THE COMIC BOOK BUBBLE

A GAME BY SCOTT ALMES

2-4 | 10+ | 45 MIN

COMPONENTS

1 Genre Board

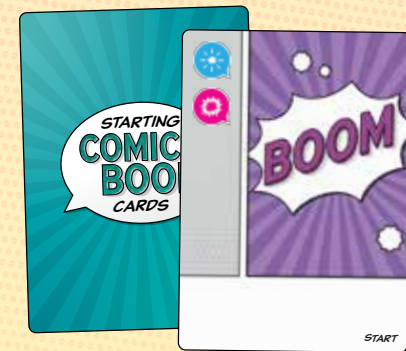6 Genre Tokens + 6 Small Tokens

4 Player boards

Money Tokens

$1 $5 $10 $50
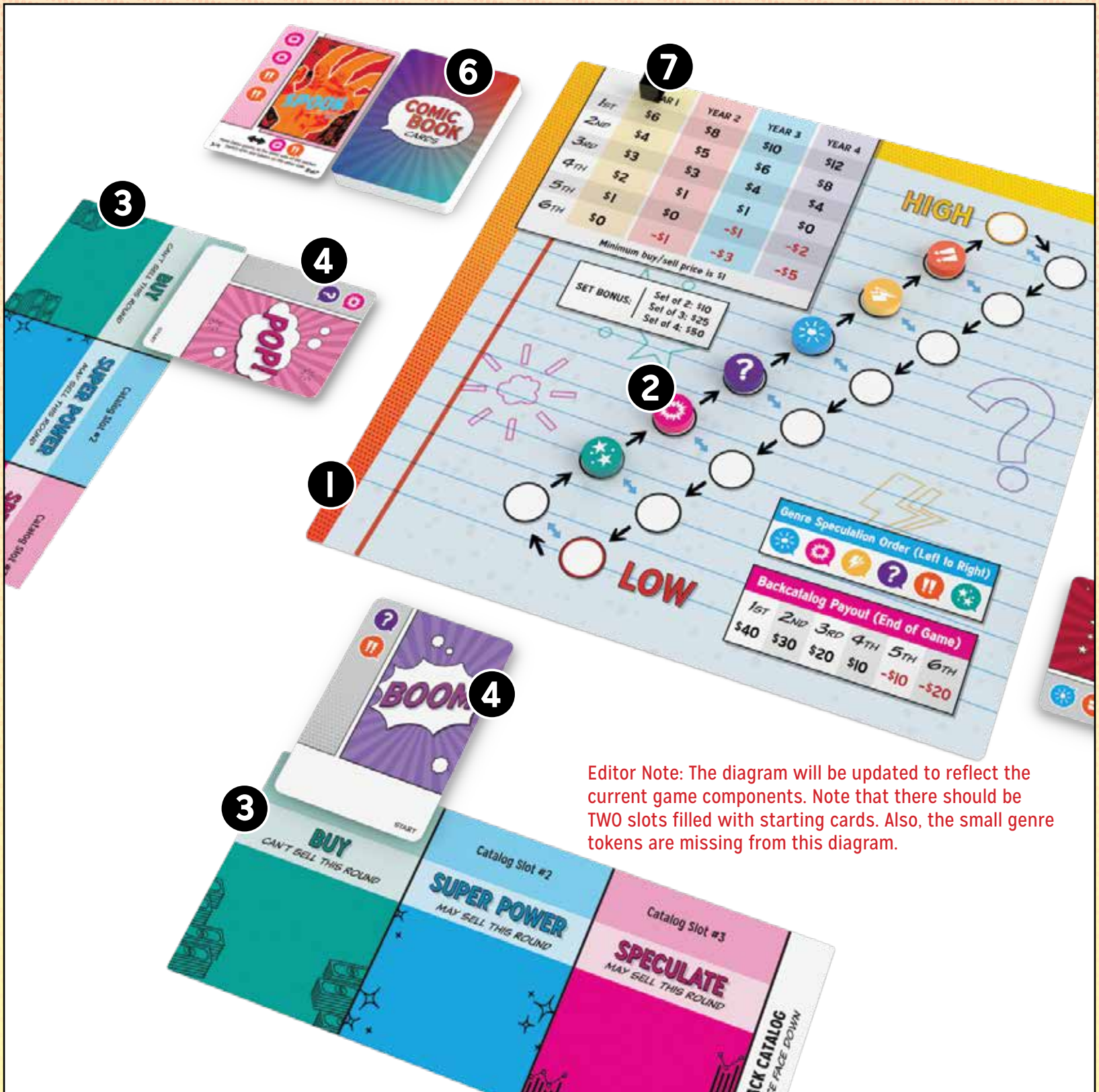
72 Comic Book Cards

12 Starting Comic Cards

SETUP

1. Place the market board in the middle of the table.

2. Blindly draw the 6 large genre tokens and place them on the board, starting with the space marked with a star and going clockwise. Place the 6 small genre tokens in the blank spaces next to the dollar amounts for Year 1 in the same order as the large tokens. For instance, if the large orange token is the highest, place the orange yellow token in the blank space next to the Year 1 $6 space. If the yellow token is the next highest, place the small yellow token in the blank space next to the Year 1 $4 space, and so on until all six small tokens are placed.

3. Give each player a player board. Place the extras back in the box.

4. Shuffle and deal each player 3 starting comic cards. Each player should select two of them and discard the third (so they start with 2). They should place these in their active catalog above their player boards. Place any discarded or unused starting comic cards in the box; they will not be used this game.

5. Give each player $20 in money tokens to start.

6. Shuffle the comic book cards deck and place it near the board, leaving a space for a discard pile.

You are now ready to begin!

6 COMIC BOOK CARDS

7

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
1ST	$6	$8	$10	$12
