MERLIN

A game by
Stefan Feld & Michael Rieneck
for 2-4 players, ages 14 and up

Basic Game Contents

Shared game materials:

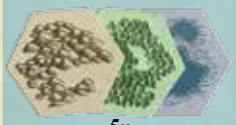
- 1 Game board



- 2 Terrain frames – *1x top / 1x bottom*



- 24 Terrain tiles



5x mountain, wood, lake



3x tower on mountain, wood, lake

- 55 Mission cards



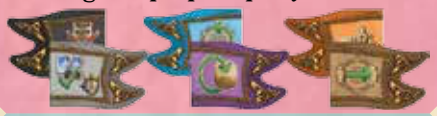
- 4 Starting tiles



- 36 Shields – *6 per principality*



- 36 Flags – *6 per principality*



- 36 Construction materials – *6 per principality*



- 24 Traitors – *4 per principality*



- 11 Apples



- 1 Grail & 1 Excalibur



- 1 Merlin & 4 Merlin dice – *white*



- 1 Game round marker



- 1 First Player marker



- 1 Rules booklet

Game materials for each player *(in the four player colors: Blue, yellow, red & green)*:

- 1 Castle board



- 7 Manors



- 3 Merlin's Staffs



- 1 Knight



- 4 Henchman tokens

Before your first game, carefully fix the henchmen stickers to the corresponding tokens.



Lady-in-waiting, Shield-bearer, Builder, Flag-bearer

- 3 Player dice



- 7 Influence counters



- 1 Scoring marker &
- 1 100-point-marker



Module contents

- 4 Extra boards – *1 per player color*
- 16 Seals – *4 per player color*



Setting up the Game

1) Place the **game board** in the center of the playing area.

2) Put the **game round marker** on the first space of the game round track.

3) **Merlin** starts on the Dragon Principality's space of the rondel (black).

4) Assemble **the Grail and Excalibur** and put them on their assigned spaces.

5) Sort **the flags, pieces of construction material, and shields,** and assign them to their corresponding principalities.

6) Place **the apples** on their designated space.

7) Shuffle **the mission cards** and place the deck face down on the game board. Reveal the top three cards and place them face up next to the game board, forming a display.



Player materials:

A) Each player chooses one of the player colors and takes the following materials in that color.
1 castle board, 1 knight, 4 henchmen, 6 influence counters, 3 Merlin's staffs, 7 manors, 1 scoring marker, 1 100-point-marker, and 3 personal dice.
Each player also takes 1 apple and 1 Merlin die.

All players place their scoring marker on the "0/100" space of the scoring track, and stack their manors next to the environs. The remaining components are assigned to each player's castle board as shown in the illustration. For the time being, each player should keep their knight next to their castle board and place their 100-point-marker next to the game board.





8) Mix **the traitor tiles** face-down and place them on the indicated spaces on the game board in three separate face-down stacks.

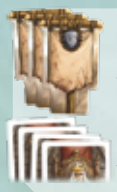


9) The environs: Next to the game board, construct the environs – a closed surface of terrain tiles bordered by the two terrain frames – in the following fashion: Mix all of the terrain tiles face-down. Then, randomly arrange the terrain tiles in rows of six face-up tiles each, enclosed by the two terrain frames. ***Note:*** *in a 2- or 3- player game, before mixing the terrain tiles, remove 1 tile each of mountain, wood, and lake, both with and without tower, and put these tiles back in the game box.*

10) Randomly select a starting player, who then takes **the first player marker.**



B) Shuffle **the starting tiles** and deal one to each player. Then, all players place their knight on the designated principality space of the action rondel. Each player takes the flag, shield, and construction material of the depicted principality from the game board, storing it on their own castle board. Each player places one of his influence markers on the depicted principality. Return the starting tiles to the game box.



C) Now, **each player** takes **3 traitors** from the game board, attaching them to the assigned spaces of their castle board. Traitors with identical shields are placed on top of each other. **Each player draws a hand of 4 mission cards** from the deck.



