

# GAME OF THRONES™

## THE IRON THRONE



RULES OF PLAY



# INTRODUCTION

*"When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die. There is no middle ground."*

—Cersei Lannister

*King Robert is dead. The succession is in dispute. The Great Houses of the Seven Kingdoms stand at the brink of war, each poised to claim supremacy or collapse into ruin. Now, House Baratheon, House Lannister, House Stark, House Targaryen, and House Tyrell compete for the ultimate prize in Westeros: The Iron Throne.*

# GAME OVERVIEW

In *Game of Thrones: The Iron Throne*, three to five players are immersed in the plotting and conniving intrigue of Westeros. Each player controls one of the Great Houses, using the cunning, honor, and brutality of infamous characters in an effort to gain power and control over the other houses.

On each turn, characters from the iconic Great Houses clash. The winners of these encounters spread their influence throughout the realm, employing any means at their command in their obsessive quest to seize The Iron Throne.

# COMPONENTS



100 PLASTIC POWER MARKERS



25 INFLUENCE TOKENS  
(5 PER HOUSE)



25 LEADER SHEETS  
(5 PER HOUSE)



18 EVENT CARDS  
(3 PER HOUSE, 3 SPECIAL)



125 HOUSE CARDS  
(25 PER HOUSE)



5 INFLUENCE BOARDS  
(1 PER HOUSE)



25 CHARACTER TOKENS  
(5 PER HOUSE)



# GAME SETUP

To set up a game, perform the following steps.

1

**Choose Houses:** Each player chooses one of the available Great Houses—Lannister, Stark, Baratheon, Targaryen, or Tyrell—and collects all components related to that house. This includes five character tokens, one influence board, five leader sheets, five influence tokens, and a house deck of 25 cards. The components for each house are marked with that house's sigil or colors.



COMPONENTS FOR HOUSE STARK

2

**Choose Leaders and Prepare House Components:** Each player shuffles the leader sheets from their house and draws two. Each player secretly chooses one to be their leader during this game; then all chosen sheets are revealed.

After all players have chosen and revealed their leaders, each player returns the character token that matches the chosen leader and all of their unchosen leader sheets to the game box. They will not be used during the game.

Then each player shuffles their house deck and places it, their chosen leader sheet, and their four remaining character tokens in their play area.

Finally, each player draws a **starting hand of five cards** from their house deck.



HOUSE STARK SETUP

3

**Prepare Influence Boards:** Each player places their influence board in the common play area and places their five influence tokens upon the five available spaces on their influence board.



4

**Prepare Power:** Each player places four power markers on each of their character tokens. Additionally, each player places four power on their leader sheet.



5

**Prepare Event Deck and Determine First Player:** Create the event deck by shuffling together the three event cards that match each house chosen to be played as well as the three special event cards.

Then randomly choose a player. That player will take the first turn of the game.



3-PLAYER GAME WITH HOUSE TARGARYEN, HOUSE STARK, AND HOUSE LANNISTER



## KEY CONCEPTS

Before players learn the basics of the game turn in *Game of Thrones: The Iron Throne*, there are two main concepts that are important for them to comprehend: power and influence.

Understanding these concepts will help players make their decisions and plan effective strategies.

### POWER

Each character token begins the game with four power. Power represents the political and physical strength of the individual characters. Throughout the game, players commit their characters to battles, schemes, and negotiations with the other characters. The more power a single character has, the stronger it is in these encounters. The less power a character has, however, the closer it is to death; a character with no power on it immediately dies.

Each leader sheet also begins the game with four power. Power on a leader sheet represents the house's reserve. While not immediately accessible, it shows the potential strength that the house can muster.

Power moves back and forth between the sheet and the characters throughout the game as the various characters emerge victorious or defeated from their encounters.

### INFLUENCE

Each player also begins the game with an influence board containing their five influence tokens. Influence represents the threads of control that the houses have over each other.

During the game, the goal for players is to spread influence to the other houses. This is accomplished primarily by winning encounters (see "Turn Overview" to the right), and the first player to spread all five of their influence tokens **wins the game**.



