

EPHEMERIS™

A GAME OF ASTRONOMICAL STRATEGY

GAME 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' or 'outer', 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 planets into the Zodiac constellations in an alignment which matches the cards you are dealt at the start of the game. Blocking and bluffing form the basis of the strategy of 'planet speeds' governed by the 'overtaking rules' which either help or hinder your ultimate aim. Will the planets will be at your command - or your opponent (s) ? There are three game variations to choose from.

GAME VARIATIONS

- GAME ONE: 2 players no dice
- GAME TWO: 2-4 players 2 dice
- GAME THREE: 2-4 players or teams
- THE SOLAR SYSTEM QUIZ game
- (See separate Game Guide)

CONTENTS

- Playing Board: Represents the 12 constellations of the Zodiac.
- Playing Pieces: 9 coloured counters - Planets, Sun and Moon:
 - 3 Inner Planets: (Red) Mercury, Venus, Mars.
 - 4 Outer Planets: (Blue) Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune
 - 1 Sun (Yellow) 1 Moon (Yellow)
- 2 Spot Dice: Command the movement of Sun, Moon & Planets

- Playing Cards: 27 Planet cards (including Suns & Moons)
- 24 Zodiac constellation cards
- 14 Retrograde cards
- 4 Pluto (chance) cards
- 64 Solar System Quiz cards

SET UP

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

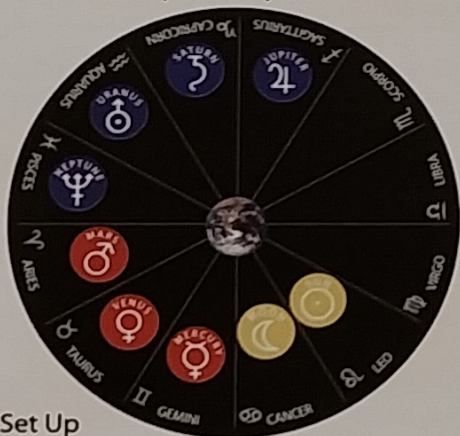


Fig 1 Set Up

OVERTAKING RULES (planet speeds)

Applies in all game variations:

PLANET SPEEDS

Outer planets (blue) may not pass* inner planets, Sun or Moon
 Inner planets (red) may not pass* the Sun or Moon.
 The Sun may pass every planet but may not pass* the Moon.
 The Moon may pass* the Sun and every planet.
 *Whilst not being allowed to pass, they may move into the same sign.

Fig 2 Planet speeds

GAME ONE (2 Players)



Planet, Sun, Moon & Zodiac cards required.
 Not retrogrades, Pluto or dice.

Shuffle the PLANET cards (including Suns and Moons) and deal 5 cards, face down, to each player. You may look at your cards but conceal them from your opponent. 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. Duplicate Zodiac cards are allowed. If you hold duplicate Zodiac cards you will aim to place two of your planets into that Zodiac sign.

AIM

Your aim is to position each of the Planet pieces that correspond with the cards in your hand, into the Zodiac signs on the board that correspond with your hand of zodiac cards (this includes Sun and Moon if you hold them).

Any combination is OK, but you must achieve alignment of all your Planets, Sun or Moon and Zodiacs **simultaneously** before you can declare the winning call of "EPHEMERIS" !

(See Fig 3 for example of a winning hand)

PLAY

Now that you have your cards in your hand, you are ready to play! Each player in turn must move a Planet, the Sun or the Moon through as many signs as desired but according to the overtaking rules. (See Fig 2)



Saturn ♄ In Aquarius, Mars ♂ In Capricorn,
 Jupiter ♃ In Sagittarius, Venus ♀ In Leo, Moon ☾ In Scorpio,

Fig 3 Example of a winning hand: the card combinations all match the planet positions on the board simultaneously.

PLAY (Game One)

Roll the 'even' dice to see who starts. Yellow beats red, beats blue. Play is anti-clockwise (same direction as the planets move on the board). **You may move any planet, not just the ones that are on your cards as players do not 'own' any planets.** You may move through as many signs as you wish but always observing the **overtaking rules** (see Fig 2).

Play continues until a player has aligned simultaneously each planet, Sun and/or Moon into the Zodiac positions that correspond with their cards. The winner calls "EPHEMERIS" and declares the winning hand.

BLOCKING

Blocking is a key feature of the game and players can use it as a tactical ploy either to attempt to secure a favourable position for themselves and/or to thwart their opponents. This is done by taking advantage of the 'Planet Speeds' i.e. inner planets cannot pass the Sun or Moon, outer planets cannot pass inner planets or Sun or Moon. Sun cannot pass the Moon. Be vigilant about observing that these overtaking rules are followed!

TIPS

It might be advisable to get the idea of the game first with just 3 of each card. Before you make your move have a look at where the planets you hold are in relation to the Zodiac cards you hold so you can make an initial plan. This will almost certainly be thwarted as the game progresses, so you will need to revise your aims regularly and employ tactics that not only improve your chances but also disadvantage your opponents.

GAME TWO (2 - 4 Players)



Planet, Sun, Moon and Zodiac cards, Spot Dice
Retrograde cards and Pluto cards required.

SET UP is as Fig1

AIM

As Game One except only 4 planet cards and 4 zodiac cards are dealt instead of five to each player.

OVERTAKING RULES

As in Game One (Fig 2).

DEAL

Shuffle the planet pack and the zodiac pack separately and deal face down to each player: 4 ZODIAC constellation cards and 4 PLANET cards. Deal one PLUTO card to be kept in front of each player. (See PLUTO)
Duplicate PLANET cards must be exchanged from the pack, as you may not hold more than one of the same planet (though opponents can have one or more of the same as you!)
Duplicate ZODIAC cards are allowed. (You will aim to place two of your planets in that zodiac sign).
Place the RETROGRADE cards pile near the board (See RETROGRADE CARDS).