2ND	$4	$5	$6	$8
3RD	$3	$3	$4	$4
4TH	$2	$1	$1	$0
5TH	$1	$0	$0	-$1
6TH	$0	-$1	-$3	-$2
	-$1			-$5

Minimum buy/sell price is $1

SET BONUS: Set of 2: $10 / Set of 3: $25 / Set of 4: $50

HIGH

LOW

Genre Speculation Order (Left to Right)

Backcatalog Payout (End of Game)

1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH
$40	$30	$20	$10	-$10	-$20

3 BUY / CAN'T SELL THIS ROUND

4 POP!

2

4 BOOM

3

BUY / CAN'T SELL THIS ROUND

SUPER POWER / MAY SELL THIS ROUND — Catalog Slot #2

SPECULATE / MAY SELL THIS ROUND — Catalog Slot #3

BACK CATALOG / PLACE FACE DOWN

Editor Note: The diagram will be updated to reflect the current game components. Note that there should be TWO slots filled with starting cards. Also, the small genre tokens are missing from this diagram.

IN THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S, THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY FOUND ITSELF IN A GIANT COLLECTORS BOOM. OLD, VINTAGE COMICS WERE NOW WORTH HUNDREDS OR THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS, AND PEOPLE STARTED LOOKING AT COMICS JUST AS MUCH AS INVESTMENTS AS SOURCES OF PLEASURE.

HOWEVER, AS THE NUMBER OF COLLECTORS AND INVESTORS GREW, SO DID PRODUCTION. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THAT THE BOTTOM FELL OUT UNDERNEATH THE INDUSTRY, AND THE GOLDEN YEARS OF MAKING MONEY IN COMICS ENDED. THE COMIC BOOK BUBBLE OFFICIALLY BURST IN 1997, WHEN EVEN GIANT COMIC BOOK GIANT PUBLISHERS DECLARED BANKRUPTCY.

THE COMIC BOOK BUBBLE GAME RECREATES THIS PERIOD IN THE MODERN ERA USING ACTUAL COMIC COVERS BY PUBLISHER RED 5 COMICS.

