

EPHEMERIS[®]

A GAME OF ASTRONOMICAL STRATEGY

GAMES GUIDE

EPHEMERIS rules are simply based on the natural laws of our Solar System. 'Planet' pieces are coloured according to their 'orbit groups', either 'Inner Planet' or 'Outer Planet', and the playing board illustrates the constellations through which they move on the ecliptic path along with the Sun and Moon.

The object is to be the first player to position the Planets into the Zodiac signs which match the cards you are dealt at the start of the game. 'Overtaking Rules' form a strategy of blocking and bluffing, based on the planets' speeds, and will either help or hinder your plan to be the first to create your EPHEMERIS (a table of planetary positions). But will the planets be at *your* command - or your opponent(s) ?

GAME VARIATIONS

GAME ONE: Pure strategy for 2 players

GAME TWO: Add luck into the mix with the dice for 2-4 players

GAME THREE: The Solar System Quiz Game for 2-7 players (or teams)

Test your knowledge or learn more about our Solar System.

CONTENTS

Playing Board:

represents the 12 constellations of the Zodiac

Playing Pieces:

9 coloured counters:

3 Inner Planets (red) - Mercury, Venus, Mars

4 Outer Planets (blue) - Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune

1 Sun (Yellow)

1 Moon (Yellow)

Playing Cards:

27 Planet Cards (including Suns & Moons)

24 Zodiac constellation cards

14 Retrograde Cards

4 Pluto (chance) cards

72 Solar System Quiz Cards

2 Spot Dice

(Variable spots)

Plus 'NEW' booklet

Your Winning Hand Predictions!

SET UP

For all game variations place the pieces on the board as Fig 1.

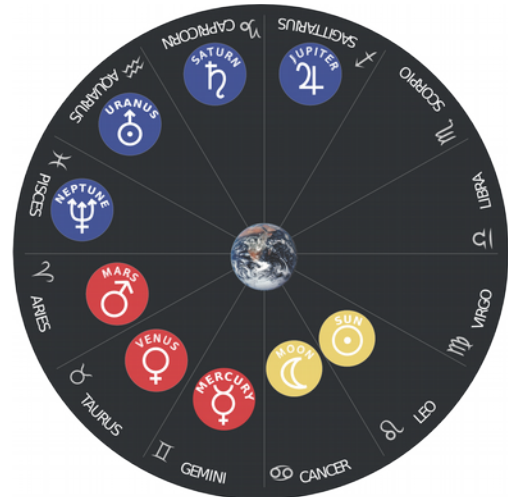


Fig 1 - Set up

OVERTAKING RULES (Planet speeds)

(Applies in all game variations).

The Moon may pass the Sun and every planet *

The Sun may pass every planet but may not pass the Moon *

Inner planets (red) may not pass the Sun or Moon *

Outer planets (blue) may not pass Inner planets, Sun or Moon *

* Whilst not being able to pass, they may, however, move into the same sign.

Inner planets may pass other Inner planets (and Outer planets).

Outer planets may pass other Outer planets.

Fig 2

Any number of pieces may occupy any sign at the same time.

GAME ONE

(2 Players)

SET UP

You will need: Planet, Sun, Moon and Zodiac Cards. No Retrogrades or Pluto cards. No dice. Place the Planets, Sun and Moon counters on the board as shown in [Fig 1](#).

AIM

The object is to be the first to create your EPHEMERIS by positioning each of the planets on the board that match the 5 Planet Cards in your hand (or Sun and/or Moon) into the Zodiac signs on the board that match the 5 Zodiac Cards in your hand.

Any combination is ok but they must all be in place simultaneously before you can declare the winning call of "EPHEMERIS" (See Fig 3 for example of a winning hand).

OVERTAKING

Taking advantage of the [Overtaking Rules](#) is a key feature of the game, enabling you to pin your planets in position and/or block planets to thwart your opponents, whilst also preparing the path for your future moves.

DEAL

Shuffle the PLANET Cards (including Suns and Moons) and deal 5 cards, face down, to each player. Pick up your cards. Any duplicate PLANET Cards must be immediately exchanged from the pack as you may not hold more than one of the same Planet Card in your hand (though opponents can have one or more of the same as you).