INFLUENCE BOARD WITH  
5 INFLUENCE TOKENS

## OPEN DISCUSSION

*"Power resides where men believe it resides. It's a trick, a shadow on the wall."*

—Varys

Every phase of *Game of Thrones: The Iron Throne* can involve some form of discussion. Players can beg, plead, promise, threaten, bribe, and in various other ways discuss their decisions and attempt to influence the decisions of the other players.

Discussion can form a very large portion of the game. Which cards to play, whom to support, whom to gang up against, alliances, betrayals: all of this can occur throughout every moment and every decision.

## TURN OVERVIEW

Each turn in *Game of Thrones: The Iron Throne* is centered around the resolution of one **ENCOUNTER**. An encounter is a clash between the houses and characters of the realm, representing anything from a hard-line negotiation to subtle political maneuvers or an all-out battle.

Each encounter involves two **ACTIVE PLAYERS**, a challenger and a defender. These two players each select one of their characters to participate in the encounter.

Then each of the other players in the game receives the opportunity to support one of the two active players by selecting and offering a character of their own.

Finally, each of the active players secretly chooses a house card. These two cards combined with the power present on the participating characters determines which side wins the encounter and which side loses.

Winning provides players with the potential reward of spreading influence, thus advancing toward victory. Losing causes players to lose power and risk the deaths of their participating characters.

All of this is encapsulated in the four phases of a turn:

1. Preparation
2. Support
3. Encounter
4. Resolution



## 1. PREPARATION

The preparation phase determines who the two active players are for the impending encounter. It also gives those players time to prepare for it. The preparation phase contains the following steps:

1. The challenger (the player resolving their turn) draws the top card of the event deck, which tells them who the defender is for the turn.
2. The two active players (challenger and defender) each draw one card from their respective house decks, adding it to their hand.
3. The two active players each distribute one power from their leader sheet to one of their character tokens.
4. The challenger chooses one of their characters to participate in the encounter. Then, the defender chooses one of their characters to participate as well.



EVENT CARD

Both of the chosen characters are pushed forward slightly and rotated so that the challenger or defender icon faces the common play area. This marks their participation as well as which side of the encounter each character is on.

CHALLENGER ICON  
ON PARTICIPATING  
CHARACTER



DEFENDER ICON  
ON PARTICIPATING  
CHARACTER



## 2. SUPPORT

During the support phase, the other players have the opportunity to declare their allegiances to either the challenger or defender.

Starting to the left of the challenger and proceeding clockwise, the other players may offer support to either the challenger or the defender. They may also choose to stay out of the encounter, offering support to neither side. The more support a player has, the greater their chances of winning the encounter, which can provide important rewards.

To offer support, a player chooses one of their character tokens. They push it toward the common play area and rotate it so that the appropriate icon of challenger or defender faces the common play area in the same fashion as the active player to whom they are offering support (see the lower-left corner of this page).

That player has the option to accept or decline the support. If accepted, the offered character joins that player's side and remains in the participating position. If declined, the offered character is returned to its original position. Regardless, each player can offer support only **once** per turn.

### CHOOSING SIDES

*"Chaos isn't a pit. Chaos is a ladder."*

—Petyr Baelish

While receiving support can definitely provide a large advantage in the encounter, each supporting character receives the same rewards for winning as the active player.

Because this can include spreading influence, the player to whom support is offered must decide carefully whether or not it is worth allowing a competitor to advance toward victory.

In the same way, the supporters must also be certain of their choice in whom they support; if the outcome is a loss, they receive the same penalties as the active player.





### 3. ENCOUNTER

During the encounter phase, the participating characters resolve the encounter. Sometimes this is done peacefully. More often, it is not.

The challenger and defender each secretly choose and place one house card from their own hands facedown in front of them. Most commonly chosen are two of the three types of house cards, hostility and truce.

The third type of house card, character cards, can be used in the same way as hostility cards; when a character card is played facedown as a hostility card, it has a value of **zero**. However, character cards are more often used for their special text effects (see “Character Cards” on page 8).

Before the cards are actually placed, the two active players typically spend a little time discussing their intentions, honorable or otherwise. Players might “agree” that a truce is in the best interest of all parties, but either player could be bluffing, trying to convince their opponent to play a card that would cause that player to lose.