ARE YOU SAVVY ENOUGH TO MAKE MONEY BEFORE THE BUBBLE BURSTS?

GAME PLAY OVERVIEW:

This game takes place over four years. As the game progresses, players will play cards from their hand to buy comic books, speculate on the market, and unleash superpowers. Their goal is to make the most money.

Each round has the following structure:

1. Draw to 5 Cards

2. Each player secretly selects 1 Card

3. Players play their card into an Action Space

4. Resolve Actions

5. Sell Comics

6. Pass Remaining Cards

7. Repeat steps 2-6 three more times, so players play a total of 4 cards per round.

Each player will therefore take a total of 16 turns during the game - four rounds with four turns each.

DRAW TO 5 CARDS
In the first round, deal each player a face-down hand of 5 comic book cards. In rounds 2-4, players will start with one card in their hand. In the later rounds, they should draw four more cards so the the cards in their hand totals 5 again.

EACH PLAYER SECRETLY SELECTS 1 CARD
The players evaluate their hand and select one card to play this round. The rest of their cards should be set face-down on the table and their chosen card should remain in their hand. This is a visual clue to the other players that they have chosen their card. All players do this simultaneously.

PLAYERS PLAY THEIR CARD INTO AN ACTION SPACE
On each player's board, there are three action spaces: Buy, Superpower, and Speculate. All players simultaneously place their selected card face-up into an action space of their choice without looking where the other players are putting their card.

RESOLVE ACTIONS

A card has two pieces of information that are important for this phase:

1. The Genres on the card. Each card has (on average) three symbols, which correspond to the genre markers on the board. These are used for Buying and Speculating (described later).

2. The special action at the bottom of the the card is the Superpower. This will let you do game-changing actions if you choose to use the card's Superpower.

Action are resolved in the following order: Buy, then Superpowers, then Speculate. Each action type is resolved at the same time by the players who chose it. So, all players who chose Buy will complete their Buy action. Then all players who chose Superpower will resolve their action, and then the players who chose Speculate will speculate.

Buy

Players who put their card in the Buy slot must pay for the card. All players who selected the Buy action may perform this action simultaneously. First, determine the price of the card, as shown by the genre symbols on the top left of the card. For each symbol, look at the current price for that genre. Add up the symbols on the card to arrive at the purchase value. **The minimum price is $1**. Pay that amount to the bank and place the card face-up above the player board in the "Active Catalog" area. A player may have, at most, 3 comic book cards at a time. (The Active Catalog area has just three slots.) This doesn't include anything in their back catalog.

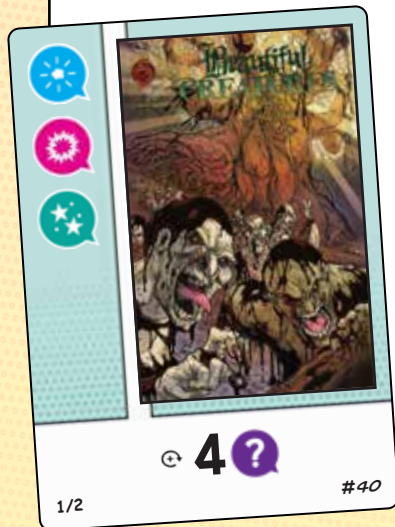*Example: The genres would be ranked as follows, going from 1st to 6th place:* ☀ 💬 ‼ ✴ ❓ ⚡

Note that it's their absolute height that matters. So some genres going down may rank higher than those going up.

According to the above market conditions in Year 3, the ☀ would be worth $10, the ‼ would be worth $4, and a ⚡ would count as a negative $3. The total cost for this comic would therefore be $11.

Superpower

Each player who placed their card in the Superpower space may now resolve the superpower on their card. These are powerful actions that will manipulate the market and perform special one-time effects. If multiple players played superpowers this round, reference the issue number at the bottom of the card. The cards should be resolved going from the lowest number to the highest. A note for some actions: Two genre tokens cannot share the same space, so if an action requires a player to adjust a token, they should skip over any spaces that already have tokens on them. When moving tokens, spaces that already have a token are not counted against the total movement amount. Discard the cards after they are used for their superpower.