D) Finally, all players **roll their 4 dice** and place them on their castle board. In case a player rolls a triplet or a quadruplet, they must re-roll all their dice, if necessary several times, until the result shows no triplet or quadruplet.

Game Concept and Object of the Game

King Arthur *is looking for a worthy successor to his throne. Together with Merlin, he seeks the best candidate from among the Knights of the Round Table. Each player assumes the role of a Knight of the Round Table and attempts to win King Arthur's favor.*

By using their dice, the players move Merlin or their own knight on the action rondel. The space where they end the movement specifies their possible action.



Each player controls the movement of their own knight, whereas Merlin can be moved by all players.

Three scorings take place during the course of the game.



The players have to repel the traitors and can gain victory points for their constructed manors in the environs, for their influence in principalities, and for their henchmen placed on the game board.





Additionally, the players may complete missions in order to gain further victory points during the game. After six rounds, the player who has most effectively used their dice to navigate the rondel to complete missions and take advantage of the interim scorings, thus accumulating the most victory points, will become King Arthur's successor.

Playing the Game

A game of Merlin is played over 6 game rounds. Each game round begins with the First Player taking a turn, followed by the other players in a clockwise direction. During their turn, the active player selects one of their dice and moves their knight, or Merlin, a number of spaces on the action rondel equal to the number of pips shown on the die, and then performs the action of the space where the movement ends. Then, the next player takes their turn, and play proceeds. The game round ends after each player has taken 4 turns, using up all their dice. A scoring takes place after the second, the fourth, and the sixth game round. The players gain additional victory points during these scorings. The game ends after the final scoring at the end of the sixth game round.

Details of a game round:

The active player selects one die from their castle board, and places it in the center of the game board without changing the number of pips. Depending on the selected die, they proceed as follows:

One of the player's personal dice

The player advances their knight on the action rondel by the same number of spaces as pips on their die, **in clockwise direction.**



The white Merlin die

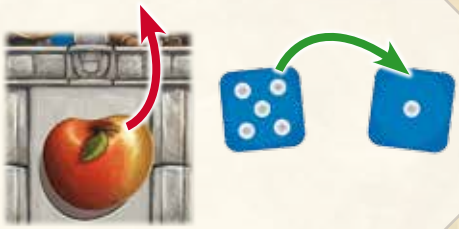
The player advances Merlin on the action rondel a number of spaces equal to the pips shown on the Merlin die, in the direction of their choice – **clockwise or counter-clockwise.**



Note: *The number of figures on a single action space is not limited.*

The apples

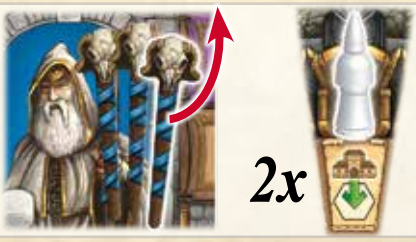
The active player may expend an apple from their castle board in order to change the facing of the selected die to any side, 1-6. They move the corresponding figure by that new number of spaces, and return the apple to the general supply on the game board.



Then, the player performs the action of the space where their movement ended.

The staffs of Merlin

If the player moved Merlin, they may choose to expend one of their Merlin's staff tokens, removing it from their castle board and returning it to the game box. If they do so, they can then repeat their action for the turn immediately.



Additionally, a player may complete up to one of their mission cards per turn.
After the active player has completed their action (or forfeited it), their turn ends, and the next player takes their turn. The round ends when no player has any dice left. ***Note:*** *A player may not skip their turn; they must select one die, place it in the center of the game board and move the appropriate figure. However, they may forfeit the action of the space.*

The actions of the action rondel:



Principality spaces: (x6)

The player chooses one of their henchmen (Lady-in-waiting, Shield-bearer, Flag-bearer or Builder) from their castle board or from any of the other 5 principalities and places her or him on the corresponding space in the principality at which they have ended their movement. If that space is occupied by the henchman of another player, that henchman is returned to the castle board of its owner.



