

ESCAPE MASTER™

THE FANTASY SPEED CARD GAME

Rule Book





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Rule Book

Scan QR code for a dramatic reading of the backstory, video tutorial, and access to rules in French (Français), German (Deutsch), and Mandarin (中文).



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2-4 Players



30-60 Minutes



10+ Ages 10+

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Backstory

For decades the Doom Master has held the Vapor Isles in his cruel iron grasp. Long ago, he cast a powerful delusion over the inhabitants blinding them to the horrors of his madness and enslaving them to his will. He used the six Tribes like plows to deepen the furrows of his control. To the Average Joes, he gave the harsh wilderness to inhabit, till, and tame. The Mice, he sent to the dangerous seas to captain his vessels of spoil. The Lumberjacks, he forced to cut wood and fashion his strongholds. The Teens, he made messengers, but to some he gave the responsibility of programming his deadly Robot infantry. Lastly, the Vapor Ninjas trained as his elite strike force to snuff out any resistance. Between the Robot infantry, Vapor Ninjas, countless traps, and his powerful delusion, the Doom Master rendered escape from the Vapor Isles nearly impossible... if not for the Escape Master. Like a lantern in the darkness, the Doom Master's folly has long been resisted by the wisdom and power of the Escape Master. Exploring uncharted territory and gathering mighty artifacts, the elusive

old man has led many of the Doom Master's captives to freedom along hidden escape routes. However, his time is ending, and his mantle must be passed on to another... A few liberated by the Escape Master have bravely returned as Escape Leaders. Even re-programmed Robots and repentant Vapor Ninjas defying the Doom Master are among their number. Their work is urgent, for the Escape Master has vanished, and without his skill and tactics, his secret paths won't remain hidden for long! The Escape Leaders must harness the artifacts left by the Escape Master to guide as many captives out as possible before every passage is sealed. However, they must stay alert! Certain members of their parties, still bound by delusion, are desperate to flee, and are willing to throw others into the Doom Master's traps to gain the upper hand... The Doom Master himself prowls in the shadows seeking their demise. Any careless blunder could result in their capture or be the final clue the Doom Master needs to destroy the last escape routes. Despite the bleak outlook, the Escape Master left one trace of hope in their hands—a letter.

The Escape Master's Letter

Dear Escape Leaders,
You must master the skills of speed
and stealth by trial. Do not lose
hope. You may not see me now, but I
will be near when you call. The one
who proves worthy, I will make the
next Escape Master! I am forging a
secret portal to the Tranquil Lands
the Doom Master will never find.
My successor will guard the way.
Go quickly now! Time is of
the essence...

Deck Summary



**GAME
Deck**
100 Cards



**CHARACTER
Deck**
6 Cards



**STORY
Deck**
12 Cards



6 QUICK GUIDES are included

Author's Note

Welcome to the game! Escape Master can be as simple or complex as you want it to be. For your convenience, the rules have been divided into 3 colors indicating difficulty level.

Green Easy • Yellow Medium • Red Hard

Remove any cards related to a difficulty level you don't wish to play. Reading through the green rules is enough to get you started!

Objective

Play all 10 cards in your hand first to go out!

Every card played is another captive saved!

Summary

1. Players go out by playing Numbered cards in ASCENDING or DESCENDING order on Stacks.
2. Stacks are started with 7-Start cards.
3. Cards must be played one at a time using one hand, and all play happens simultaneously. There are no turns!
4. A round ends when one player goes out and declares, "Escape Master!"
5. Each card left in a player's hand when another player goes out counts as one Blunder, or "point," against them.
6. The game ends when one player reaches 30 or more Blunders.
7. The player with the fewest Blunders at the end of the game wins!

Game Overview

Setup

1. Shuffle the entire GAME deck well.
2. Choose a starting dealer. The dealer deals every player 10 cards face-down.
3. The remaining cards are placed in the center of the table as the draw pile.