Regardless of which cards are selected, after these cards are placed, they are revealed. These revealed cards determine the outcome of the encounter: hostility, truce, or betrayal.

#### HOSTILITY

A **HOSTILITY** outcome represents characters scheming against or directly assaulting each other. It occurs when both active players reveal hostility cards, which have numerical values and represent the troops, guards, spies, and servants of the house.

During a hostility outcome, the value of each hostility card is added with the amount of power on **all participating characters** on that side. The side with the greater total of power plus hostility value wins the encounter and receives rewards (see “Winning the Encounter” on page 7).

Conversely, the side with the lower total loses the encounter and receives penalties. In the case of a tie, both sides lose the encounter and receive penalties (see “Losing the Encounter” on page 7).



HOSTILITY CARD

#### TRUCE

A **TRUCE** outcome represents the two houses agreeing to peaceful discourse. It occurs when both active players reveal truce cards, which have an image of a flag upon them and represent the envoys of a house.

During a truce outcome, the two **active players** enter a discussion, and each active player may bargain for **one or more** of the following from each other:

- Spreading one influence token (see “Winning the Game” on page 8).
- Taking up to two hostages (see “Hostages” on page 9).
- Removing up to three power from one active player’s leader sheet and placing it on the leader sheet of the other active player.

This discussion is completely open. It can be one-sided, with a single player demanding the influence placement as well as hostages without allowing the same, or both players can facilitate a completely equal exchange.

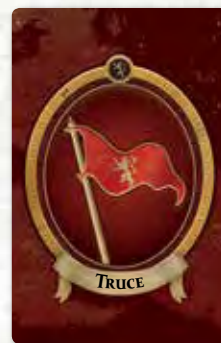
If anything is given or taken, there is no winner or loser to the encounter, and no rewards or penalties are resolved. However, if nothing changes hands, all players on both sides, including supporters, **lose the encounter** and suffer penalties.

#### BETRAYAL

A **BETRAYAL** outcome represents one side agreeing to peaceful discourse while the other side takes advantage.

Betrayal occurs when one active player reveals a hostility card and the other reveals a truce card. This is similar to a hostility outcome; the side with the hostility card wins the encounter, **regardless of** any power amounts or hostility values, and the other side loses.

However, because of the betrayal, the player that revealed the truce card receives special compensation (see “Taking Hostages” on page 7).



TRUCE CARD





## HOSTILITY OUTCOME EXAMPLE



HOUSE LANNISTER WINS WITH:  
 $12 + 5 = 17$



HOUSE STARK, SUPPORTED BY  
HOUSE BARATHEON, LOSES WITH:  
 $10 + 2 + 4 = 16$

### 4. RESOLUTION

After the winner and loser of the encounter are determined, participating players receive various rewards and penalties.

#### WINNING THE ENCOUNTER

In a hostility or betrayal resolution, all players on the winning side receive the same basic rewards. However, the actual gains depend upon whether these players were on the challenger's side or the defender's side.

**Challenger Rewards:** If the challenger wins, each player on their side spreads influence to the defender (see "Winning the Game" on page 8).

**Defender Rewards:** If the defender wins, each player on their side draws two cards and distributes two power from their leader sheet to any of their character tokens.

In a hostility outcome, the active player on the winning side also receives one hostage (see "Taking Hostages" on the right).

#### LOSING THE ENCOUNTER

In a hostility or betrayal resolution, all players on the losing side suffer the same basic penalty, regardless of which side they were on.

Each player removes half of the power from their participating character, rounded up. This power is placed on their leader sheet.

A character who has no power remaining immediately dies (see "Character Death" on page 9).

#### TAKING HOSTAGES

After the basic rewards and penalties have been resolved, hostages may be awarded to either active player, depending upon the outcome of the encounter (see "Hostages" on page 9).

**Hostility Outcome:** The active player on the winning side (either challenger or defender) chooses **any one** player on the losing side and takes **one** hostage from that player.