Depending on which henchman the player has chosen, she or he now "does their duty":

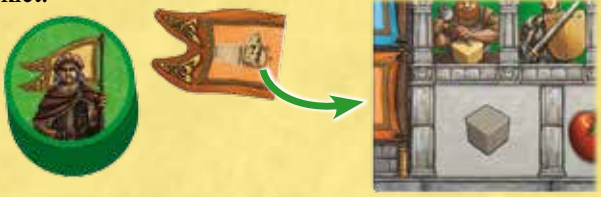
Builder: The player claims one piece of construction material from that principality, if available, and stores it on their castle board. ***Note:*** *Construction material is needed to build manors in the environs.*



Shield-bearer: The player claims one shield from that principality, if available, and stores it on their castle board. ***Note:*** *Shields are needed to fight off traitors.*



Flag-bearer: The player claims one flag from that principality, if available, and attaches it to their castle board. Flags can be used to perform various additional, special actions during the player's turn. You will find a detailed explanation of these special actions on the last page of this booklet.



Note: *Flags override certain basic rules of the game, thus providing the player with specific advantages.*

Lady-in-waiting: The player takes one of their influence counters from their castle board, if available, and places it on that principality. It is added to existing counters there, if any.



Note: *Influence counters give the players more options when performing certain actions and may be worth victory points during scorings.*



Victory point spaces: (x4)

Shield, flag, construction material: The player gains one victory point for each shield, flag, or piece of construction material on their castle board, depending on the space.



Influence counter: The player gains one victory point for each of their influence counters that has been placed in the principalities.



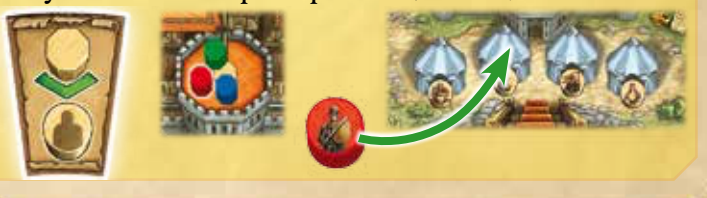


Influence spaces: (x4)

Flag, construction material, shield: Depending on the space, the player claims one shield, one flag, or one piece of construction material from any **one principality** where they have at least **one** influence counter, and places it on their castle board.



Henchman: The player chooses **a principality** in which they have at least one influence counter, and sends one of their henchmen there to perform his duty. The henchman may come from their castle board, or from any of the other 5 principalities. ***(see above).***



Excalibur: (x1)

Excalibur: The player claims Excalibur from the game board or from the player currently holding it, and places it next to their castle board. Then, the player chooses one of the traitors attached to their castle board, and puts the tile on the discard pile.



Note: *Excalibur may be worth additional victory points for its holder during scorings.*

The Grail: (x1)

The Grail: The player claims the Grail from the game board or from the player currently holding it, and places it next to their castle board. Then, the player takes one apple from the game board, and stores it on their castle board.



Note: *The Grail may be worth additional victory points for its holder during scorings.*

Relocate one henchman: (x1)

The player chooses one of their henchmen from any principality and relocates that henchman to the next principality in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction. Then, that henchman does her or his duty *(see page 5)*.



Example:
The red player moves his builder counter-clockwise onto the purple principality. There he does the action of the builder taking one purple construction material.

Exception: *If all of the player's henchmen are on the castle board currently, the player may choose one, and send her or him to a principality of their choice, where she or he will do their duty.*

Exchange spaces: (x2)

The player selects one shield, flag or piece of construction material from their castle board, and returns it to its principality of origin. Subsequently, they take one shield, flag or piece of construction material from any principality, storing it on their castle board.



Example: The player uses the exchange space to exchange the blue construction material from his castle board with an orange flag from the game board.

Mission spaces: (x2)

The player may discard up to two of their mission cards to the discard pile, and then draw the same number of cards from the display and/or draw pile. When a card is taken from the display, replenish it immediately. If the draw pile is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile to form the new draw pile.



