

To the bottom – card game

The narrative of the game is sinking of an ocean liner. Each player represents a ship, its crew and travellers. It is a very sad game because at the end of the day, all the vessels sink to the bottom. The goal is to stay above the water level as long as possible to save as many travellers as possible.

The game consists of two phases – the **Cruise** and the **Sinking**. During the Cruise phase, players build their decks of cards. The cards represent the crew, travellers and gadgets. In the Sinking phase, players use their cards. The Cruise comes first but for the sake of clarity, the Sinking rules will be explained before it.

Sinking:

There are 4 fields where you can keep your cards during the Sinking:

- The **deck** is the pile of your cards facing down
- Your **hand**
- Cards played on the table face up are on the **board**
- The discard pile is called the **water**



Deck:

In the beginning of the **Sinking**, each player has 5 cards in their **hand**. All cards that have been played **on board** during the **Cruise** phase stay on board. The remaining cards are in the **deck**. Construction of the starting deck will be described in **Cruise** section of the game.

Hand:

The player who bought Iceberg during the **Cruise** phase starts the game (see later). Then other players follow clockwise. The exact structure of a turn will be described in the **Turn course** section, for now just remember that you **draw 3 cards** from your deck by default. There is **no card limit for your hand**. Cards on your hand do not have any effect.

Board:

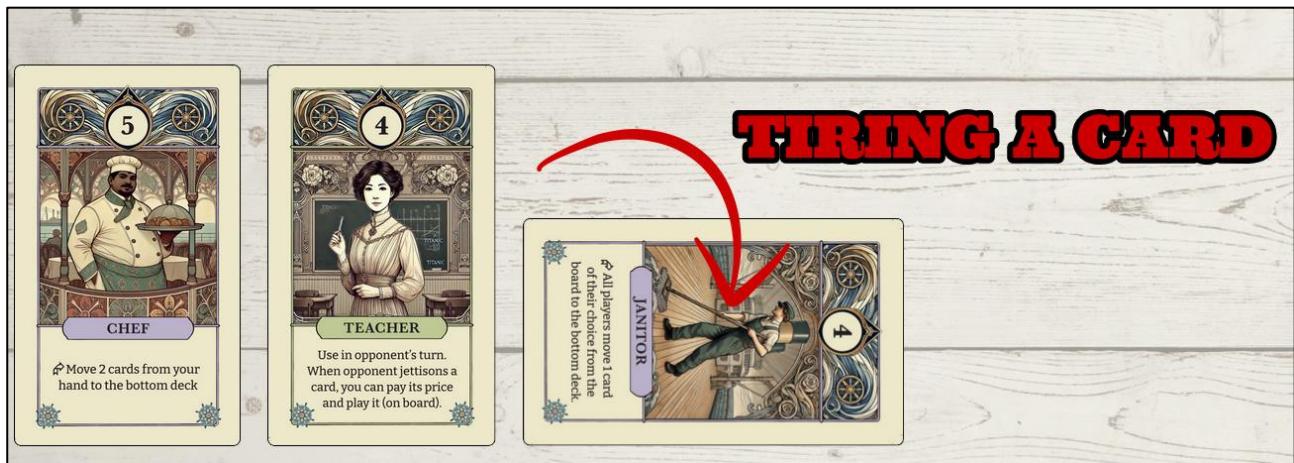
Every card has a **point value** shown in the upper part of its front side. Before you **play** a card on your board, you must have **jettisoned** card(s) with at least the same points. To jettison means to move the card into the **water**. The points of jettisoned cards are pooled.



If you have at least **5 cards on your board**, playing additional cards costs twice as many points. If you have at least **10 cards** on your board, the cost triples etc.



When the card is played on board, it starts performing its **function** (see the text on the card). Some cards must initiate their **action** by **tiring** (see the symbol ). To signal a card is tired, turn it 90°. A tired card cannot perform its action anymore. Activating a card that requires tiring is optional.



Attention: Red, violet and beige cards with the  action symbol enter the board tired. It means they cannot use their action in the turn they have been played. In the beginning of your turn, **ready** (un-tire) all tired cards, turn them back to the default position. Blue (defensive) cards enter the board ready. Cards entering the board tired are indicated by this symbol for better visibility:



Water:

Water has no specific meaning. It only witnesses which cards have already been sacrificed during a hopeless attempt to keep the ship above water. Some cards interact with water, though, e.g. Diver. Every player has their own water.