**Betrayal Outcome:** The active player on the losing side (the player who revealed the truce card) takes one hostage from **each** player on the winning side.

#### END OF THE TURN

After rewards and penalties have been resolved, players perform a few clean-up steps. All participating characters are returned to their normal positions, and all played and revealed cards are placed in their own corresponding discard piles. Additionally, each player with fewer than five house cards in their hand draws house cards until they have five.

Then the next player in clockwise order becomes the new challenger and begins their turn with the preparation phase.



## WINNING THE GAME

Players win the game by spreading influence to the other houses. Each time a player spreads their influence, they remove one of their own tokens from their own board, placing it on the board of the player to whom influence is being spread.



**HOUSE STARK  
SPREADS INFLUENCE  
TO HOUSE LANNISTER**

The game ends in one of two ways:

- One or more players have spread all five of their influence tokens.
- All four characters from a single house are dead (“Character Death” on page 9).

When the game ends, the player who has the most influence on other players’ influence boards wins the game. In the case of a tie, the tied players share victory.

## ADDITIONAL RULES

In addition to the basics of each turn, there are a number of other important rules.

### LEADER ABILITY

During setup, each player chooses a leader, and each leader has an important ability that can substantially alter how each player plays the game.

For example, some abilities modify hostility values, provide card draw, or allow hostages to be taken from other players. Some may alter how an encounter is resolved.

Each leader ability specifically states when it can be used and the precise game effect that it provides. Resolving a leader ability is always optional.

#### LEVERAGE

*Before a player offers support, if you have influence over that house and if you are an active player:*

Choose 1 character in that house. That character is forced to support you.

#### LEADER ABILITY

### CHARACTER CARDS

Each house deck contains several character cards. These cards feature an image of the character, that character’s name, and text defining a useful advantage.

The character card can be played during its specified timing for its effect **only when** the corresponding character is participating in the encounter. If the card matches the player’s leader, then it can be played when **any** of the player’s characters are participating in the encounter.

During the encounter phase, it is possible for the active player to place a character card as their facedown card (see “3. Encounter” on page 6). If this happens, the card **does not** need to match the leader or participating character. Additionally, it is considered to be a hostility card with a value of **zero**.



**CHARACTER CARD**



## WITHDRAWING

Certain game effects can cause a **supporting player** to withdraw from the encounter. If this happens, that player returns their character to its normal position, discards any cards played, and no longer participates in the encounter. The player does not receive rewards or penalties.

Game effects cannot allow or force the **active player** to withdraw.

## CHARACTER DEATH

Many game effects can cause players to remove power from characters. If a character has no power on it, that character dies.

When a character dies, the character token is flipped facedown. The character can no longer participate in encounters, and cards corresponding to that character cannot be used for their text effect.



EDDARD STARK IS KILLED AND FLIPPED FACEDOWN

## HOSTAGES

Numerous game effects can cause a player to take a hostage from another player. This is represented by the player taking and holding one of that player's house cards. When taking a hostage, a player can choose from one of three places:

- From the top of the other player's house deck.
- Randomly from the other player's hand.
- From the hostages that the other player has already taken.

After a hostage is taken, the card is placed facedown in the hostage taker's play area. At any time, a player can look at the front or back side of cards that they have taken as hostages.

## RELEASING OR TORMENTING HOSTAGES

Hostages are not used for their values or text effects. Instead, at the start of any turn, any players can **RELEASE** or **TORMENT** any number of hostages that they have taken.

**Releasing a Hostage:** When a player releases a hostage, they return the card to the original owner's hand. After doing so, they draw one card from their own house deck.

**Tormenting a Hostage:** When a player torments a hostage, they place the card in the original owner's discard pile. This has three possible effects, depending upon the type of card tormented:

- **Leader:** If a tormented hostage is a character card that matches the house's leader, immediately return four power from that leader sheet to the game box.
- **Characters:** If a tormented hostage is a character card that matches any faceup character token, remove **four power** from that character's token, placing it on the house's leader sheet.
- **Hostility or Truce:** If a tormented hostage is a hostility or truce card, the tormenting player chooses and removes one power from one character in that house. This power is placed on the leader sheet of the tormenting player.