Build a manor: (x3)



The player may build **one** manor in the environs. A manor can be built on any terrain tile not already occupied by a manor, provided the player has the required construction material stored on their castle board.

Required construction material:

Drawing a straight line from any terrain tile in all 6 directions, at least one of these lines will end at a frame and indicate a piece of construction material. One of these pieces is required to build a manor on that terrain tile. In most cases the player will have a choice between several pieces.



Example: A player can build a manor onto the red highlighted terrain tile by using a grey, orange or blue construction material.

The player returns one of the required pieces to the principality of its origin, and places one of their manors on that terrain tile. If the tile is showing a tower, the player may additionally claim one shield or one flag from any principality, or they may place one of their influence counters in any principality. A player may build no more than 7 manors in the environs. Manors constructed in the environs may be worth victory points during scoring.



Example: The green player pays his grey construction material and builds a manor on the water terrain tile which depicts a tower. Having built on a tower, he then chooses a black shield from the game board and places it on his castle board.

Mission Cards:

The active player may resolve **up to one** of their mission cards at any time during their turn. Each mission card depicts the requirements needed on the upper left-hand side of the card. If the player meets all requirements of a card, they gain the victory points as shown in the shield in the upper right-hand corner of the card, and put the card on the discard pile. You will find a detailed description of the requirements on the last page of this booklet.



Important: *The player must **simply own** the shields, flags, construction material or influence counters needed to meet the requirements of a mission card, they do not have to expend these components.*

Example: The yellow player has all the requirements needed to resolve the 3-point mission card. He announces that he is completing the mission, places the card on the discard pile, and moves his scoring marker 3 spaces forward.

After a player has resolved one of their mission cards, they draw a new one at the end of their turn. They may take a card from the display or from the draw pile. When a card is taken from the display, replenish it immediately.

If the draw pile is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile to form the new draw pile.

End of a game round:

After all players have had four turns, the game round ends. All of the dice should be in the center of the game board at this time. The number of played game rounds determines what happens next. After the…

first game round:	Preparing the next game round		
second game round:	Scoring	&	Preparing the next game round
third game round:	Preparing the next game round		
fourth game round:	Scoring	&	Preparing the next game round
fifth game round:	Preparing the next game round		
sixth game round:	Scoring	&	End of the game

Preparing the next game round:

Each player picks up their 3 personal dice and 1 Merlin die, and then rolls them. If a player rolls 3 of a kind or four of a kind, they must re-roll all their dice, repeatedly if necessary, until the result shows no more than 2 of any given number. After rolling, the players place their dice on their castle boards, being careful not to change the facing of the dice.



The First Player passes the First player marker to the player on their left, who will be the First Player in the next game round.



Move the game round marker to the next space of the game round track.



Scoring:

The players gain victory points depending on their success in the 4 categories described below. They mark their victory points on the victory points track with their victory points marker. A marker landing on a space occupied by another marker is put on top of that marker. If a player's victory points marker passes the "100" space on the victory points track, that player takes a 100-point-marker and places it beside their castle board. At the end of the game, that player will add 100 points to their score.

1st Category: Traitors

a) First, the players need to repel the traitors in front of them. A traitor is repelled by returning the appropriate shield (as depicted on the traitor) from the player's castle board to the corresponding principality. The traitor is discarded.
A player loses 3 victory points for each traitor they could not repel. The traitors are discarded afterwards.



Excalibur: If a player has managed to repel all traitors and is currently holding Excalibur, they are awarded 3 additional victory points.





Example: The yellow player can only defeat two traitors with his shields. The blue traitor remains, so he has to move his scoring marker 3 spaces backward.

***Note:** If a player has to repel several traitors showing the same shield, they must expend one shield for each of these traitors.*

b) Then, each player draws 3 new traitors from the stacks. The traitors are attached to each player's castle board. If the traitor stacks are exhausted, mix the discard pile and form three new stacks.

2nd Category: Environs

The environs are considered to be divided into territories. A territory is a group of one or more terrain tiles of the same type that are connected. For each territory, victory points are awarded to the player who has the most manors there (more than any other single player). The number of victory points awarded for each territory is equal to the number of tiles in it. In the case of a tie for the most manors, the points are split equally between the tied players (rounding down). Nobody gains points for a territory that has no manors.





