

Moonshot: The Next Giant Leap
Provisional Game Rules - text only
V0.10.4

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Introduction

Two teams of players take on the roles of two Space Programs (NASA, RosCosmos) in the Cold War space race, competing to be the first to deploy their nations' (USA, CCCP/USSR) astronauts to the Moon. Both Space Program teams consist of a Politician and an Engineer who need to cooperate to win.

About the publisher

Game Shuttle Labs is a board game publishing studio founded in 2018, when our team of science communicators and physicists sat down in one of the board game cafés in Budapest and decided to create a tabletop game celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing. Our mission is to popularize science playfully, and to discover the traditional and new ways of board game design and publishing via our first game.

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Goal of the Game

The first team to complete a successful Moon landing mission wins the game. In the case of both teams completing a successful Moon landing mission in the same round, the team with the most popularity wins. In case of a further tie in popularity, the nation launching their rocket first for the Moon landing mission wins the game. The game also ends if the popularity of a team reaches 0, or if the budget difference is more than 15 between the teams, resulting in a win for the team with more popularity/budget.

Components - See attached color printed paper in box

Game Overview

When playing with 4 players, you play in teams of 2: one team member selecting the Politician role, the other one selecting Engineer. With 2 players, Moonshot is a 1 vs. 1 experience where each player takes on both roles. 3 players should split 2-1 and play 1 vs 1 with the 2-player team members cooperating for each role.

The game is played in rounds until one of the end game conditions is met (successful Moon landing mission, critical budget or popularity loss). A game round has four consecutive phases (1, 2, 3, 4).

The first phase (1), strategic discussion, is only used with 4 players. Teams have two minutes to discuss their strategy for the current round; use any timer.

In the second phase (2), the two roles act at the same time, i.e. the roles play actions simultaneously. Engineers spend money to develop their rocket blueprints or do testing on possible risks during launch. Meanwhile, Politicians use their influence to support their Space Program and prevent the opponent from achieving their goals.

In the third phase (3), players follow the rocket launches and the results of the missions.

In the fourth phase (4), players do end-of-round administration: Politicians evaluate their actions and players determine the resources available for the next round.

Setup

Prepare the Mission and Risk decks by separating and shuffling the Mission and Risk cards face down into different decks based on their difficulty level (0, 1, 2, 3 for Risk cards and 1, 2, 3, 4 for Mission cards).

Put the two Level 0 Missions between the two teams and place two randomly chosen Level 0 Risk cards face-up next to them as indicated on the Mission card.

Display the Moon landing Mission card and draw 3-3 level 3 Risk cards face down to each side of the mission.

Start tracking the budget and popularity for each Space Program.

The Space Program Budget has no limits and starts at 30 , while Popularity moves on a scale of 1 to 12, starting from 10.

Place the different tokens—Test Tokens, Sabotage etc.—within reach on the table.

Politician players should face each other on opposite sides of the politics board; at setup they shuffle their Maneuver decks, draw four Maneuver cards, then collect their own Influence and Bluff tokens.

Give 30 money each to the Engineers.

The two Engineers also face each other on opposite sides of the table with the Research Center between them: this part of the board shows how much their Technology tiles cost and how they can be acquired. On one side of the Research Center, form a deck from the shuffled Module tiles face down, then draw and place four of them face-up in the designated places on the Module sideboard. Draw two more Module tiles to the "8\$" position of the two Engineer Suppliers lines. Shuffle the Technology Tiles by type (Structure, Electronics, Code, Payload) and form four decks on the other side of the Research Center. Put one Tile from each Technology deck into the Engineers' Development line, except the Payload Pile.

The two Engineers examine the Rocket Blueprint and the Rocket Parameters sections on their board. Set the values of the Rocket Parameters to 0.

Give the First Player Marker to the CCCP/USSR Politician.

Gameplay

A game round consists of four consecutive phases (1, 2, 3, 4)

1) Strategic Discussion

Teams have two minutes to openly discuss their strategy for the current round. Topics can include which Maneuver Cards the Politician will use and where, which mission is achievable, etc. Communication is NOT restricted in later phases.

2) Simultaneous Actions

(in two and three player games, start with the Politician Actions and proceed to the Engineers after deciding about the launches)

For the Politicians

2.1) Preparations subphase

Both Politicians receive four Influence and four Bluff tokens. The player with the First Player Marker gets +1 Bluff token and starts the round.

Beginning with the First Player, the Politicians alternate their actions by either placing Maneuver Cards on one position on the Politics board or passing. If one player passes and the next player plays a card, the player who had previously passed is allowed to play a card in response. Once both players pass consecutively, this subphase ends.