Turn course:

1. Readying of all your cards
2. Effects before the Drawing (e.g. Maid)
3. Drawing (including Tycoon's effect)
4. Sacrificing = Jettisoning of cards from your hand to your water for earning points
5. Playing cards on board and using their actions

Note: You can always jump between steps 4 and 5. The sum of **value points of sacrificed cards** can **never be lower** than the sum of **value points of played cards**.

Note 2: You can store the unused points till the end of your turn. Imagine you use an abacus.

6. End of turn – **the remaining points get lost.**

Special rule for the first turns:

The beginning player draws 0 cards. The next player only draws 1 card; the next player draws 2 cards; after that, all players draw 3 cards by default (there are modifiers, e.g. Fisherman; the modifiers apply to the first 3 turns too).

This rule applies even if there are just two players.

The fun comes from a conflict of two objectives:

Drawing speed: Some basic cards affect the number of cards you draw. The more cards you draw, the more operational you become, the more you can control the game. But remember, drawing cards pushes you to the inevitable end as once you shall draw another card while your deck is empty, your ship sinks, and your game is over.

On the other hand, if you slow down the drawing, you can keep the cards longer in your deck which basically represents your life points. It may, however, make you an easier target to your aggressive opponents.

Value points: The vast majority of cards can be utilized in two ways. Playing them on board which allows you to use their effects and actions; and **sacrificing** (jettisoning) for points in order to play another card(s). The higher the point value of the card, the more useful it generally is. On the other hand, the more valuable it as a sacrifice.

Cruise:

Cruise is a deckbuilding phase. Cards and their point values have additional meaning to those during **Sinking**. In the beginning of Cruise, players' decks consist of **8 Passenger** cards and **2 Baby** cards. These 10 cards represent travellers who got on in the first harbour. They have no special abilities which is symbolized by the beige framing of their card face sides. All other cards get shuffled, and they wait in a drawing deck that is common for all the players.

All the time during the Cruise, there are **5 randomly chosen cards** laying face up in between of the players. Next to those cards, there is **1 Iceberg** card. This space is called **Shop**. All players share the same Shop.



A turn of Cruise represents a stop in a harbour, with new travellers entering the ship. The **tallest player starts** the game by drawing **3 cards**. The Cruise plays as the Sinking, you can normally play cards on board (if paid) and eventually use their actions, however, you can also use the points from jettisoning cards to **buy new cards** from the common Shop.

Sum of the point values determines the maximum value of cards the player can buy into their deck this turn. The player can buy any card on the table = the 5 random cards or the Iceberg. As soon as the player buys one of the 5 cards, it is **immediately replaced** by another one from the common deck of all cards. For better orientation among the cards, their frontsides are equipped with different colour motives. Cards without a special ability are beige. Offensive cards come in red. Defensive cards are blue. Green cards have a passive effect, e.g. they alter the number of cards drawn. Violet cards have a special effect.

The player does not have to use all their points. The unused points expire after the turn. Bought cards go face up on a discard pile (water) together with cards that have been jettisoned this turn.



In this example, the player jettisoned Rats worth 3 points. They decided to buy Lifebuoy of the price 3. The player put both cards into their water and drew a new card to fill the emptied slot in Shop. The player could also have bought Polka Dancer instead of Lifebuoy; or jettison a Passenger worth 1 point together with Rats to buy Maid; or they could have just skipped the buying phase and wait for another turn to draw more cards and eventually use them to buy Lady or Tycoon.

The second player **draws 4 cards**; the third player and **every player after draws 5** on default (cards like Fisherman played on board can alter the number even during the Cruise phase).

Here comes another **important change compared to the Sinking phase**. Once the player shall draw a card, but the deck is out of cards, shuffle the discard pile (water) and make it a new deck. In Cruise, jettisoning does not represent sacrificing the cards for good.

Another rule change is the **card limit in hand**. At the end of their turn, a player must not have more cards in hand than **5**. The player chooses which cards they keep, the discarded cards go to water.