Example: The superpower for this card (issue #40) tells the player to move the ❓ clockwise 4 spaces. It must skip over other tokens without counting that space. Note that any other players with a lower issue number comic in the Superpower space will perform their card's action first.

In the genre order, each player should announce how many symbols they have for that genre. Then, one player should move that genre token along the market board the total number of spaces equal to the total announced for that genre. Note when moving that two tokens cannot share the same space, so players should skip over any spaces with other tokens, not counting those spaces.

If fewer than three players selected Speculate, then a random comic book card is flipped over from the deck. This is added to the total just as if another player had played it.

Repeat this procedure for all six genres, then discard the cards used for speculation.

At the end of the Speculate phase, adjust the small genre tokens on the year/price table to match the order of the large genre tokens. Remember, the token order is determined by the absolute position of the large tokens on the main track, not whether those tokens are moving up or down the track.

Speculate

Each card in the Speculate area will move the genres shown on the card in the market. To do this, the genres are manipulated in a specific order. That order is, going left to right:

This order is also shown on the genre board.

SELL COMICS

After all players have resolved their actions, players have a chance to sell one of their comics for its current value. **A player who has bought a comic this round cannot sell a comic.** Players may only sell one comic in a turn.

The sell value is determined for selling the same way it is for buying: according to the market, except players take money from the bank rather than paying ($1 minimum). After selling, the player adds the card face-down to the right of their player board in the space noted as "Back Catalog." Players will score during the end game for genres where they have more comics than other players.

Players may look at their back catalog at any time.

Editor Note: The diagram below will be updated to reflect the latest components.

Example: Two players selected Speculate action, so we flip a third card (Abyss). Then, in genre order, we add up all of the tokens on the left side of both the Speculate cards and the newly-flipped card - ***move Blue 2, Red 0, Yellow 3, Purple 1, Orange 2, and Green 2.***

PASS REMAINING CARDS

All players should then pass their remaining hand to the player on their left. The round ends when players pass just one card.

(Players should still pass that one card, as it will be used to start their next hand!)

FINISHING A ROUND

If players have played their 4 cards AND this is the last round (Year 4), proceed to Game End / Scoring.

If this is not the last round, move the small genre tokens to the same relative positions in the next year.

Then, start the new round by drawing up to five cards. (Each player will draw 4 cards to get their hand back to 5.)

GAME END / SCORING

Once the game ends, players must sell off any comics they still have in their collection at the current market price. These comics are then added to their back catalog.

Players then simultaneously reveal all of the cards in their back catalog. Each player totals the number of symbols they have in each genre. The player with the most in a genre will gain or lose money depending on the final position of that genre's marker in the market. Here is their payout based on rank (also shown on the player boards):

1. $40   4. $10

2. $30   5. -$10

3. $20   6. -$20

If multiple players tie for majority, all the tied players get the bonus, whether it's positive or negative.

The player with the most money wins!

Editor Note: Rules for solo play and a 5th player are forthcoming.

SUPERPOWER SYMBOLS

Some Superpower icons require additional explanation.

Move the genre tokens listed by the number shown. For instance:

Here, the player would move the red genre token clockwise around the market board, then move the yellow token 2 spaces clockwise. Remember to skip over other tokens.

As above, but the tokens are moved counter-clockwise.

This icon locks the genre token(s) in place as soon as the superpower becomes active and for the rest of the turn (not until the end of the round/year).

+$2 The specified genre(s) means all players sell for +$2 per genre icon this turn.

Move the genre token to the same spot on the other side of the track by following the double-headed arrow. If there is already a token in that spot, then move the active token clockwise to the first empty space.

CREDITS

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Publisher: Kevin Brusky and APE Games

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Red 5 Comics: ‹lots of credits here›