2.2) Actions subphase

Starting with the First Player, Politicians alternate turns by taking one Action selected from below:

- A. Supporting Maneuvers: Put Influence or Bluff tokens face down on your own or the opponent's Maneuver Cards. At least two tokens must be placed at a time on the same or different Maneuver Cards.
- B. Announcing a new Mission: Select a random Mission from one of the Mission decks and place the Mission Card on the table, then add Risk Cards according to the icons on the revealed Mission. There cannot be more than three active Missions on the board at any given time.
- C. Increasing Influence: you may decide once in a round to reduce Popularity by X. In this case, you get the +X Influence token for that round.
- D. Decision to Launch: you must decide, as your last Politician action in this phase, to either place your team's Rocket on an active Mission thus initiating a Launch in the next phase, OR abort rocket launch for this round by toppling your Rocket.

For the Engineers

Engineers simultaneously take as many Actions from below as they want, but they must always be able to pay their respective Action Cost first and finish one Action before starting another.

- a. Installing Technology Tiles from the Development Line (7 money): install one of the Technology Tiles discovered in your own Development Line to your Rocket Blueprint.
- b. Technology from Research (10 money): Pick two Technology Tiles from the Technology Tile decks (the same or different decks), then install one Technology Tile onto your Rocket Blueprint and place the other on top of the discard pile in the Research Area.
- c. Technology Tile installment from the Research Area (10 money): install the face-up Technology Tile from the Research Area.
- d. Technology Tile Placement on the Suppliers line: If there are no items in "8\$" space of the Suppliers line, the Engineer may place one of the Technology Tiles in their Development line into that space free of charge.
- e. Ordering a Module: One of the discovered Modules can be placed for 8, 13, or 20 money in the respective free space on the Suppliers line.
- f. Testing (4 money): Place your own Test token on a Risk Card.
- g. Anti-Sabotage (10+X money): remove X Sabotage Markers from your Rocket Blueprint.

- h. Preparing payload: pay the appropriate price and place a payload marker on a Payload Technology Tile for the next rocket launch. (Astrodog 2 money, Satellite 5 money, Astronaut 7 money)

To utilize Political Opportunities, yell 'STOP,' let the other Engineer finish their current Action, then execute one of the following Actions:

- i. Stealing Test Results: Spend a Test Steal token, as an Action, to replace one of the opponent's Test tokens with your own (flip the token)
- j. Stealing Technology: Spend a Technology Steal token, as an Action, to install a Technology Tile from your opponent's Development Line to your Rocket Blueprint for free.

When an Engineer does not want to or is unable to take further Actions in the round, they yell 'PASS.'

Game concepts for the 2nd phase (Simultaneous Actions)

Constructing a Rocket Blueprint with Technology Tiles

Each team develops their own Rocket Blueprint on their designated board space. The Technology Tiles are installed on the Rocket Blueprint (rotating them freely), marked with Tech Icons in the middle and along the edges.

Icons on the tiles include Structure, Electronics, or Code. The full icons in the middle will immediately contribute to the values of the Rocket Parameters. Icons on the edges only add value to the rocket if they match the icon on the edge of an adjacent Tech Tile. Tiles with no Icons in the middle are 'Payload Tiles', granting the possibility of carrying one payload.

Different icons can also be put next to each other, but they don't add value to the Rocket Parameters. When the Engineer installs a Technology Tile, they must immediately place it on their Rocket Blueprint next to an already installed Tech Tile, and register the new values for the Rocket Parameters. The Technology Tile can be placed on top of an installed Tile, but the replaced Tile will be lost and the change of the parameters must be immediately registered on the Rocket Parameters.

Modules

The Rocket Blueprint also has places to install Modules. Modules give you conditions for one or two rows (or a column containing three spaces), which, when fulfilled, give you different bonuses that should be registered by changing the values of the Rocket Parameters. When a new Module is acquired, it must be placed in an empty space or on an existing Module (in which case the existing Module must be discarded). Modules can give a Rocket Blueprint Adaptivity which gives the Engineer extra "wild" values that they can divide freely between icons before each launch.

Testing

Engineers can run tests on hazards (shown on the Risk Cards) that can occur during Missions to ensure that no element in the rocket system is causing a malfunction.

Each time you test a Risk, place one Test token on it. Each Test token on that particular Risk adds 1 to the result of a roll with the Risk Die.

The Risk level is determined by rolling the 8-sided Risk Die. The higher the rolled result, the easier the Risk becomes, so you will improve your chances even if you only test once. Example: If there is a Test token on the Risk Card and you roll a 6, then the Parameter Check Value is 7.

The Politics Board

Politicians play their cards in the Politics Board. They can place their cards in four different places with each empty place having a different effect. These effects are categorized into three categories, depending on when they are rewarded:

Per Round: Bonus in the 4th phase of each round.

Successful Mission: Bonus in the 4th phase if a successful Mission was achieved that turn.

Obstruction: takes effect when preventing an opponent's Political Maneuver, meaning the opposing side has more Influence tokens on the card after evaluation.

Maneuver Cards

The iconography on the Maneuver Cards explicitly tells you what bonuses you will be given when you evaluate and win the Maneuver on a given level.