Example: The blue and the green player get the full victory points for their territories, since only they have built manors in them. 2VP for the blue player and 1VP for the green player. The red and the yellow player have both built 1 manor in the large forest territory, therefore they will split the victory points. Both receive 2VP. (5 ÷ 2 = 2 rounded down)

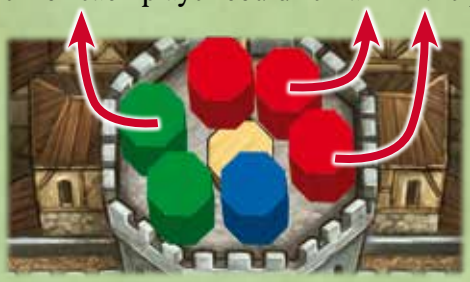
3rd Category: Influence

In each of the six principality, victory points are awarded to the player(s) with the most influence. Starting with the Dragon Principality (black), and continuing in clockwise direction, victory points are awarded for the influence in each principality, one after the other. The awarded points equal to the total of all influence counters in a principality. If one player owns more influence counters in the principality than any other single player, that player gains all these victory points. If two or more players are tied for the most counters, the total is divided by the number of tied players (rounded down), with each player gaining the resulting number of points. After a principality has been scored, all players who own more than 1 influence counter in that principality return all but 1 of their counters to their castle boards: this means that a maximum of 1 counter for each player could remain in the principality.



Example:

The yellow, blue and red player all have one influence in the black principality. They each gain 1VP. (3 ÷ 3 = 1)



Example:

The red player has more influence than the green and the blue player. Therefore earning all 6 VP.

4th Category: Henchman

Each player gains one victory point for each of their henchmen positioned in a principality. Henchmen on castle boards are worth no victory points.



Example: Green = 4VP | Blue = 3VP | Red = 3VP | Yellow = 1VP

The Grail: The player in possession of the grail can use it in one influence scoring in a principality where he is tied with other players to break the tie. He places the grail in that principality and takes all the points, the other players gain nothing. After all 6 principalities are scored that player takes back the grail.



Example: The yellow player places the holy grail in the orange principality, therefore winning the tie. He now gains 4 instead of 2 victory points.

This ends the scoring.

End of the game

The game ends after the sixth round. The players now gain additional victory points for the following:

Apples:

Each apple is worth 1 victory point for its owner.



Merlin's staffs:

Each staff of Merlin is worth 2 victory points for its owner.



Material:

For any 3 unused materials (shields, flags and/or construction material) on a player's castle board the player gains 1 victory point.



Example: The yellow player gains 1 victory point for his remaining 5 materials. (2 Flags, 2 construction materials and 1 shield)

The player with the most victory points is the winner of the game! In case of a tie, the tied players share the victory.

The special actions allowed by flags, and the descriptions of mission cards, can be found for easy reference on the last page of this booklet.

Module: King's favor

When resolving a mission card, the players now have the choice to either gain victory points for the card, as usual, or turn down the points in order to acquire a new, permanent ability. A player can gain up to 4 abilities in this fashion.

Changes during setting up the Game:

Additionally, each player takes one extra board plus 4 seals of their player color. The extra board is placed below each player's castle board, and the seals are kept next to the extra board.



Changes in playing the Game:

Each time a player resolves a mission card, they have two options:

Gain victory points:

The player gains the number of victory points shown on the card, as usual.



OR

The player learns an ability, depending on the card:

The henchman at the lower left corner of the card indicates the column of the extra board from which the player may adopt an ability, while the number of victory points of the card defines the row. A card worth 1 point allows the top row's ability only. A card worth 2 points allows the player to choose the top row's or the second row's ability, while with a card worth 3 points the player may choose any one of that column's abilities.



