Animanize

Designer: 無界 (Mukai)
Players: 3-4; Length: 30-45 minutes; Ages: 10+

Recently, the World Animal Congress (WAC) decided to hold a World Exposition for Animals. As part of the entertainment, a large circus will perform. You are the organizers of the show and have been asked to assemble the members of the circus and put together a plan for the performance.

We would like to make it a great success with the help of animals with unusual skills that can be found somewhere in the world. However, it is not advisable to gather them together unnecessarily. The pride of these animals can cause a brawl if the backstage area is too small. Moreover, the mood of the lion, famous for his influence, may upset your plans.

OBJECTIVE: Animanize is a slightly maniacal trick-taking card game played over several rounds. The objective of the players is to collect a "reasonable" number of animal cards to become members of a circus.

COMPONENTS: 36 number cards (1-9 in each of red, blue, yellow, and green); 8 animal cards (numbered 2-9); 2 lion cards; 1 summary card; 36 scoring chips; 1 start player marker

PREPARATION: Place the summary where everyone can see it. The person who has had a pet the longest receives the start player marker and is responsible for dealing the cards.

GAME FLOW: The game is played over a number of rounds, each consisting of 5 phases. These rounds are repeated until the game ends.

(1) Deal the Cards: Shuffle all the cards face down and place four cards face down in the center of the table for three players and two cards face down for four players. The remaining cards are dealt equally to each player. The cards dealt are considered to be a player's hand.

(2) Discard Cards From Your Hand: Beginning with the starting player and proceeding clockwise, each player may discard cards from their hand once. A player places any number of cards from their hand face down in the center of the table and mixes them with any cards already there. It is a good idea to remember how many cards you discarded. It is possible to discard none or all of your cards.

(3) Card Redistribution: After all players have discarded their cards, shuffle all the cards in the center of the table together. Deal out the cards so that each player has 14 cards in hand for three players and 11 cards in hand for four players. In other words, deal out the same number of cards to each player as were discarded earlier. The remaining cards are put aside, face down.

(4) Card Play: The start player begins the first trick. A trick is each person playing one card and the determination of a winner.

The first player plays a card of their choice face up in front of themselves. The color of this card is called the lead color. In clockwise order, the other players each choose a card from their hand to play face up in front of themselves; if they have any cards of the same color as the lead color, they must choose one of those. If they cannot follow the lead suit, they may play any card.

If the trick is lead with an animal or lion card, there is no lead color defined yet. As such, the next player may play any card from their hand. It is the first numbered card played to a trick which defines the lead color.

Animal Cards - Only one animal card (purple) may be played per trick. In other words, if another player has already played an animal card to a trick, no one else may play one to the trick. If it is your turn to play, you only have animal cards left in your hand, and another player has already played an animal this trick, you are eliminated from the hand. (More on that later.)

Lion Cards - A lion may be played at anytime, regardless of any following suit rules. Additionally, a lion can be played to a trick where another lion has already been played.

Determining the Winner of a Trick: After each person has played a card, the winner of the trick is determined as follows.

1. The person who played the strongest lion card. A person who plays a lion card always wins a trick; if both lions are played to the same trick, the one who played it later wins.
2. The person who played the highest ranked card of either the lead suit or the animals. If it is a tie, the animal card wins.

The winner of a trick collects all of the cards played to the trick and places them in a face down pile in front of themselves. If they win additional tricks they should stagger the piles so that the number of tricks won can be counted. If there are animal cards in the tricks, set them next to the pile face up.

After the winner is determined, the next trick begins with that player.

(5) Score Calculation: When a player is eliminated or when all players have played all of their cards, each players calculates their score by summing the following:

- 1 point for each trick won
- Score points equal to the face value of the animal cards won

Then, check to make sure a player's score has not exceed the brawl limit (20 points for a 3 player game, and 16 points for a 4 player game). If a player has not exceeded the brawl limit, they take chips equal to their points; if they have exceeded the limit, they do not earn any points; actually, they lose points equal to the difference between the points they earned and the brawl limit. (Players cannot have a net score below 0.)

ELIMINATIONS: If a player cannot play a card on their turn (because they only have animal cards remaining and an animal card has already been played to the trick), the trick is interrupted, the trick does not resolve, and the players move on to scoring. The eliminated player does not participate in the normal scoring; instead, they lose 1 point for each animal card in their hand. Other players calculate their scores as usual.

NEXT ROUND: Pass the start player marker to the left and play another round.

END OF THE GAME: The game ends when someone has earned chips equal to the goal (60 points for 3 players, or 48 points for 4 players) or each player has been the start player twice. The player with the most points wins.