Shuffle the ZODIAC Cards. Deal face down 5 ZODIAC Cards to each player. Pick up your cards. Duplicate Zodiac Cards are allowed. If you hold duplicate Zodiac Cards you will aim to place two of your Planets into that Zodiac Sign.

PLAY

Initially have a look at your cards and also where your target Zodiac signs are on the board. Try to plan which of your Planets (or Sun or Moon) you aim to place in those signs - although you will almost certainly need to re-plan as play progresses!

Decide who starts. (Roll a dice. First to get yellow starts)

On their turn, a player must move **one** piece, either Sun, Moon or Planet, anti-clockwise. You can move **any** piece, (not just the ones that are in your hand as no-one 'owns' any planet)..

You may move through as many signs as you wish, as long as you observe the [Overtaking Rules](#) (Fig 2).

Be vigilant about observing that the [Overtaking Rules](#) are followed.

Play continues in this way until a player has positioned each of their planets (or Sun or Moon), simultaneously, into the Zodiac signs to correspond with the cards they hold. The winner calls "EPHEMERIS" and declares the winning hand by revealing their cards.

(See Fig 3 for an example of a winning hand).

The Winner may consult the [Winning Hand Predictions](#) if desired!

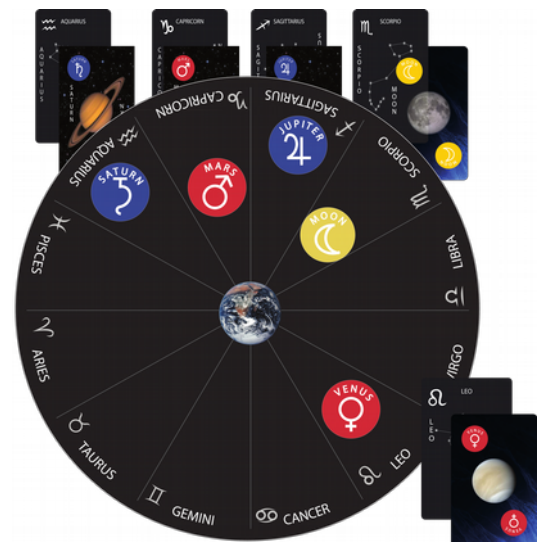


Fig 3 - Example of a winning hand (Game 1)

*The card combinations all match the Planet positions on the board simultaneously:
Saturn in Aquarius
Mars in Capricorn
Jupiter in Sagittarius
Moon in Scorpio
Venus in Leo*

GAME TWO

(2 - 4 Players)

SET UP

You will need Planet, Sun, Moon & Zodiac Cards, Retrogrades and Pluto cards. 2 Spot Dice.
Place the Planets, Sun and Moon on the board as shown in [Fig 1](#).

AIM

Your aim is to be the first to create your EPHEMERIS (table of planet positions) by positioning each of the 4 Planet Pieces that correspond with the 4 Planet Cards in your hand (may include Sun and/or Moon) into the Zodiac signs on the board that correspond with the 4 Zodiac Cards in your hand.

Any combination is ok but you must have them all in place simultaneously before you can declare the winning call of "EPHEMERIS" ([See Fig 4 for example of a winning hand](#)).

DEAL

Shuffle the PLANET cards (including Suns and Moons) and deal 4 cards, face down, to each player. Pick up your cards. Any duplicate PLANET cards must be immediately exchanged from the pack as you may not hold more than one of the same Planet Card in your hand (though opponents can have one or more of the same as you).

Shuffle the ZODIAC cards. Deal face down 4 ZODIAC cards to each player. Pick up your cards. Duplicate Zodiac Cards are allowed. If you hold duplicate Zodiac Cards you will aim to place two of your Planets into that Zodiac Sign.

Deal one PLUTO card to be kept in front of each player. (See [Pluto](#))

Place the RETROGRADE cards pile near the board (See Retrograde Cards).

PLAY

Initially have a look at your cards and also where your target Zodiac signs are on the board. Try to plan which of your Planets (or Sun or Moon) you aim to place in those signs - although you will almost certainly need to re-plan as play progresses!

Decide who starts by a roll of the 'even' dice: First to roll yellow starts.