***The dealer rotates clockwise after each round**

Starting a Round

The dealer may start the round by declaring "Start!" whenever they choose.

Ending a Round

The first player to go out declares "Escape Master!" Then all other players must immediately stop playing cards and the round is over.

Scoring

All cards left in a player's hand at the end of a round count as 1 Blunder each regardless of card type. Keep a running total of how many Blunders each player has using a scoring app or a piece of paper.

Avoid mistakes that will reveal the last hidden escape routes to the Doom Master!

Preparing for the Next Round

Rotate the dealer and repeat the game setup for the next round!

Ending the Game

The game ends when one player reaches 30 or more Blunders at the conclusion of a round. This is called the Breaking Point.

Winning

The player with the fewest Blunders at the end of the game wins!

Become the next Escape Master!

Close Calls and Ties

1. Multiple players may go out if they both play their last card and declare "Escape Master" at the same time.
2. At the end of a game, any players involved in a tie play one additional round to determine the winner.

Starting and Playing on Stacks

Stacks are simply piles of cards where players may play Numbered cards from their hand to try and go out.

Starting Stacks

Stacks are started by playing 7-Start cards around the draw pile. There is no minimum or maximum number of Stacks that may be Started each round. It will depend on how many 7-Start cards are played. There are 8 of these cards included in the deck.



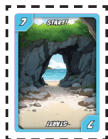
STACK



STACK



DRAW PILE



STACK



STACK

Each 7-Start card represents one of the Escape Master's secret routes!

Playing on Stacks

Numbered cards are ranked 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jump (J), Quiet (Q), and Kindle (K) from lowest to highest. The face cards J, Q, and K have no number but play as if they were 11s, 12s, and 13s. The GAME deck includes 6 different suits of Numbered cards 1-K. Each suit is represented by a different Tribe:



Average Joe



Mouse



Lumberjack



Teen



Robot



Vapor Ninja

1. Once Stacks are started by 7-Start cards, other Numbered cards may be continuously played on the Stacks in ASCENDING or DESCENDING order by any player.
2. The highest and the lowest Numbered card may be played on each other to create a continuous loop. Therefore, a K may be played on a 1 and a 1 may be played on a K.

***Players may only play one card at a time using one hand.**

Jump, tiptoe, and maneuver your way through the Vapor Isles. The adventure is yours to imagine!

Examples of Playing on Stacks

7, 6, 5, 6... is an acceptable sequence of cards.

Q, K, 1, 2... is an acceptable sequence of cards.



Wisdom Cards

Wisdom cards are wild cards. There are 4 included in the deck. Wisdom cards may be played on any Numbered card and any Numbered card (or card combination) may be played on them.



***Wisdom cards may be used to start Stacks.**

Drawing Cards

1. Players may only draw from the draw pile if they have no playable Numbered cards or Wisdom cards. Playable Special cards do not prevent a player from drawing.
2. Drawing is not required. However, if no player can play and no player is willing to draw, any player may announce "Draw" to force every player to draw one card. The player who announced "Draw" should be the last to draw. Every player must finish drawing before play continues.

***If a player announces "Draw" prematurely when another player has a playable Numbered card or Wisdom card, the other player should quickly state they can play, and the "Draw" does not go into effect.**

Combinations

Card combinations allow a player to play 2 cards at once using one hand.

Suit Combinations

Cards 1-5 of the same suit may be added and played together on a Stack if their sum equals a playable card. The two cards may be played in any order but play always continues off the top card's number and not the sum.



STACK



This Suit Combination may be played on a 7-Start card, but play will continue off the 4.

***Suit Combinations may be used to start Stacks if they equal 7.**

Face Combinations

Two face cards with the same letter (J, Q, or K) may be paired and played together as they were one card. Suit does not matter.



Special Cards

Special cards are cards with unique abilities shuffled into the deck that have no numbers.