The promises and threats of releasing and tormenting hostages can be strong leverage during play. Players can ask for other players to support a one side or to stay out of an encounter, to play (or not play) a specific card, or attempt any other scheme they can concoct.

## WHAT NEXT?

*"I will give him the Iron Chair that his mother's father sat upon. I will give him the Seven Kingdoms."*

—Khal Drogo

Players now know all the rules necessary to play their first game of *Game of Thrones: The Iron Throne*. Players can use the quick reference section on the back of this rulebook for a reminder of the basics of each turn. Additionally, "Clarifications" on pages 10 and 11 provide details on how to resolve more complex interactions.



## CLARIFICATIONS

The following section consists of clarifications that players should read thoroughly after their first game.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

It is possible for certain rules to be contradictory or for certain effects to occur at the same time.

- If rules between this book and game components contradict one another, priority is given to the rules on components.
- If effects occur at the same time, apply the following rules:
  - Players resolve leader abilities before all other text effects.
  - If other effects conflict, they are resolved in clockwise order starting with the challenger. If the effects cannot be resolved in this manner, the challenger decides the resolution order.

### TABLE TALK

Open discussion is a core part of the game experience, but there are three important rules.

- Discussion of any kind is permitted during any phase as long as all players are able to hear it.
- Any promises made during the course of the game's open discussion are non-binding with one exception: what the two active players decide during a truce outcome must be resolved as agreed upon.
- Although players can make the claim that they have particular cards or hostages, they are not allowed to directly show this information to other players.

## COMPONENTS AND TERMINOLOGY

This section contains clarifying information relating to topics discussed earlier in this book.

### CHARACTER DEATH

The following are clarifications for character death (see page 9 for basic rules):

- A leader cannot die.
- If a character dies during an encounter in which it participates, the player who controls it is still involved in the encounter and can still receive rewards or suffer penalties.
  - The character itself is no longer participating, so cards corresponding to that character can no longer be played for their text effect.
- A dead character cannot have power placed on it.
- Cards corresponding to dead characters can still be placed facedown by an active player during the encounter phase.
  - The card is resolved in the same manner as all character cards used this way: it is considered to be a hostility card with a value of zero.





## HOSTAGES

The following are clarifications for hostages (see pages 7 and 9 for basic rules):

- When a hostage is taken, the card is placed facedown in the hostage taker's play area.
  - If a player takes a hostage corresponding to their own house, that hostage is returned to their hand.
- A player can examine the hostages that they control at any time.
  - Other players can see which houses the hostages are originally from, but they cannot look at the front side of the card.
- If an effect prevents an active player from receiving rewards, that player cannot take a hostage.
- If an effect prevents a player from suffering penalties, that player cannot be chosen as the player from whom a hostage is taken.

## HOUSE CARDS

The following are clarifications for house cards (see pages 6 and 9 for basic rules):

- There is no limit to the number of cards a player can have in their hand.
- At the end of each turn, all players with fewer than five cards in their hand draw cards until they have five.
- If a house deck has been depleted, its discard pile is immediately shuffled to form a new deck.
- If a player has no house cards but is required to play one, such as the facedown card for an active player during the encounter phase, that player draws and plays the top card of their deck.
- Players can take cards from other players' house decks as hostages but cannot use the encounter options or text effects from any other players' house cards.

**House Card Breakdown:** Each house deck contains four truce cards, 10 character cards (two per character), and 11 hostility cards (values 1-8, 10, 12, and 20).

## INFLUENCE BOARD AND TOKENS

The following are clarifications for the influence board and tokens (see pages 4 and 8 for basic rules):

- When a player spreads influence, they place one of their own tokens from their own board on the board of another player.
- A player's influence board can have any number of influence tokens from other houses on it, including multiple influence tokens from the same house.
- The icons underneath the tokens on each influence board have no inherent gameplay function; they are used only to help players easily track how close they are to winning.

## PARTICIPATE

The players who are participating in any given encounter are the two active players and any players whose support was accepted.

- The characters selected by each of these players also participate in the encounter.
- Players and characters are considered to be participating from the start of the encounter phase until the end of that turn.
- Characters who withdraw no longer participate.