Cruise ends as soon as a player buys **Iceberg**. During the Sinking phase, the Iceberg has a point value of 10 and no special ability. Its buying price during Cruise is 20, though. For the additional 10 points, the player buys the advantage to start the Sinking. Also, ending the Cruise might be a strategic move. There is no limit for the number of cards in a deck; the players themselves determine how long Sinking would be by rushing up or postponing the purchase of Iceberg.

The Cruise phase also draws from a conflict of objectives:

You might be tempted to buy a lot of cheap cards to build a thicker deck that sinks longer. On the other hand, more expensive cards have also their advantages. Usually, they are more useful on board. Also, they allow for bigger purchases during the Cruise. A deck bloating with cheap cards can be slow in both phases of the game.

Buying cheap cards in the beginning of the Cruise may be a tactical mistake, however, in case you don't like any of the 5 random cards, you might invest couple of points to see the card that comes next. Also, you don't want your points to expire.

You might also decide to put some cheap cards such as passenger on board so that more valuable cards are being drawn more often. However, these passengers can eventually cause that playing cards becomes more expensive if you reach the 5 cards on board limit.

Always consider your strategy and the right balance of your deck.

How the game ends:

In case the number of cards in your deck goes to zero and at the same time you shall draw another card, it means the ship has sunk and you stop playing. All your cards **except for the cards on board** leave the game for good. The **cards on board are rescued and saved**. They cannot be targeted by any effects anymore. Count their values, they represent your **Victory score**.

Other players keep playing until they also cannot draw another card. Once all ships have sunk, the player(s) with the highest Victory score win.

Have fun

Differences between phases Summary:

Initial cards in hand:

In Cruise, there are zero cards in hand in the beginning.

In Sinking, there are 5 cards in hand in the beginning.

Drawing:

In Cruise, the first player draws 3 cards, the next player draws 4 cards and then each player draws 5 cards by default.

In Sinking, the first player draws no card, the next player draws 1 card, the next player draws 2 cards and then each player draws 3 cards by default.

Hand limit:

In Cruise, the hand limit is 5 cards at the end of a player's turn.

In Sinking, there is no hand limit.

Shop:

In Cruise, you can use points to buy new cards from shop or to play cards on board.

In Sinking, you can only use points to play cards on board. There is no shop.

Shuffling water:

In Cruise, if you shall draw a card and there are no cards left in your deck, shuffle all cards in your water and make it a new deck.

In Sinking, if you shall draw a card and there are no cards left in your deck, you stop playing, all your cards but those on board leave the game and the cards on board count into your Victory score.

Explanatory notes to cards:

Anchor:

Once you have played Anchor on board, you skip the drawing phase altogether. No modifiers are applied. In case you have Fisherman, Stoker or Tycoon on board, ignore them.

In your turn phase 4/5, you can decide to jettison Anchor to avoid further skipping of the upcoming drawing phases.

Arbiter:

As Arbiter is a green card (it has a passive effect), you must use its action at the end of your turn.

Situation 1: The most expensive card on any of the boards is Pirate (12).



Situation 2: The most expensive card on any of the boards are Steersman and Arbiter himself (7). Jettison them both.



In case of Iceberg and Lifeboat, consider the standard value (10) when deciding how expensive the card is.

Assistant:

When playing Assistant on board, put it on top of another of your cards on board.



In this case, Assistant is merged with Polka Dancer. Once merged, you cannot merge Assistant with another card. Both cards are counted in the board limit, this means you have 5 cards on board in this scenario. Playing another card on board would cost you double the standard cost.

In case an opponent's card attacks Polka Dancer, they must attack Assistant first.

When you tire Polka Dancer, draw 2 cards.

Band:

Band cannot be jettisoned either by your opponents or by yourself, unless you have 5 cards on your board. This means that you cannot use it for buying cards from Shop in Cruise (unless you have for example 4 Passengers and 1 Baby on board). Also, you cannot jettison it to gain points for playing cards on board (unless you have at least 5 cards on board).

It also means that neither can your opponent jettison Band from your board (e.g. using Fanatic), nor can you do it (e.g. using Profiteer); Band cannot even be jettisoned from your hand by Saboteur or from your deck by Torpedo – unless you have at least 5 cards on board (including Band if it on board). In case Band shall be jettisoned from your hand or deck, it will stay in your hand or deck respectively.