3) Rocket Launches

Launches must be resolved in the order of the announcements.

Before launch, check if the payload required for the mission is on the rocket. If not, delay the launch (-3 popularity).

The participating team's Rocket miniature will either move to the next Risk if the current Risk was completed successfully or explode in case of an unsuccessful parameter check.

If both Space Programs announce a Launch on the same Mission and the first team successfully completes it, the second Space Program must delay the launch (-3 popularity)

After each launch, the teams will immediately receive their reward for the accomplished Mission or experience popularity loss for the exploded rocket.

Game concepts for the 3rd phase (rocket launches)

Mission Cards

Mission Cards include Payload Requirements (eg. satellite, astronaut). If the Rocket has the appropriate payload and meets the Risks marked on the Path, the Space Program will be rewarded. The reward is determined by the Mission Card. When announcing a Mission, place the appropriate level of Risks next to it, face up.

The Moon Landing Mission

The final mission is different than the others. It is displayed from the very beginning of the game, with 3 of the highest level Risk Cards on each side, forming separate paths for the CCCP and the US. These Risk Cards are hidden, but can be explored by choosing to forgo a Mission Cards reward. In this case, one Risk Card can be turned face-up, with the limitation of no more Risk Cards can be visible than the level of the Mission.

The Moon Mission can only be started when either Nation has finished a level 3 Mission. If there are still Risk Cards unexplored, they cannot be tested but turn face-up automatically when starting the Moon Mission.

The Risk Cards

The Risk Cards are placed next to the announced Mission Cards in the amount indicated on the Mission Card, face up.

Each Risk Card indicates a technical error that can be solved or made less likely by testing. It also has three ranges, each listing the minimum parameters that are needed for the Rocket to remain functional.

Testing on the Risk adds 1 to the result of a roll with the Risk Die.

In the case of sabotage, the value on the die is reduced by X where X is the number of Sabotage tokens on the Rocket Blueprint. If the value rolled with the die is 0 or negative after factoring in sabotage (before counting tests), the Rocket explodes immediately.

The Risk Die

The game has an 8 sided die referred to as the Risk Die.

Eliminating Risks / Parameter Checks

After the Launch, the Rocket is exposed to various dangers and risks. Risk Cards must be eliminated in order. To eliminate the Risk, roll the Risk die, add in any Testing bonuses, and compare the resulting value to the Risk level table. The Rocket will fulfill the conditions if the values of the Rocket Parameters are greater than or equal to the value for the appropriate level of risk indicated in the table.

If the Risk is eliminated, continue with the next Risk Card until all Risks are eliminated and the mission is a success (Spacewalk, Attempt at Docking, Moon landing etc.) or the rocket is destroyed.

An exploded Rocket does not only cause material damage: if carrying astronauts, the Space Program loses popularity.

Aborted Launch	-1 Popularity
Successful Launch	No change in popularity
Explosion	-2 Popularity
Explosion with lives on board (dog or human)	-3 Popularity

Delayed launch (because the teams raced for the same mission and the first one succeeded, or because no necessary payload present)	-3 Popularity
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4) End of round administration

4.1 The Budget of the Nations decreases by 3 at the end of each round.

4.2 The Engineer slides every item on the Supplier lane down by one space. A Module or Tech Tile sliding off from the Supplier lane is installed into the Rocket Blueprint for free.

4.3 The Politicians, starting with the First Player, decide the fate of their own Maneuver Cards. They can choose from the following:

Evaluation: In this case, the tokens placed on the Maneuver Card are revealed and counted. If the owner of the card has more Influence tokens on it than their opponent, they will receive the reward of the card. The level of the card is the lowest visible level. If the opponent nation has more Influence on a card, the card will not take effect and the opponent Politician will receive the values shown on the Politician's table for Obstruction.

If each player has an equal number of Influence tokens, the Politician owning the Maneuver Card gets to decide to either pay 2 Popularity and win the card, or pay nothing to allow the opponent to succeed in an Obstruction.

Escalation: If you are not at the highest level (level 3) of the Maneuver Card at this phase, you can decide to escalate. In this case, the evaluation is postponed to a later round and the Maneuver Card is left with the tokens on it in the Politics Board. For the first escalation, the Politician must cover the escalated card with one card still in their hand; for the second escalation, just slide the extra card already on the Maneuver.

4.4 The Popularity and Budget Changes received as a result of the Maneuvers are immediately recorded and the Engineer receives any extra resources - money, Tech Tiles, tokens, etc.

4.5 Discard every evaluated Maneuver Card (together with the cards used for their potential escalation) and unused Bluff or Influence Markers.

4.6 The Politician's hand size is four; at the end of each round, they draw Maneuver Cards from their decks until they have four cards in their hands again. If there are not enough cards in the deck, the discarded cards should be shuffled in.

4.7 The Engineers receive money equal to their current budget.

4.8 The First Player marker shifts to the other team.

4.9 Continue with the next round until an endgame condition is met.