Engine

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A simple tableau-based engine building game for 2-4 players.

Use playing cards to play the game.

There are 2 additional units in the game: gold and victory point. To represent them, use this counter for each players: my-engine-counter.vercel.app.

Starting

At start, shuffle the cards. Hand each players 3 cards and 3 golds.

Each players choose 1 card from their hand to be built on their tableau for free.

Gameplay

Each turn, active players must:

1. Choose one suit.

2. Trigger the basic action for that suit.

3. Activate all cards in the tableau with the same suit as the chosen one, from left to right, top to bottom. Simultaneously, other players also activate their own tableau.

4. End turn.

Rules

- At the start of the game, if by any chance, a player gets 3 tradeoff cards (Jack, Queen, King), then they should reshuffle the deck with their starter cards and take another 3. Repeat if it's happening again.

- Cards need to be built on the tableau to be useful.

- Building a card always costs gold.

- Every players activate all cards in their tableau of the chosen suit in that round.

- Active player can activate a whole stack even if other cards in the stack doesn't match the suit.

- Other players can only activate cards with the same suit.

- Player can only build a 3×3 tableau. The starting card doesn't necessarily have to be the center.

- If tableau is full, replace one of the stack with a cost of 5 golds. If player doesn't have a sufficient gold, pay the rest with victory points.

- Cards stacking can be used to free slots and optimize card activation. The maximum number of cards in a stack is 3.

- With card stacking, it is theoretically possible to have a total of 27 cards in your tableau.

- Instant cards can be activated at any time during the turn. They are discarded immediately from the player's hand upon activation. They can't be built on the tableau.

- Player can only activate 1 instant card per turn.

- When instant card is active, player can then activate all cards in the tableau with the same suit as the played instant card. This takes effect immediately.

Endgame

Game ends when:

- The deck is exhausted, or

- A player gained ≥ 40 victory points during the game.

When one of those condition is met, all players may still activate their tableau first. Instant cards are also still playable. However, no more turn is available afterwards.

Here are the sources of victory points:

- Total golds / 3 (rounded down) = victory points.

- The base cost of the cards in the tableau / 2 (rounded up) = victory points.

- Total victory points gained during the game

Player with the highest victory points wins the game. If tied, player with the most cards in their tableau wins.

References

Basic Action

Suit	Action
Diamond	Draw 3 cards. Choose 2 and discard the rest
Club	Gain 3 golds
Heart	Gain 1 victory point
Spade	Build 1 card with half its base cost, rounded up

Engine cards

Card	Base Cost	Action
A	1 gold	Activate 1 stack on the same column or row in the tableau. Cannot be daisy-chained
2	2 golds	Gain 2 golds
3	3 golds	Draw 1 card
4	4 golds	Build 1 card with a flat price of 4 golds or 4 cards
5	5 golds	Stack 1 card
6	6 golds	Stack 1 card on top of another card with the same suit. When stacking, gain victory points equal to the final stack
7	7 golds	Build 1 card with its base cost. Gain 2 victory points when building
8	8 golds	Pay 3 golds to draw 1 card and gain 2 victory points
9	9 golds	Pay 3 cards in hand to gain 2 golds and 2 victory points

Card	Base Cost	Action
10	10 golds	Gain 1 victory point

Instant cards

Card	Base Cost	Action
Jack	-1 victory point	Draw 4 cards
Queen	-2 victory points	Gain 6 golds
King	-3 victory points	Take 2 engine cards from the discard pile

Example Game

Legend

Symbol	Meaning
A	Ace
J	Jack
Q	Queen
K	King
S	Spade
H	Heart
C	Club
D	Diamond
G	Gold
VP	Victory Point

Game Sequence

This sequence can also be simulated.

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
0	None	Hand 8S, AS, and 7C. Build 7C as their starter card	Hand 7S, 3D, and 3S. Build 3D as their starter card
1	Player 1	Choose D as their action suit. Draw 7H, QS, 6S. 7H is discarded, and the rest are kept.	Activate 3D, draw JS.
2	Player 2		Choose S as their action suit. Build 3S west of 3D. Pay (3/2)G rounded up, which is 2G. Activate 3S, draw KC.
3	Player 1	Choose D as their action suit. Draw 4C, 10H, JC. JC is discarded, and the rest are kept.	Activate 3D, draw 9C.
4	Player 2	Activate 7C, build AS east of 7C. Pay 1G. Gain 2VP	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G.
5	Player 1	Use instant card QS. Pay 2VP and gain 6G. Free activation for all S cards. Activate AS → 7C, build 4C east of AS. Pay 4G. Gain 2VP. Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Skip 7C. Activate 4C, build 8S	

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
		south of AC. Pay 4G.	
6	Player 2		Choose D as their action suit. Draw 9D, 10D, and 5C. 5C is discarded, and the rest are kept. Skip 3D.
7	Player 1	Choose S as their action suit. Build 6S south of 8S. Pay 3G. Activate AS → 6S, stack 8S on top of AS. Gain 2VP. Skip 8S. Activate 6S, stack 6S on top of 8S. Gain 3VP.	Activate 3S, draw 6H.
8	Player 2	Skip 7C. Skip 4C.	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G.
9	Player 1	Choose D as their action suit. Draw 10C, 9S, and QD. Discard 9S. Keep the rest	Skip 3D.
10	Player 2	Skip AS. Skip 8S. Activate 6S, stack 4C on top of 7C. Gain 2VP.	Choose S as their action suit. Build 9C west of 3S. Pay 5G. Activate 3S, draw 6D
11	Player 1	Use instant card QD. Pay 2VP and gain 6G. Choose C as their action suit.	Activate 9C, pay with 9D, 6D, and JS. Gain 2G and 2VP.