Types of Special Cards

✗ Dead End (1 included)

🕸 Traps (2 of each kind included)

🏃 Escapes (3 of each kind included)

Playing a Dead End

The Dead End card is played directly on a Stack to close it. No more cards may be played on a closed Stack for the rest of the round.

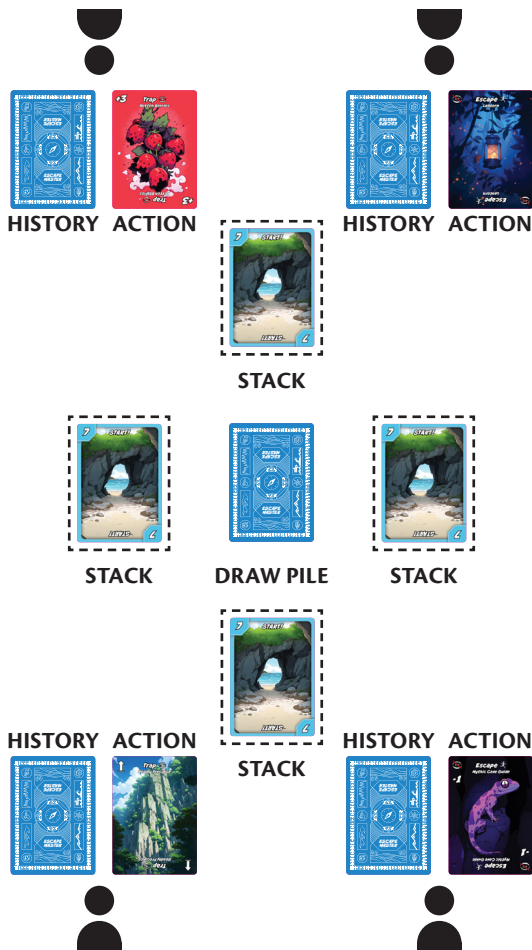


Playing Traps and Escapes

1. All players have an Action pile and a History pile in front of them where Trap cards and Escape cards are played and resolved.

***Traps and Escapes are never played on Stacks.**

2. A Trap can be played on an opponent's Action pile to hinder their ability to play.
3. A player affected by any Trap card can play an Escape card on top of the Trap to resolve it without suffering any negative effects. After using an Escape card to resolve a Trap, both cards are flipped face-down into a player's History pile where they will remain until the end of the round.




Types of Traps



Traps force another player to draw 3 cards.







Traps force another player to only play in ASCENDING order.

Note: A player affected by a  Trap may not play on a K because both cards in either direction are lower.



Traps force another player to only play in DESCENDING order.

Note: A player affected by a  Trap may not play on a 1 because both cards in either direction are higher.

***Only one  /  Trap may be active in a player's Action pile at a time. However,  Traps may always be played on another player.**


Types of Escapes



Escapes may be played on top of any Trap to resolve it.







Escapes give a player the ability to resolve any Trap and/or discard an extra card from their hand.

*If a player is not trapped, they may still use an  Escape card to discard a card from their hand.

Important Special Card Regulations

1. All Special cards must be verbally announced when played and take effect immediately. They stay in effect until resolved (if able to be resolved).
2. Any player may discard any number of Special cards from their hand directly into their History pile if they don't wish to use them. This may allow a player to go out more quickly.
3. Special cards left in a player's hand at the end of a round each count as 1 Blunder even if they could have been discarded

Wisdom Cards and Traps

Any time a Wisdom card is played, it automatically resolves every player's active  /  Traps. Wisdom cards do not resolve Traps. Therefore, Wisdom cards must be verbally announced when played to alert other players their  /  Traps may be resolved. Wisdom cards may not be discarded.

The Escape Master's Wisdom helps everyone!

CHARACTER Deck, STORY Deck, and Doom Master Cards

CHARACTER Deck

1. At the start of the game, every player randomly draws an Escape Leader card from the CHARACTER deck to obtain a unique ability they may use each round.
2. All Escape Leader abilities are visible to other players and last for the duration of the game unless lost or traded as the result of a Story card.

