more letters, and using at least 3 .
- c. Flip over your completed book. Great job!
- d. Now draw a blue book.
  - **Note:** If you're playing on hard or legendary, choose any color book for your 3rd and 4th books.
- e. If you finish binding your books before your teammates do, you no longer draw books but you must still draw letters and help your team.
- f. Once everyone has bound all their individual books, move onto the Final Chapter in an attempt to win the game. (See "The Final Chapter" on page 6.)

### 3. ILLITERATI ATTACK Phase

At the end of each round, the Illiterati attack! Draw an Illiterati Villain and resolve its effects.

*The Illiterati are relentless in their assault upon the forces of literacy. We need to move fast because the longer our operation takes, the stronger the Illiterati become.*

1. **Draw an Illiterati Villain.** Place it in the Illiterati Villain play area and resolve its effect.
2. **Chain Attack:** If the same villain has already attacked, stack the new one on top of the previous ones. This triggers all of that villain's previous powers from the most recent to the oldest.



Trigger powers from top to bottom

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Newest matching Villain cards go to top of stack

3. **Relentless Assault:** During a Chain Attack, the Illiterati will often attack you even after they have removed part of your words.
- **Note:** When letters are discarded by the Illiterati, the remaining parts of the word must converge together towards the middle. If this forms a **Valid Word**, it counts as a word during the remainder of the Chain Attack. If it does not form a **Valid Word**, then those letters no longer count as a word but still belong to that player.

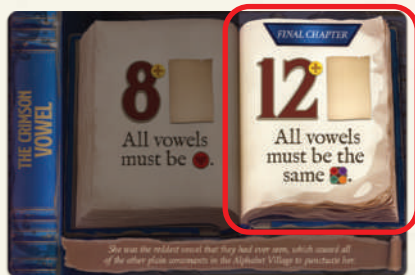


4. **Power of the Wilds:**
- During **each** Illiterati attack, you can change which symbol you want your Wild Letters to be.
  - You can also change what letter you want your Blank Wilds to be during different parts of a chain attack as long as it still spells a Valid Word.

## THE FINAL CHAPTER

*There's one last book we need to bind, and it's going to be more dangerous than anything we've faced. It all comes down to this.*

- Once each player has bound all their own books, your team must bind one final book together called **The Final Chapter**.
- As a team, draw 1 book from either Book Deck and read the right side aloud.



- In order to win, **each player** must complete the Final Chapter objective. Additionally, everyone must turn

in their words during the same round! (Even if one player is ready to bind the Final Chapter, he/she must wait until **everyone** can do it in the same round.)

- **Note:** On Hard and Legedary mode, you must also clear the **Library** to win the game. This means the **Library** must be completely empty in order for you to win!

## VALID WORDS

*Is it a word or not a word? That is the question.*

- Rule #1:** Words must be found in an agreed upon dictionary. (You may look up words while playing, but you may not stop the timer to do so.)
- Rule #2:** Words must be 3 letters or more.
- Rule #3:** No proper nouns, acronyms, contractions, prefixes, suffixes or words requiring a hyphen.
- Rule #4:** You may break rules #1-3 if you are spelling words that meet your book's specified requirements.
  - Landon needs to spell "movies, TV shows, and theater productions" in order to bind his book. He is permitted to spell "A Bug's Life" of "What's Eating Gilbert Grape?" even though it would break rules #1-3.
  - He could also spell the following:
    - 1-letter and 2-letter words (I, TO, AM)
    - Proper nouns (SARAH, PARIS)
    - Acronyms (ET, CSI)
    - Contractions (You've Got Mail = YOUVE GOT MAIL)
    - Possessives (Pan's Labyrinth = PANS LABYRINTH)

## REDRAW RULE

*When life gives you LMNS...*

Sometimes you may get a really bad draw, like a hand with no vowels. Therefore once per round, the team may choose to discard up to 7 letters in order to redraw the same number of letters. When you do this, draw an extra Illiterati Villain card at the end of the round. It does not trigger chain attacks.

- **Note:** Do not pause the timer while redrawing.

## LETTERS AND SYMBOLS

*A cloud by any other name... would spell defeat.*

Most letters have symbols on them.

Each symbol represents a different narrative element, like adventure or drama. In order to successfully bind a book, you must not only form particular words, but in many cases you must also make sure you have the correct symbols.

### Symbol Types

*These symbols represent four different literary elements in a story.*



### Letter Types

**H C M** **Standard Letters x48**  
Does not have any symbol.

**S A**  
**N O** **Symbol Letters x 88**  
**(22 of each type)**  
Has 1 symbol.

**J Z Q** **Wild Letters x5**  
Letters can be any when binding a book. When the Illiterati attack, you can change its symbol repeatedly to benefit you the most.

**Wild Blanks x3**  
Can be any letter and any when binding a book. When the Illiterati attack, you cannot change the letter, but you can change its symbol repeatedly to benefit you the most.

## SOLO MODE

*Oftentimes the best librarians are those that have spent ample time alone.*

- Illiterati isn't just a great cooperative game, but it's also a great solo game!
- The only difference is that you draw 10 letters each round instead of 7.

## JUNIOR MODE

*A junior sized journey for our little librarians*

- Recommended for younger readers.
- Junior mode is played the same as the standard game with the following changes:
  - Remove the 3 minute timer.
  - Illiterati do not chain attack.
  - Players win once all players have completed 2 books. (i.e. no Final Chapter)



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