## POWER

The following are clarifications for power (see pages 4 and 6 for basic rules):

- When a player distributes power, they take it from their leader sheet and place it on any character token or tokens of their choice.
  - Distributed power does not all need to be placed on a single character.
  - If a character is participating in an encounter, the distributed power does not need to be placed on that character.
  - With the exception of certain game effects that specifically allow it, a player cannot take power from another player's leader sheet.
- When a player removes power from a character token, they place it on their leader sheet.
  - Some effects specify that power is removed from the leader sheet. When this happens, the power is returned to the game box and can no longer be used during that game.
- An individual character can have any amount of power on it.
- If a player's leader sheet has no power on it, they cannot distribute additional power from the sheet to the characters.

## TRUCE

The following are clarifications for truce outcomes (see page 6 for basic rules):

- The actual truce discussion is considered to be resolved during the resolution phase for the purposes of various game effects.
- During a truce outcome, players do not receive rewards but do suffer penalties if the truce discussion was unsuccessful.
- Each of the possible truce requests can be resolved only once by each active player.
- Supporting players can be involved in the truce discussion (in the manner of the game's open discussion and table talk) but cannot request or receive anything from it.



# QUICK REFERENCE

## TURN SUMMARY

### 1. PREPARATION (PG. 5)

The challenger draws an event card to determine the defender.

- A. Each active player draws one house card and distributes one power from their leader sheet.
- B. First the challenger and then the defender select a character to participate in the encounter.

### 2. SUPPORT (PG. 5)

Each non-active player may offer one character in support of either the challenger or the defender.

### 3. ENCOUNTER (PG. 6)

Each active player chooses and places one card from their hand facedown. Then the cards are revealed.

- **Hostility Outcome:** Each side adds its total power and hostility value. The higher total wins.
- **Truce Outcome:** The two active players enter an open discussion and may barter for specific components.
- **Betrayal Outcome:** The side with the hostility card wins but suffers special penalties.

### 4. RESOLUTION (PG. 7)

Players receive rewards and penalties based upon the results of the encounter.

- **Challenger Wins:** Each player on that side spreads one of their influence to the defender.
- **Defender Wins:** Each player on that side draws two cards and distributes two power from their leader sheet.
- **Either Side Loses:** Each player on that side removes half of the power from their participating character, rounded up.
- **Hostages Taken:** In a hostility outcome, the active player on the winning side takes one hostage from one player on the opposing side.

In a betrayal outcome, the active player on the losing side takes one hostage from each player on the opposing side.

After the resolution phase, each player draws until they have five house cards.

## HOSTAGES

- A hostage can be taken from a player's hand, deck, or already taken hostages.
- At the start of a turn, a player can release or torment a hostage (see "Releasing or Tormenting Hostages" on page 9).

# CREDITS

**Game Design:** Bill Eberle, Peter Olotka, Greg Olotka, and Justin Kempainen

Game design based on Cosmic Encounter®, Eon Products, Inc

**Producer:** Jason Walden

**Technical Editing and Proofreading:** Molly Glover and Allan Kennedy

**Graphic Design:** Monica Helland

**Managing Graphic Designer:** Brian Schomburg

**Licensing Specialist:** Amanda Greenhart

**Quality Assurance Coordinator:** Zach Tewalthomas

**Production Coordination:** Jason Glawe

**Production Management:** Megan Duehn

**Board Game Manager:** Justin Kempainen

**Executive Producer:** Michael Hurley

**Executive Game Designer:** Corey Konieczka

**Creative Director:** Andrew Navaro

**Publisher:** Christian T. Petersen

**Playtesters:** Samuel Bailey, Adam Baker, Justin Bognar, Kara Centell-Dunk, Daniel Lovat Clark, Jacob Clark, Ben Eldridge, Jacob Freedman, Ben Garrett, Molly Glover, Donovan Goertzen, Ellen Griffin, Nathan Hajek, Julia Jannace, Steven Kimball, Nathan Kiemele, Todd Michlitsch, Sean O'Hare, Quoc Tran, and Paul Winchester

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