***The player with the Lumberjack Escape Leader ability may make another player reach the Breaking Point at the start of a round by giving them one extra Blunder, but the game is not over until the round is finished.**

STORY Deck

Story cards grant a one-round advantage to help struggling players catch up.

1. The player with the most Blunders in their hand at the end of each round gets to draw a Story card from the STORY deck.
2. If players tie for the most Blunders in their hand, the player with the highest overall score gets to draw. If their overall score is also tied, no player gets to draw.
3. After drawing a Story card, a player reads it outloud and places it next to their Escape Leader card as a reminder to use their advantage in the upcoming round.

Beast Mode

1. After a Story card is used, it is placed beneath a player's Escape Leader card to be collected as Experience points. Once a player collects 2 Experience points, they may unlock their Escape Leader's Beast Mode in a future round.
2. Whenever a player chooses to unlock their Beast Mode, they must return 2 Experience points back to the bottom of the STORY deck (the STORY deck is not

re-shuffled). Beast Mode only lasts for one round.

3. An Escape Leader card is turned sideways whenever a player's Beast Mode is unlocked.

***A player can never save more than 4 Experience points at a time.**

Doom Master Cards



1. The Doom Master cards are shuffled into the GAME deck. They play on Stacks with the same numeric value as a J, Q, or K. However, they cannot be played in combinations.
2. If a Doom Master card is left in a player's hand at the end of a round, it counts as 3 Blunders.

***A Doom Master card may only be discarded using a  Escape card.**

Rule Details

Keeping the Game Fair and Tidy

1. A player must return a card to their hand if they play incorrectly or if another player beats them to a play.
2. Penalties for more complex errors should be agreed on by the players, such as drawing extra cards, adding blunders at the end of a round, or re-playing a round.
3. No physical blocking is allowed.

Special Cases

1. A round may alternately end when the last card in the draw pile is drawn, and every player has played their last playable card. In this case, the round ends and every player counts the Blunders left in their hand.
2. If there are not enough cards left for every player to draw when a "Draw" is announced, players to the left of the player who announced it must be the first to draw going in a clockwise fashion. Once the cards run out, the remaining players do not have to draw.

***Players are always welcome to make house rules in any given situation.**

Alternate Rules


1. Set Rounds: Instead of choosing a Breaking Point, players may choose a set number of rounds to play such as 12.
2. Early Ending: Remove one Doom Master card from the GAME deck every time a player fails to play one. Place them in a separate Doom pile. When the Doom pile collects all 3 Doom Master cards, it triggers an early end to the game!
3. Practicing English: Have players verbally announce card titles before playing them. Use masking tape to label cards with new words as desired.

Escape Alliance (Team Game)

Basic Rules

1. Choose one teammate.
2. Table talk and hand viewing between teammates is allowed.
3. Teammates add up their collective number of Blunders after each round to obtain a team score. When one team reaches the Breaking Point, the team with the lower score wins.

Rule Details

1. Players may play any kind of Escape card on their teammate's Traps to resolve them. However, playing an  Escape card only allows the team member who played it to discard a card.
2. Drawing a Story card is based on team score and not individual score. Therefore, teammates may always pick which one of them gets to draw a Story card and gain Experience.

Ending a Round

Multiple players will declare "Escape Master" as they go out, but a round only ends when both members of a team go out. The second teammate to go out declares "Escape Alliance" to end the round.

*Work as a team to become the
Escape Master's successors!*

Credits

Game design: Zac and Lily Taw founders of
Zily Creative Works LLC

Art and graphic design: Timothy Simpson and
David Richardson

Box design and graphic design: Hannah
Kinderman

Online content: Lane Yoder

We want to give a SPECIAL THANKS to our
beta testers and our Zily Inner Circle. We
couldn't have done this without you!

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