LOST CITIES
The Board Game

A game by Reiner Knizia for 2–4 players, ages 10 and up

Summary

In this game, each player leads a team of explorers consisting of four adventurers and one researcher on an expedition to discover lost cities. There are five lost cities, each found at the end of a separate path consisting of nine stepping stones. During your turn, you must play a card to move one of your explorers (either an adventurer or the researcher) forward along one of the five paths. The card's value should be as low as possible because you can only play a card of equal or greater value in order to move an explorer forward along the path. The color of the card determines which path your explorer moves along. How many explorers you send out is your decision. But each explorer that you send out must travel along a separate path — explorers from the same team cannot be on the same path.

Your goal is to move all the explorers you have sent out as far along the paths as possible because on the first three stepping stones you score negative points — only the following six stepping stones earn you positive points. Along the way you can collect artifacts that will earn you valuable bonus points. The researcher (the larger explorer piece) is also uniquely valuable: when scoring takes place, the researcher earns you twice as many points — reason enough to move him as far along the path as possible. At the end of the game, the player with the most points wins!

Game Contents

1 Game board
110 Cards *(2 of each card in values from 0 to 10, in each of the 5 colors)*
25 Event tiles

9 Artifact tiles   *9 Arrow tiles*   *7 Victory point tiles*

27 Artifact tokens

4 Sets of explorer pieces
(5 pieces per color)

4 Adventurers   *1 Researcher*

64 Victory point tokens

100   20   5   50   10

Preparing to play

Place the **game board** in the center of the table and the **victory point tokens** and **artifact tokens** next to the board. Each player must choose an explorer piece color. Take the **five corresponding explorer** pieces and place them in front of you.

Shuffle the **25 event tiles** face down. Place them in random order face down on the corresponding spaces of the game board and then turn them **over.**

Then shuffle all 110 cards face down and deal **eight cards** per person. Organize the remaining cards into a face-down draw pile and place them next to the game board.

Event tiles

Two-player game rule: Before dealing the cards, draw **30 cards** from the deck at random, and return them to the box face down.

Sequence of Play

The game consists of three expeditions. After each expedition, scoring takes place. After the third expedition, bonus points for artifacts collected during the game are awarded.
The oldest player starts the first expedition.

The players take turns in a clockwise order. A turn consists of two parts, which are performed in the following order:

1) Playing a Card:

✦ Place a card face up in front of you to **begin** an expedition down a path, moving your explorer to the first stepping stone, OR

✦ Place a card face up on one of **your own cards** already placed in front of you to go to the **next stepping stone** on that path, OR

✦ Discard a card by placing it face up on one of the five **discard piles.**

2) Drawing a Card:

✦ Take a card from the **face-down draw pile,** OR

✦ Take a card from one of the **face-up discard piles**.

Game Rules in Detail

1. Playing a Card
Beginning an Expedition Down a Path

Choose one of your card colors and place the **lowest-value** card of this color **face up** in front of yourself to begin a new column. Later, only you may place cards on this card!

Next, choose one of your explorer pieces (adventurer or researcher). Place it on the **−20 stepping stone** of the path which is the **same color** as the card you have just played. The value "−20" means that for now this explorer piece earns you negative 20 points!

Cards in your hand

Card played
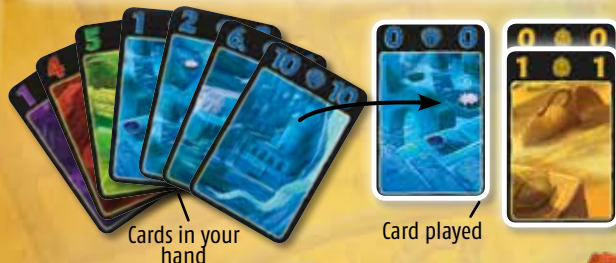
Important: When scoring takes place at the end of the expedition, the **researcher** earns you twice the number of points depicted on the stepping stone it is standing

on. However, if the researcher is standing on a stepping stone with a negative value, the researcher earns twice the negative value! **Note:** Each player may only start **one** expedition per colored path! However, multiple players may explore paths of the same color (e.g., three players may each start exploring the blue path).

Stepping to a New Stone on One of Your Paths

Decide which of your paths you want to explore further. Choose a card of the path's color from your hand and place it face up on the last of the cards of that color that you already placed in that column. The newly placed card must either be of the **same or higher value!** Then move your explorer piece on this path to the next stepping stone (for example, from the −20 stepping stone to the −15 stepping stone).
Important: If there is an **event tile** on the new stone, please refer to the section *Finding an Event Tile* on the next page.

When an Explorer Has Already Reached a Lost City:

If one of your explorer pieces has already reached the final (ninth) stepping stone on a path and you place a (valid) card of that path's color, you may move **any** one of your explorer pieces one step forward on its path.

Discarding a Card

Cards must be discarded into shared discard piles separated by card color. Up to five discard piles may be formed during the course of the game. Only the top card of each discard pile should be visible. To discard a card from your hand: If a discard pile of the same card color has already been started, place the card face up on this pile. If not, place it face up next to the matching expedition symbol on the game board to start a new discard pile.