After the player has chosen an ability, they place one of their seals on it. This indicates that the ability is activated for the rest of the game. Once a player has activated 4 abilities on their extra board, they can't activate any more. Relocating seals that have already been placed is not allowed.



The abilities in detail:

+1 victory point (x4)

Each time the player resolves a mission card of this henchman, they gain one additional victory point, no matter if they gain victory points from the card or acquire a new ability.







Example: The player completes a mission card and gets 3VP. 2VP from the card and 1VP because he has gained the first ability of the builder.

Deployment to any principality (x4)

When moving their knight or Merlin to one of the 6 principalities, and choosing a henchman, the player may send that henchman to any principality of their choice. However, if the henchman had already been placed in a principality, they may not be re-placed in that same principality using this ability.







While the abilities in the third row are permanent, they can be used **no more than 3 times** during the game (once per scoring). To indicate that such an ability has been used, the player flips the seal face-down. This ability cannot be used again until a scoring takes place. After each scoring, the seals are flipped face-up, indicating that the ability can be used again.

Builder: Build two manors

When moving their knight or Merlin to a space which allows the building of a manor, the player may perform that action twice.







Important: A player may not use a staff of Merlin with this ability.

Shield-bearer: Repel traitor

The player may repel one traitor attached to their castle board without needing to own (and expend) the corresponding shield. The traitor is put on the discard pile. Additionally, the player is awarded 1 victory point.





Flag-bearer: Victory points for any elements

When moving their knight or Merlin to a victory points space, they may score any element of their choice – influence counters, shields, flags or their pieces of construction material, no matter which of these icons is shown on that space. Additionally the player is awarded 1 extra victory point.





Lady-in-waiting: Two actions

When moving their knight or Merlin to an influence space, the player may use this ability instead. One after the other, the player chooses 2 principalities in which he has at least 1 influence marker, and places one of his henchman there, performing his or her duty. The player may choose the same principality twice.



Important: A player may not use a staff of Merlin with this ability.

Special actions allowed by flags

Flags may be used at various times to perform special actions. While each flag allows 1 special action, a player may use as many flags as they want, and are able to, during their turn. After it has been used, a flag is returned to its principality of origin.



Repel traitors
The player may repel all the traitors attached to their castle board showing a certain shield, without needing to own (and expend) the corresponding shield(s). The player may repel just one, or many, traitors with this flag. The traitors are put on the discard pile.

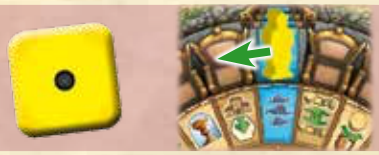




Missions
The player may resolve **2 mission cards** during their turn. If they do, they gain two additional victory points. The player draws two new mission cards at the end of their turn.

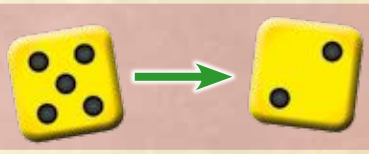


Backwards
The player may advance their knight on the action rondel in a **counter-clockwise** direction.





Turn one die
The player may turn one of their dice **upside-down**, before moving the figure.





Different action
After the player has moved a figure, they may perform the action of any other space occupied by another player's knight, instead of the action of the space where they landed with the figure.





Mirroring
After the player has moved their knight, they may place the knight on the opposite space of the action rondel, and perform the action of that space. The knight remains on that space and will be moved from that space onward in one of the upcoming turns.

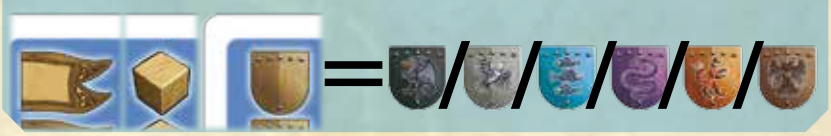


Requirements of mission Cards

Specific flags, construction material, shields:



Any kind of flags, shields, construction material:



Influence counter(s) in a particular principality:



Influence counter(s) in any principality:



Specific henchman in a particular principality:



Any two henchmen in a particular principality:



Two specific henchmen in any principality:



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