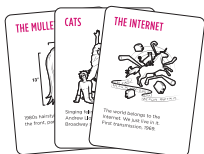


HOW TO PLAY THE METAGAME



Instructions for playing a whole bunch
of different games with a single deck of
Metagame cards. Friends not included.
Local No. 12, 2015.

THE METAGAME has two kinds of cards:



culture cards



opinion cards

When the rules mention a **hand** of cards, it means keep your cards hidden from other players.

FILLING IN BLANKS

When there is a **blank** on an opinion card, you fill it by saying any word or phrase.

WHICH GAME SHOULD YOU PLAY?

- 4 **MATCHMAKERS** for your first game (3+ players)
- 6 **HISTORY 101** for two or more culture nerds (2+)
- 8 **THINK-ALIKE** to cooperate with a partner (2+)
- 10 **DEBATE CLUB** for a talkative game (5+)
- 12 **HEAD-TO-HEAD** for fast, intense fun (3)
- 14 **METAQUILT** if you want to get strategic (3-7)
- 18 **MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER METAGAME**
if you have a lot of players (3-50+)

WHO GOES FIRST?

If a game asks you to pick a first player, draw a culture card at random. Whoever most recently interacted with some version of what is on the card goes first.

YOU CAN CHANGE THE RULES

Once you have tried out a few of the official Metagames, we invite you to break some rules or make up new ones. Here are some ideas:

Stretch it. Add a few rounds to supersize **MATCHMAKERS** into an epic contest.

Shrink it. Turn **HISTORY 101** into a 1-strike-and-you're-out lightning duel.

Add more cards. If someone doesn't know a card in their **METAQUILT** hand, let them draw a new one.

Go for speed! In **MATCHMAKERS**, everyone tries to play their cards as quickly as possible – and if you are left holding the last card, you don't get to play it.

Get weird. In **DEBATE CLUB**, players pick the worst card from their hand and give it to another player to argue. Or maybe players argue for their cards with... interpretive dance?

The drunk version. When you lose a round of **THINK-ALIKE**, take a drink. Or when you win a round. Or both. (*ages 21+*)

You get the idea. But why stop there? Feel free to invent your own brand-new Metagames from scratch. Power to the players.

PREFER TO WATCH?

For how-to-play videos, visit www.metaga.me.

MATCHMAKERS

 3+

try this
one first!



Each round, match your hand of culture cards to everyone else's opinion cards. Recommended for your first Metagame.

SETUP

Deal everyone a hand of 4 culture cards. Each player also gets 1 opinion card face-up in front of them.

For 3 player version: Each player starts with a hand of 7 culture cards instead of 4. And each player has 2 opinion cards face-up in front of them—not just 1.

PLAY

Each player reads their opinion card out loud. ***If yours has a blank:*** as you read the card, *you make up a word or phrase to fill the blank.* Then everyone puts ALL of their culture cards face-down next to the opinion cards of other players to make good matches. (DON'T play on your own cards!) You don't have to play on every opinion card and you can put multiple cards in the same place. There are no turns - everyone plays at the same time.

JUDGMENT

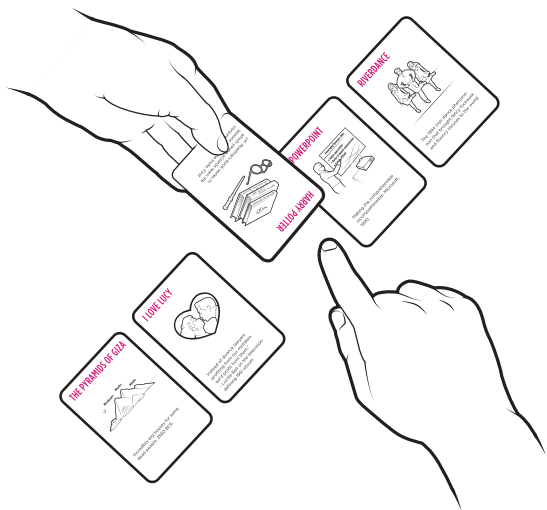
One by one, each player shuffles the culture cards that were played on their opinion card, lays them face-up on the table, and picks their favorite. The judge can explain their decision—but keep quiet about who played which card during judging. If your card was chosen, you win the opinion card PLUS all of the culture cards that were played on it. Keep the cards you win in a scoring pile.

WINNING

Play 3 rounds. At the end, count all of the cards in your scoring pile—opinion cards AND culture cards. The player with the most cards wins!

HISTORY 101

2+



Get your dates straight. A Metagame for two or more players about putting culture in the right chronology.

SETUP

Start the timeline by putting a random culture card face-up on the table. You won't need any opinion cards.

PLAY

Take turns clockwise around the table. On your turn, the player on your left draws a card and reads it to you—saying “BLANK” for any dates. They can show you the card upon request—just be sure they cover the date!

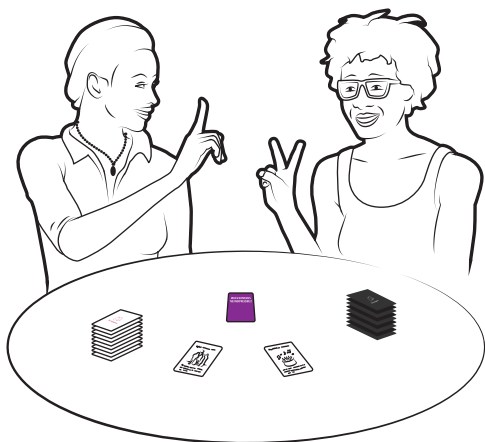
Then you point at the spot in the timeline where the card should go. If you're right, the card goes into the timeline. If you're wrong, put the card in front of you as a **strike**.