The first player rolls both dice and then moves 2 pieces that correspond to the colours shown on the two dice (e.g. red spot = move any Inner Planet; blue spot = move any outer Planet; yellow spot = move either Sun or Moon). The two pieces must move **anti-clockwise**, through as many signs as you wish but always observing the Overtaking Rules (Fig 2).

Each player follows in this way. Remember, you may move **any** Planet of the correct colour, not just the ones that are in your hand - players do not 'own' the Planets.

Using the strategy available in the [Overtaking Rules](#) i.e. Planet speeds, you can block and pin the Planets in the signs when favourable to you, whilst also preparing the path for your future moves.

The winner may consult the [Winning Hand Predictions](#) booklet if desired!



Fig 4 - Example of a winning hand (Game 2)

*The card combinations all match the Planet positions on the board simultaneously:
Saturn in Aquarius
Mars in Capricorn
Jupiter in Sagittarius
Moon in Scorpio*

BLOCKING (Game Two)

How to proceed in different blocking situations.

There will be occasions when, having rolled the dice on your turn, you cannot move a Planet of the right colour because it is blocked. For example:

COMPLETE BLOCK:

Two red dice are thrown. In Fig 5, the Sun and Moon are blocking all the reds so no move can be made. In this case the player is required to turn up a Retrograde Card and move that planet backwards accordingly. (see Retrograde Cards)

A PARTIAL BLOCK (1): Occurs when only one Planet can be moved. For example in Fig 6 where two 'blue' dice are thrown, but only one 'blue' Planet can move - i.e Neptune. The other "blues" are all blocked by reds and yellows. In this case play moves on without making the second move.

PARTIAL BLOCK (2): However, if it is possible to enable the second move by moving a faster piece first, this must be done. For example, in Fig 7, a blue and a red dice are thrown but all blue Planets are blocked by red and yellows. However, if by moving a red planet first – i.e. Mars out of Libra, a blue planet - i.e. Saturn, can then be moved then this must be done to enable the second move,.

RETROGRADE CARDS

When a complete block occurs the player is required to turn up a Retrograde Card and move the Planet indicated on the card in 'retrograde motion' i.e. backwards (clockwise) through as many signs as desired, **without** reference to the Overtaking Rules. The card is then removed to the bottom of the pack.

PLUTO

Each player has a Pluto card which can be played as a 'chance' card at any time on their turn.

If a player holds three of their Planets in alignment but the roll of the dice does not produce the colour(s) needed and being only one move away from a winning "EPHEMERIS" a player may opt to play their 'Pluto' card.

This card allows an extra roll of the dice (the dice with two yellow spots) to try to get the colour needed to make that move and win. If the attempt fails, the game continues as normal. Pluto can only be used once by each player.

ECLIPSE

Occasionally you may find that conflicts of interest in one or more planets can make it difficult for anyone to win in reasonable time - and you continually hamper each other's overall plans. (Attrition will generally solve this if you have the time.)

A player may call Eclipse at any time on their turn during the game. Each player has the option to 'agree' or not. If no one else agrees, the caller lays down his cards, unseen, and retires from the game and the game continues. Any players who 'agree' to Eclipse also lay down their cards, unseen, and retire from the game, leaving those in play to continue until the winner declares EPHEMERIS!



Fig 5 - Example of Complete Block (Game 2)



Fig 6 - Example of Partial Block (1) (Game 2)



Fig 7 - Example of Partial Block (2) (Game 2)

GAME THREE

THE SOLAR SYSTEM QUIZ GAME

(2-7 players or teams)

SET UP

You will need: The Solar System Quiz Cards. 7 Planet cards, (no Sun or Moon cards), Zodiac Cards, Retrograde Cards. 1 Dice with two yellow spots.

Place the Planets, Sun and Moon on the board as shown in [Fig 1](#).

Place the Quiz Cards, face down, next to the board.

Place the Retrograde Cards, face down, next to the board.

AIM

Your aim will be to transit your planet through one complete orbit of the Zodiac to finish back at your planet's start Zodiac sign, taking turns to ask and answer the Solar System Quiz questions and moving a planet, according to the colour on the dice. NB The [OVERTAKING RULES](#) apply (See Fig 2).