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
		Gain 3G. Skip 7C. Activate 4C, build 10C east of 6S. Pay 4G. Activate 10C. Gain 1VP.	
12	Player 2	Skip 7C. Skip 4C. Activate 10C. Gain 1VP.	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Skip 9C.
13	Player 1	Choose D as their action suit. Draw 8C, KS, 2C. Discard KS. Keep the rest.	Activate 3D, draw 5S.
14	Player 2	Skip AS. Skip 8S. Activate 6S, stack 10C on top of 4C. Gain 3VP.	Choose S as their action suit. Build 7S south of 3D. Pay 4G. Activate 3S. Draw AH. Activate 7S. Build AH south of 3S. Pay 1G. Gain 2VP.
15	Player 1	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Activate 7C, build 2C east of 6S. Pay 2G. Gain 2VP. Skip 4C. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G.	Skip 9C.
16	Player 2		Choose D as their action suit. Draw 7D, 4S, and AC. Discard 7D. Keep the rest.

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
			Activate 3D, draw QH. Use instant card QH. Pay 2VP. Gain 6G. Free activation for all H cards. Activate AH → 7S, build 6H south of AH. Pay 6G. Gain 2VP. Activate 6H, stack 7S on top of 3S. Gain 2VP.
17	Player 1	Choose D as their action suit. Draw 6C, 4D, 8H. Discard 8H. Keep the rest.	Activate 3D, draw 3C.
18	Player 2	Skip 7C. Skip 4C. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G.	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Activate 9C, pay with AC, 4S, and KC to gain 2G and 2VP.
19	Player 1	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Activate 7C, build 6C south of 10C. Pay 6G. Gain 2VP. Activate 4C, build 8C east of 6C. Pay 4G. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G. Activate 6C, stack 8C on top of 2C. Gain 2VP. 8C cannot be activated now as its	Skip 9C.

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
		position has changed.	
20	Player 2		Choose H as their action suit. Gain 1VP. Activate AH → 3S, 7S. Activate 3S, draw 10S. Activate 7S, build 5C south of 9C. Pay 5G. Gain 2VP. Activate 6H, stack 5S on top of 7S. Gain 3VP.
21	Player 1	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Skip 7C. Activate 4C, build 10H west of 6C. Pay 4G. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G. Activate 8C, pay 3G to draw 2S and gain 2VP. Activate 6C, stack 6C on top of 8C. Gain 3VP.	Skip 9C.
22	Player 2	Skip AS. Skip 8S. Skip 6S.	Choose S as their action suit. Build 3C south of 3D. Pay 2G. Activate 3S, draw AD. Skip 7S. Activate 5S, stack 3C on top of 3D.
23	Player 1	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G.	Skip 9C. Activate 3C, draw 9H.

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
		Activate 7C, build 2S south of 10C. Pay 2G. Gain 2VP. Skip 4C. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G. Activate 8C, pay 3G to draw QC and gain 2VP. Skip 6C.	
24	Player 2	Activate 10H, gain 1VP.	Choose H as their action suit. Gain 1VP. Activate AH → 3S, 7S, 5S. Activate 3S, draw 2H. Skip 7S. Activate 5S, stack 9C on top of AH. Activate 9C, pay with 10S, 9H, and AD to gain 2G and 2VP. Skip 6H.
25	Player 1	Choose C as their action suit. Gain 3G. Skip 7C. Skip 4C. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G. Activate 8C, pay 3G to draw 5D and gain 2VP. Skip 6C.	Activate 3C, draw 5H. Skip 9C.
26	Player 2	Activate 10H, gain 1VP.	Choose H as their action suit. Gain 1VP.

Round	Active Player	Player 1	Player 2
			Activate AH → 3S, 7S, 5S. Activate 3S, draw 4H. Activate 7S, build 2H east of 9C. Pay 2G. Gain 2VP. Activate 5S, stack 2G on top of 3C. Activate 9C, pay with 10D, 5H, and 4H to gain 2G and 2VP. Skip 6H.
27	Player 1	Choose H as their action suit. Gain 1VP. Activate 10H, gain 1VP. Use instant card QC. Pay 2VP and gain 6G. Free activation for all C cards. Activate 7C, build 4D south of 6C. Pay 4G. Gain 2VP. Activate 4C, build 5D south of 4D. Pay 4G. Activate 10C, gain 1VP. Activate 2C, gain 2G. Skip 8C. Activate 6C, stack 5D on top of 4D. Gain 2VP.	Activate 2H, gain 2G. Skip AH.

The game is over, as player 1 has obtained 44VP on round 27.

Here is the total victory point calculation:

Category	Player 1	Player 2
Golds	= Rounded down (2/3) = 0	= Rounded down (4/3) = 1
Tableau	= Rounded up (7+4+10+1+8+6+2+8+6+2+10+4+5) / 2 = Rounded up (73/2) = 37	= Rounded up (3+7+5+3+3+2+1+9+6) / 2 = Rounded up (39/2) = 20
In-game victory points	= 44	= 24
Total	= 0 + 37 + 44 = 81	= 1 + 20 + 24 = 45

Player 1 wins the game with 81 VP!