PLAY

Decide who starts by a roll of the 'even' dice: Yellow beats red, beats blue. First player rolls both dice and then moves 2 pieces that correspond to the colours showing on the dice (e. g. red spot, move any inner planet (red), blue spot, move any outer planet (blue).
Each player follows in this way. You may move **any** planet of the correct colour, not just the ones that are on your cards - players do not 'own' any planets.
You may move the planets through as many signs as you wish, as long as you are observing the overtaking rule of the planet speeds.
Using the strategy available in the planets' speeds you can block and pin the planets in the signs when favourable to you, whilst also preparing the path for future moves.

BLOCKING

There will be occasions when having rolled the dice on your turn you cannot move any planet of the right colour because all are blocked. For example:

COMPLETE BLOCK: 2 reds thrown on the dice but all the red planets are blocked by Sun or Moon.

In this case player must pick up a Retrograde card.

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 rule. The card is then replaced to the bottom of the pack.

A **PARTIAL BLOCK** occurs when only one planet can be moved.

For example:

Two 'blue' dice are thrown, but only one 'blue' planet can move, due to blocks by reds and yellows. In this case play moves on without the second move.

However, if it is possible to enable a second move this must be done.

For example:

A blue and a red are thrown but all blue planets are blocked. If, however, by moving the red first, a blue could then be unblocked, then the red must be moved first to allow the second move.

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 (even 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.

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!

GAME THREE (2-4 players or teams)



THE SOLAR SYSTEM QUIZ GAME

SET UP is as Fig1

AIM

Your aim will be to transit just one planet through one complete orbit of the zodiac finishing back in your planet's 'home' constellation.

PLAY

See separate Game Guide to play the Solar System Quiz Game.

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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 inspiration and serene beauty.

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EPHEMERIS™

A GAME OF ASTRONOMICAL STRATEGY

THE SOLAR SYSTEM QUIZ GAME GUIDE

GAME THREE

☉ (2-4 players or teams)

Solar System Quiz cards, Planet cards, Zodiac cards, Retrograde cards and one dice ('even spots') required.

AIM

Your aim will be to transit one planet through one complete orbit of the Zodiac board finishing back in the planet's 'start' constellation.

SET UP

Place the Planets, Sun and Moon on the board as shown in Fig 1.

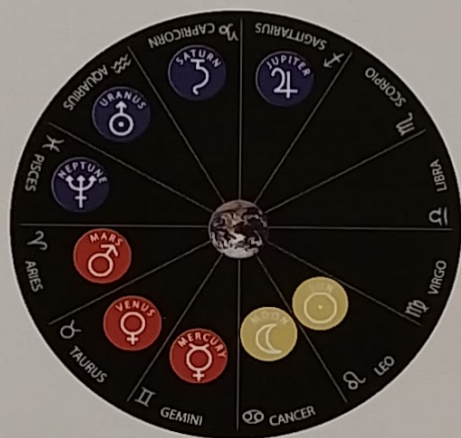


Fig 1 Set Up

OVERTAKING RULES (planet speeds)

PLANET SPEEDS

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The Moon may pass* the Sun and every planet.

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Fig 2 Planet speeds

CARDS

Separate out from the pack, one of each of the Planet cards (Sun and Moon cards **not** required).

Separate out one of each of the 12 Zodiac cards.

Place the Retrograde pack next to the board.

Shuffle the 7 planet cards and deal one to each player face down. This will represent the planet you aim to orbit back to its home sign by answering the quiz questions along the way.

Each player or team should take from the 12 Zodiac cards the one that matches their planet's **set up** position (this is just to remind you of where you are aiming to finish after a complete orbit. Keep your cards concealed.

PLAY

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

Play is anti-clockwise (same direction as movement of the planets on the board as shown by the arrows).

Player or team A throws the dice.

The player to the right (or Team B) picks up a quiz card and asks A the matching colour question, giving the multiple choice of A, B or C. (The correct answer is in **bold** print). Additional information on the card is given only when the answer has been given correctly).

A **correct** answer entitles A to move any planet of the colour thrown, anti-clockwise, through **as many** zodiac signs as desired, subject to rules of overtaking (Fig 2).

An **incorrect** answer allows only **one** move into the next sign.

Player (or team) B throws the dice and the person to the right (or Team A) asks the question which matches the colour thrown on the dice.

A **correct** answer entitles **B** to move any planet of the colour thrown, anti-clockwise, through as many zodiac signs as desired, subject to rules of overtaking (Fig 2).

Play continues until the winner has progressed their planet through a complete orbit of the board arriving back in the start Zodiac sign. Depending on the length of play, a score can be kept for a run of games, in which case the winner gains 12 points and the other player(s) gain one point for each zodiac sign they have passed into.

BLOCKING

You may not be able to move your own piece, but you will have to move another, which may benefit your rivals – in which case you may choose to move it just one sign even with a correct answer. Be aware that it may be beneficial to clear your path of planetary obstacles and potential blocks to help you complete your orbit more quickly, e.g. you may decide to move the Sun or Moon (on a yellow throw) to a position which may potentially hinder another player's progress or free 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 in 'retrograde motion' i.e. backwards (clockwise).

LUCK

You may of course beat everyone by learning all the answers on the cards, so with luck and cunning you'll whizz round the Zodiac in no time!

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See main Game Guide for Game Variations ONE and TWO

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