Discard pile

Note: You will accumulate cards in your hand that are of no use to you, which is why you may discard them. Let's say you start down a path by playing a red "4" card and then move forward by playing a red "7." If you then draw a red "3," you can't use it. Discard the card! However, you may want to keep the card until your opponents can't make use of it either.

2. Drawing a Card
At the end of your turn, draw a card. You have two options:
- Draw the top card from the face-down draw pile, OR
- Draw the top card from one of the face-up discard piles.

Now your hand contains eight cards again, and your turn is complete. The next player in the clockwise direction takes his or her turn.

Finding an Event Tile

If you move an explorer piece to a stepping stone that contains an event tile, you must perform the corresponding action immediately:

Artifact Tile:
Remove the artifact tile from the game board and place it in front of yourself. **The tile space remains empty.**

Victory Point Tile:
You receive victory point tokens corresponding to the value indicated on the tile. With victory points, the researcher does not receive twice as many points!
Note: The victory point tile **remains face up on its space** on the stepping stone and can be used by subsequent explorers.

Arrow Tile:
You may move **any one** of your explorer pieces **already on any of the paths** forward one stepping stone (unless it is already on the ninth stepping stone).
Note: The arrow tile **remains** face up **in its space** on the stepping stone and can be used by subsequent explorers.

If the stepping stone you move your explorer piece onto also contains an event tile, you must perform the action indicated on this tile as well, and so on.

Example: You place your fourth card, moving your explorer onto the blue 15 stone. Now, thanks to the arrow tile there, you can move any one of your explorer pieces already on an expedition path one stepping stone forward. If you choose to move to the blue 30 stone, you would immediately receive 15 victory points.

Ending an Expedition and Scoring
- An expedition immediately ends when a total of **five explorer pieces have crossed the bridges** (between the sixth and seventh stepping stones). It does not matter on which expeditions this happens. It is absolutely possible that on one path two explorer pieces have passed the bridge and on another path no explorer pieces have passed the bridge.
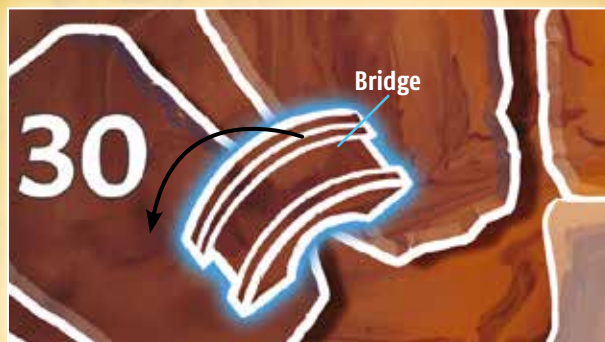
Note: If the explorer piece that ends the expedition reaches a stepping stone containing an event tile, the corresponding action is **not** performed!
- **An expedition also ends** when the **last card** of the face-down draw pile is drawn.
Once the game ends, scoring takes place.

Scoring an Expedition

- Each of your **adventurers** earns you as many victory points as depicted on the stepping stone it is standing on. The **researcher** earns you twice as many points as depicted on the stone it is standing on.
- First, count the scores of your explorer pieces that are in positive territory (steps four through nine). From this, subtract the scores of your explorer pieces that are in the negative territory (steps one to three). Then take victory point tokens of the appropriate value. **Note:** You can never have fewer than zero victory points at the end of the expedition.
- Afterward, the players take all their explorer pieces and place them in front of themselves.
- Each player who has artifact tiles must give them back to reset the board. In exchange for each artifact tile, the player receives a square **artifact token,** which is placed face up in front of the player.

Exchange artifact tiles for artifact tokens

The Next Expedition

After scoring, shuffle all 25 event tiles (including the nine artifact tiles) face down, place them randomly face down on the corresponding spaces on the game board, and turn them over. Shuffle **all** cards. Once again, deal eight cards face down to each player. Organize the remaining cards into a face-down draw pile. **Important:** Each player keeps their victory point tokens and artifact tokens!

Two-player game rule: Shuffle **all** the cards, remove 30 of them, and return them face-down to the box.

The player who would have been the next to move starts the next expedition.

Ending the Game

- The game ends after the scoring of the **third expedition** has taken place.
- Afterward, the players count their artifact tokens. The long scoring track indicates how many victory points you will be paid for your artifact tokens. For example, you receive victory point tokens for the corresponding values: for six artifacts, 30 victory points; for nine artifacts, 70 victory points; etc.

Important: If you have collected fewer than five artifact tokens, you must pay back victory points!

Short
Scoring Track

Long
Scoring Track

- Then each player calculates the sum of the values of his or her victory point tokens. The player with the highest total wins the game. If there is a tie between two or more players, the tied player who collected the most artifact tokens wins.

The Short Game

- The short game ends after only **one expedition** instead of after three. The artifact tokens are also scored differently: The value of your collected artifact tokens is indicated by the **short scoring track** instead of the long scoring track.

Rule Variant

Before beginning the game, the players can agree to play with the following rule variant:

- Instead of beginning a path by playing a low-value card and then adding cards of increasing values, each player can decide if they want to proceed in the reverse order, from high-value cards to low-value cards.
- The act of placing a second card of different (higher or lower) value on the previous card for any one path determines whether the player wants to place all cards for this particular path in ascending or descending order. The players are free to use increasing card values for one path and decreasing card values for another.