

How to Play Avalon (The Resistance)

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Avalon (The Resistance) Overview

Avalon is a spin-off game of The Resistance, a party game that challenges players to deduce one another's identities. You may have played similar games such as Werewolf and Mafia. Those titles have their merits, but Avalon works great because players don't die—meaning no one gets left out of the fun. To get the most out of this awesome game, today we'll learn all about the rules and characters of [the Resistance: Avalon edition!](#)

How Many Players Are Needed?

You'll need at least five participants to play Avalon. Before the game begins, each player will receive a card determining which side they're on, good or evil. Make sure to keep this card and knowledge to yourself. The chart below details how many characters will be good and how many will be evil based on the total number of players.

Some characters have special abilities, but for basic games, it's recommended for only Merlin on the good side and Assassin on the evil team to utilize their skills. We'll get to those soon. Most players need only know whether they're good or evil.

Total Number of Players	5	6	7	8	9	10
Good (Blue background)	3	4	4	5	6	6
Evil (Red background)	2	2	3	3	3	4

Starting the Game

Great! Everyone knows their own character. Players should sit in a circle so everyone can face each other. Then, one player (it doesn't matter who) will give out the following instructions in order. Be sure to pause for at least a few

seconds between each statement.

1. Everyone, extend your right arm into the circle and close your eyes.
2. Minions of Mordred (evil players) only; open your eyes so you may know each other.
3. Minions of Mordred, close your eyes.
4. Merlin, open your eyes.
5. Minions of Mordred, extend your right thumb into the air so Merlin will know you.
6. Minions of Mordred, lower your thumbs, and Merlin, close your eyes.
7. Everyone, open your eyes (and you can lower your arms now, of course).

Essentially, what these instructions have done is let the evil players know who each other is without revealing themselves to the good players. Also, Merlin knows the identity of the evil characters, but they do not know who Merlin is. This is Merlin's special ability: he immediately discovers who secretly serves Mordred. However, Merlin must be careful with this knowledge: at the end of the game, if the evil team can guess which player is Merlin, they can steal the win. More on that later.

Voting for Mission Teams

Avalon now truly begins! The player who reads the instructions aloud is the first "leader," who will propose the first mission team. Once the leader has chosen players, everyone in the group will vote on the team using the included "pass" or "reject" tokens.

If a majority of players approve the team, the team members do the mission, and each is given a succeed and fail card. These cards are handed face-down to the mission leader, who shuffles them face-down, so no one knows who turned in what. They are then revealed to see if the mission succeeded or not (see "Rounds of Play" below for more details). The next mission team will be proposed by the person clockwise to the first team leader.

If a majority of players reject the team, or it's a tie, the members do not do the mission. Instead, leadership passes clockwise, and the new leader proposes a new team. It's voted on again, and the process repeats until a team is agreed upon.

Note that if five teams in a single round are rejected in a row, the evil team automatically wins the entire game. Gotta agree on *something* here, Arthur servants.

The chart below details how many players the leader will propose for a mission based on which round it is.

Total Number of Players	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mission 1	2	2	2	3	3	3

Missions with asterisks () require two "fail" cards for the mission to fail.*

Total Number of Players	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mission 2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Mission 3	2	4	3	4	4	4
Mission 4	3	3	4*	5*	5*	5*
Mission 5	3	4	4	5	5	5

Rounds of Play

Rounds consist of the group selecting specific players to go on missions. Good players, servants of Arthur, must put in a "success" card when selected for a mission. Evil players, servants of Mordred, can either put in a "fail" or a "success" card. If all players selected for a mission put in a success card, the mission proceeds smoothly, and the good side is closer to winning. However, a single fail card will automatically sabotage a mission and give the point to Mordred's servants instead. If three total missions succeed, the good team wins; if three fail, evil claims victory.

Why would a servant of Mordred put in a "success" card? True, it will help the good players, hindering evil's chances of winning; however, it can be useful as an attempt to convince others of one's innocence. And remember, if a fail card comes up, you know for a fact that someone on that team is evil.

Ending the Game/Assassin's Role

Avalon can take as few as three rounds or as many as five. If three missions fail before three succeed, evil automatically wins. Well done, Mordred servants. Feel free to reveal yourselves and gloat. If three missions succeed before three fail, evil has one last chance to win. The evil players may talk to each other (no point in hiding now) and discuss which player they believe Merlin is. Then, the evil character Assassin picks one good participant, and they reveal their player card. If that card is Merlin, evil has stolen the win! If that card is not Merlin, good claims victory!

Other Characters

You now know how to play a basic game of Avalon! Merlin and Assassin are the only unique participants in basic games, but other characters have optional abilities to liven things up. These units are recommended for larger groups and can help balance things if one side consistently wins. Let's take a quick look at these unique servants.

Percival (Good)

Percival, a loyal servant of Arthur, is able to learn Merlin's identity at the beginning of the game by having Merlin stick his thumb in the air. Merlin—and everyone else—does not learn Percival's identity. This character can help cover for Merlin and will balance the game toward the good team.

Morgana (Evil)

Morgana, a minion of Mordred, deceives Percival. During the beginning round, where Merlin puts his thumb in the air to reveal himself to Percival, Morgana also raises her own thumb, confusing Percival as to which "Merlin" to trust. Morgana balances the game in favor of evil, and her effect, of course, only works when Percival's ability is agreed to be used.

Oberon (Evil)

Unlucky you. You've drawn the Oberon card, who, despite being a servant of Mordred, is somewhat of a hindrance. Oberon does not reveal himself to evil players, and also they do not reveal themselves to him. Oberon still raises his thumb for Merlin to see, however. Oberon makes the other evil players have to deduce one of their own's identities, while Oberon does the same with them. It balances the game in favor of the good team.

Lady of the Lake Token

Lady of the Lake is a unique token for more advanced play. If used, give this token to the player counter-clockwise of the initial leader in addition to a character. (Remember, Lady of the Lake doesn't replace a character, so it can be given to either a good or bad player).

At the end of the second mission, the player with the Lady (player one) chooses another player (player two) and forces them to hand over a generic blue or red "alignment" card. Player two must hand over the correct alignment; they cannot lie. However, only players one and two see the card, so either or both may lie about the information to deceive players who did not see the actual alignment card. Then, player two receives the Lady token. At the end of the third mission, the process repeats; player two picks a new player (player three) and has them hand over an alignment card, then player two gives player three the Lady token. At the end of the fourth mission, player three repeats the process one last time.

Players cannot select someone who already possessed the token. Using the above example, players two and three would not be able to have player one reveal himself, and player three also could not select player two.

All in all, the Lady token complicates play and can skew the game in favor of good or evil, depending on the players who receive it. Use it to create more hectic sessions.

Final Tips

We've now covered both normal and advanced sessions. Experiment to find which style you prefer using. You can even come up with your own characters or unique rules. My friends and I sometimes play with our custom-made

Arthur, who has the ability to negate Assassin's guessing of Merlin by successfully guessing every player's character. Mordred's team should also strive to only put one evil person in; having two or more runs the risk of everyone putting in a fail card, which gives the loyal knights too much information; a single fail card will suffice.

Now grab some friends and have some fun!

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Comments

Leon on September 21, 2018:

Well written!