DEAL

Separate out one of each of the 7 **Planet Cards** (Sun and Moon cards not required). Shuffle and deal **one** to each player face up, or players may choose their planet. This will be your planet to orbit the Zodiac. (Younger players may choose an inner (red) planet for a lesser challenge, but it doesn't necessarily follow that 'reds' will beat 'blues'. As the game develops 'retrograde' cards can create unexpected opportunities!).

Check your Planet's starting position on the board (see [Fig 1](#)).

Each player or team should then take the card from the **Zodiac pack** that matches their start position at set up. (For example, if your Planet Card is Mars, you should take an Aries Zodiac Card).

Your two cards are to remind you which Planet is yours and where it must finish to make a complete orbit.

PLAY

Decide who starts by rolling the dice. First to roll yellow starts.

The first player (or team) rolls the dice. The player to their right picks up a Quiz Card and asks the colour question that matches the colour on the dice, giving the multiple choices of A, B or C. (The correct answer is in **bold** print).

If a **correct answer** is given, the player must **move any planet** of the colour thrown, (or Sun or Moon) anti-clockwise, **through as many Zodiac signs as desired**, but must not infringe the [Overtaking Rules](#) (Fig 2).

An **incorrect answer** only allows the player to move any planet of the correct colour, **one space**, i.e. into the next Zodiac sign, subject to the [Overtaking Rules](#) (Fig 2) The correct answer should be read out giving any additional information at your discretion.

Pass the dice to the next player and the Quiz cards to the player to their right, so they can continue as above, rolling the dice, answering a question and moving a planet to match the colour on the dice.

Play continues until the WINNER has progressed their planet through a complete orbit of the board, arriving back in their 'home' Zodiac Sign.

BLOCKING

You will not always be able to move your own planet but you will have to move another, which may benefit another player, so even with a correct answer you may choose to move it forward only one sign. When deciding what to move, be aware that it is beneficial to clear **your** path of blocking planets to help you complete your orbit more quickly, and also to create obstacles for other players (e.g. you may decide to move the Sun or Moon (on a yellow throw) to a position which potentially hinders another player's progress and/or frees up your own.

RETROGRADE

If no move can be made because the planets of the correct colour are all blocked, no question is asked and the player must pick up a Retrograde Card and move the Planet indicated on the card one sign back in 'retrograde motion' (i.e. clockwise).

SCORING

Depending on the length of play, a score can be kept for a run of games. The winner gains 12 points, the other player(s) gain one point for each Zodiac Sign they have passed into.

LUCK

You may of course try to beat everyone by learning all the answers on the cards, so with luck and cunning you'll whiz round the Zodiac in no time! However, all the knowledge on planet Earth may not influence the dice!

ALERT !

In Ephemeris there is always the chance that another player's move may be favourable to you. So, keep your wits about you because the perfect alignment and winning call of "**EPHEMERIS**" may be closer than you think!

YOUR WINNING HAND PREDICTIONS!

We've always wondered why the ancients never devised a board game from their heavenly musings of the night sky...THEN It came to us!

The game they invented is still with us in the form of astrology - a legacy and fore-runner of modern astronomy.

So for a bit of fun and as homage to the ancient Babylonian star-gazers, we've devised this booklet of simple predictions, so you can check out the meaning of the planets in the signs which match your winning hand!

*** If you have previously purchased EPHEMERIS without this booklet, email us your details to receive a copy free of charge on proof of purchase.**

OTHER VARIATIONS

You may wish to try playing any of the games 'open'. For example by laying your Zodiac Cards out in front of you, but still keeping your Planet Cards concealed in your hand. This way you have more idea of what your opponent is trying to achieve, though, of course, they may be bluffing!

For the very young (or very old!) why not try a traditional card game with the Planet and Zodiac cards - Snap or Pairs. For pairs, lay out all the cards face down. On each go turn over two cards to find a pair. If it is not a pair, place them back face down. The winner has collected the most pairs. Test your memory!

EPHEMERIS [ih-fem-er-is]

a table showing the positions of a heavenly body on a number of dates in a regular sequence. <http://www.dictionary.com>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to our intrepid contributors for their enthusiasm, support, artwork and sheer playing power which has helped to refine this new version of the original 'ephemeris' and most importantly thanks to the myriad celestial spheres for their infinite beauty and inspiration.

For more information about the planets or to leave feedback visit www.ephemeris-game.uk

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