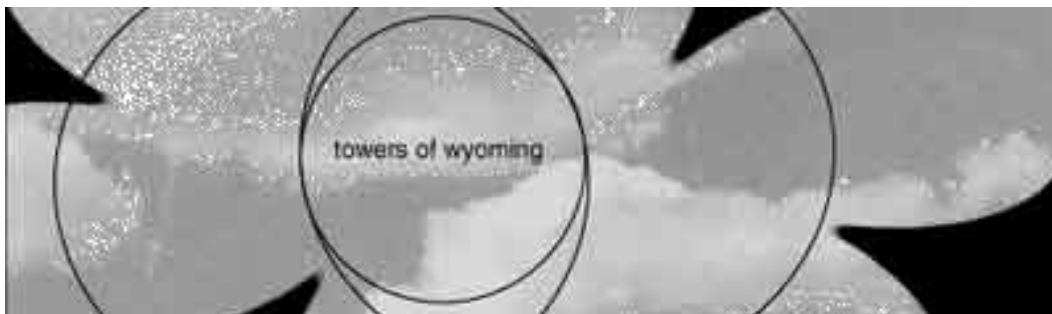


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a game by Jonathan A. Leistikio

Object

To Construct a Tower of cards - a pile containing only one suit - faster than the other players, or to be the last player in the game.

You Need

- A deck of cards with four distinct suits and 25 cards in each suit. Shuffling two poker decks together and then removing one card from each suit works nicely. You can also use extra cards you have lying around from certain collectible card games (think of ones that rhyme with "tragic: no blathering").

Setup

- Put ten pennies in the middle of the table. This pile is called the Settling Sky.
- A Tower that does not contain any cards is called a Foundation. When the game begins, all players start the game with a certain number of Foundations:

Players	Foundations per player	Settling Sky pennies
2	2	10
3	1 or 2 (see next page)	10 or 8 (see next page)
4	1	10

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Setup, continued

- (In a three-player game, if you choose to play with two Foundations apiece, reduce the number of pennies that make up the Settling Sky to eight.)
- Shuffle the deck. Deal 7 cards to each player. Place the remaining cards face-down in the middle of the table to create a draw pile. Although it doesn't exist yet, the discard pile will be a face-up pile to the side of the draw pile.
- Choose a person to go first.

Play

At the beginning of your turn, you must draw until you have 7 cards. (If you already have 7 cards, don't draw.) Once you have a full hand, you must play one or more cards. All cards played must either Construct or Deconstruct.

Restrictions:

Regardless of whether you play to Construct or Deconstruct, the following rules always apply:

- All cards played on a turn must be of the same suit. (You may play one, some, or all cards from that suit that you have in your hand.)
- All cards played on a turn can only be played on a single player.
- All cards played on a turn can only be played on a single Tower or Foundation.

Constructing:

Cards played to Construct may be added to any Tower in play, provided that that Tower contains cards of the same suit. If you have an empty Foundation, you may begin Constructing it with any suit. You may not play cards on another player's empty Foundation.

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Play, continued

Deconstructing:

Cards played to Deconstruct may be added to any Tower in play, provided that that Tower contains cards of an "opposing" suit (see below). Once played, Deconstructing cards are then moved to the Discard pile. In addition, the Tower that they were played on loses one card to the discard pile for each deconstructing card played. If there are more cards played to deconstruct than there are in the Tower, then the excess cards form the new Tower, changing the suit of the Tower to the suit of the Deconstructing cards.

Spades oppose Hearts and vice versa.

Clubs oppose Diamonds and vice versa.

After you've Constructed or Deconstructed, then your turn ends and play passes to the next player.

It's the end of the deck as we know it

When the draw pile runs out of cards, take one penny out of the Sky and recycle the discards, shuffling them and making a new draw pile; continue playing normally.

Winning

If, at the end of a turn, any player has a Tower with a number of cards greater than the number of pennies in the Settling Sky, then that player wins.

If, at any time, only one player remains in the game (see Optional Rules, next page), then that player wins.

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Optional rules

Sudden Death:

When the draw pile runs out of cards, continue play as normal without drawing cards. When all players have run out of cards, then the game ends. The player with the most cards in one tower wins.

This is a good rule to use if you don't have long to play.

Contractual Deadlines:

Any player without a tower when the cards are recycled loses his or her building contract and is removed from the game. If, at any time, only one player remains in the game, then that player wins.

This rule is only an optional rule because it's a little too harsh for beginning players. I recommend using it once all players are comfortable with the rules of the game.

Tidal Influences:

The Settling Sky starts with eight pennies (regardless of how many players there are). Instead of removing a penny from the Sky when you reshuffle the deck, toss all of the pennies onto a flat surface. If there are more face-up pennies than face-down ones, then add a penny to the Sky. Otherwise, take a penny out of the Sky. If they come out half-and-half, toss again.

This is my favorite variation.

Wheel of Opposition:

The suits lose their normal opposition rules and oppose each other as follows: Clubs oppose Diamonds which oppose Spades which oppose Hearts which oppose Clubs.

You should find that this rule dramatically affects the strategy of the game.

Finicky Clients:

To win, your Tower must have exactly as many cards as there are pennies in the Settling Sky.

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Origin and credits

I was trying to design a game based on the comic strip Bob the Angry Flower, and I got this instead. From intent to completion, I figure the core game took about two days to make. The extra rules evolved as we (ICP) were brainstorming to think of a "theme" to attach to the game.

Many thanks to Ben, Natosha, and Sharon for playtesting this with me.

Credits:

Concept, development : Jonathan A. Leistikio

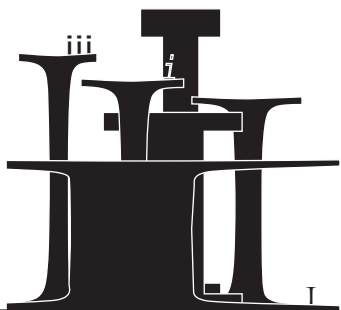
Conceptual engineering, editing, graphic design : Jeremy P. Bushnell

Additional editing: Sharon J. Cichelli

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