Bartender:

Let's assume that your opponent jettisons Seal (worth 5) to play Stoker (worth 5). By activating Bartender, you can prevent the Stoker from entering your opponent's board this turn. The Stoker goes back to your opponent's hand, however, the Seal has been jettisoned. The opponent still has 5 points at disposal that can be used for playing other cards than the Stoker.

In the rare case when your opponent has another copy of Stoker in their hand, they can play the copy.

Boogeyman:

You can have the opponents show you the cards in their hands in your turn or in theirs in case they interact with you. In combination with cards like Lady or Saboteur, you can effectively choose the card.

Caretaker:

It means you can tire red and violet cards in the same turn you play them on board.

Flapper:

The effect activates both when you jettison the card yourself (even though Flapper does not contribute point for playing/buying cards) and when Flapper is jettisoned in any other way (e.g. by Torpedo).

Iceberg, Lifeboat:

The point value of 10 applies in every situation except for buying the card.

In case you have Iceberg/Lifeboat on board at the end of the game, it grants you 10 victory points.

Jack, Janitor, Chef, Maid etc:

The bottom deck means the lowest position in your deck.

Lifebuoy:

Lifebuoy stops only the effect targeting you, not the whole action (compare with Ship Guard). This means that you can stop a passive effect too, such as Tycoon's.

Lifeguard:

In this situation, Lifeguard is the 5th card on your board. You can play one more card without multiplying its price. Also, playing the card is discounted by 1. This allows you to play a Passenger for free. The next Passenger would cost 1 to play ($1*2 - 1$). The minimum price of playing cards is 0.



Lockdown:

Lockdown itself is one of the 5 cards; it also gets discarded.

Navigator:

You can view the 2 top cards in your deck any time, including during your opponent's action such as of Burglar. This might help you decide whether to stop the action by a defensive card such as Ship Guard.

In case you have Steersman on board as well, you can view and rearrange the top 5 cards in your deck any time.

In the rare occasion when you have two Navigators and a Steersman, you can view and rearrange top 7 cards. 2 Navigators without a Steersman do not add up to their own abilities though. 2 Steersmen also do not add up to their own abilities.

Proletarian:

The player(s) who must jettison their card choose which card.

Rose:

Rose always goes on your board no matter the way she was jettisoned. If you jettison her to gain her points for playing/buying cards, immediately put her on board. If Rose was the 5th card added to your board this way, the card you want to play will be twice as expensive to play.

You can even combine Rose with Profiteer and jettison her each turn.

Seal:

In case you jettison for example Pirate (12 points), you can decide to jettison Seal with him and get 22 points (instead of 12 + 5).

You can also jettison Seal individually for her 5 points; that means that when you jettison Passenger and Seal, you gain 6 points.

In case you jettison Seal with a card and your opponent has Teacher, they can use her ability to pay for both the Seal and the other card. In such case, the price the player with the Teacher shall pay for Seal is 5 no matter the price of the other card.

Ship Guard:

Ship Guard's effect stops the whole action. In case Ship Guard stops an effect of Saboteur who attacks multiple opponents, none of the opponents is affected by Sabouter.

Ship Guard can stop any action that requires tiring of a card. The action does not have to impact you, and it does not have to have a negative effect.

Steersman:

See Navigator.

Steward:

In case you opponent attacks a card on your board, you can tire Steward. A card on your board is still being attacked; however, you select the target, not your opponent. When your opponent attacks a card in your hand, by using Steward, you can select the card in your hand. When your opponent attacks a card in your deck, by using Steward, you can select the card in your deck (in

this case, you typically cannot see the cards' faces, unless you have Navigator or Steersman on board.

Storyteller:

Your opponents repeat the whole action, meaning they can decide for themselves whether to put the card on their board or to the bottom of their deck.

Stowaway:

In case there are 5 or more cards on your board, the price for playing Stowaway on your opponent's board multiplies.

The number of cards on your opponent's board does not affect the price you need to pay.

Teacher:

In case there are 5 or more cards on your board, the price you need to pay multiplies following the standard rules.

Technician:

Technician himself might be among the cards you decide to move.

Torpedo:

In case you don't have any card in your hand, Torpedo cannot be tired/used.

Tycoon:

You can decide whether you draw first from your opponent's deck or from your own. Typically, it does not make any difference, however, you can end your Sinking by failing to draw a card from your own deck. In this case, you can still harm your opponent.

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