FAQ

- *If a card has no date:* discard it and pick another.
- *If there are multiple dates:* use the earliest one.
- *If it's a decade or century:* use the first year of the range.
- *If it has the same date as another card:* it can go on either side of the matching card in the timeline.

WINNING

When you have 3 strikes you are out of the game. The last surviving player wins.



Get on your partner's wavelength so you both pick the same card. With two players, it's cooperative - with more, each pair plays as a team.

SETUP

Sit down next to your partner. Place both kinds of cards face-down in separate stacks. **If you only have 2 players:** Deal one stack of 7 opinion cards face-down on the table.

PLAY

Each team of 2 takes a separate turn. On your turn:
FIRST: reveal 1 opinion card. If there is a blank, you and your partner fill it in with any word or phrase.
THEN: deal 2 culture cards face-up below the opinion card. *At this point, no talking with your partner!*

Each team member silently picks which culture card is best for the opinion card. The card to the left is **one** and the card to the right is **two**. Count “ready, set, GO!” and put out one or two fingers, revealing your selection.

If you both pick the same card - You advance! Discard all cards you used. Next round deal 3 culture cards.

If you don't match - It's OK! Discard all cards you used. Next round, use the same number of culture cards.

WINNING

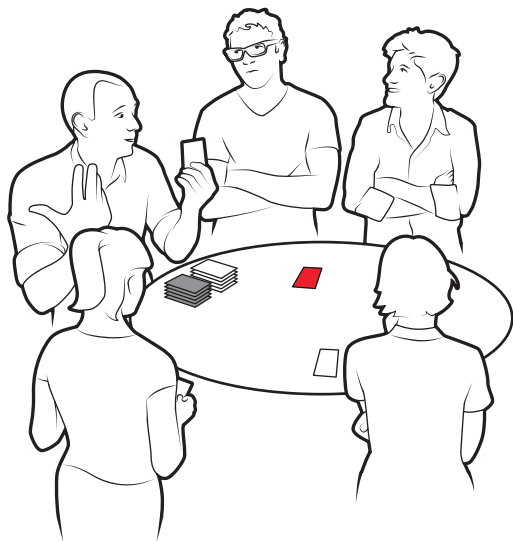
2 players: Keep advancing up to 3, 4, and 5 cards. If you make a match at 5 cards - before the stack of 7 opinion cards run out - you win!

Teams: Each pair takes turns, advancing 1 more card if they make a match. After one team gets a match with 5 culture cards, every other team gets one more turn. If only 1 team has matched 5 cards, they win!

If there is a tie: The tied teams play SUDDEN DEATH rounds, everyone using the same set of 5 culture cards. If any team matches, the teams that didn't match are knocked out. Survivors win.

DEBATE CLUB

5+



Loudmouths rule. Survive each round by arguing for your card. If the critics don't like what you say, you are knocked out and become a critic, too.

SETUP

One player starts as the critic. Deal everyone but the critic a hand of 5 culture cards.

DEBATE

The critic draws 3 new opinion cards, picks one to read out loud, and discards the others. **If it has a blank, the critic decides how to fill it.** Everyone else selects the best match from their hand and places it face-down on the table. The critic calls on each player one by one. That player reveals their card and argues for a minute or two why their card is the best match.

JUDGMENT

The critic picks the BEST and the WORST responses, then collects all played cards and discards them. **The losing player** discards all cards and joins the critic. On future rounds, the growing group of critics judges together. The newest critic selects the next opinion card and breaks tie votes. All surviving players draw a card. **The winning player** of the round draws an extra card.

WINNING

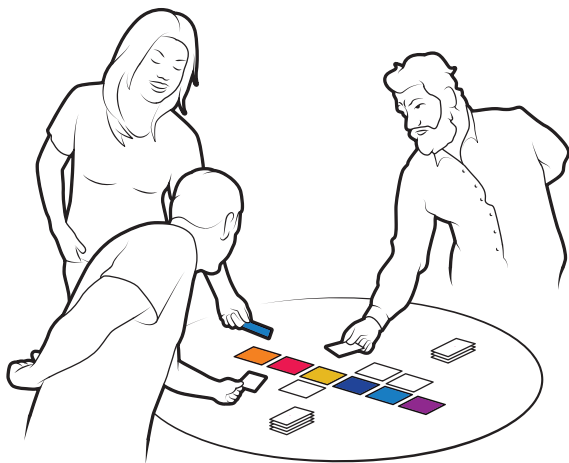
The final player remaining wins the game - and is the starting critic for the next game.

Strategy Variant: Starved for Cards

Players begin with a hand of cards equal to 2 less than the total number of players (i.e., a hand of 3 for 5 players). Deal that many opinion cards face-up in a row. The critic picks one of the face-up cards to use each round. Players do NOT draw any more cards.

HEAD TO HEAD

3



A high-speed battle of wits for three. You and an opponent race to put your cards on the table.

SETUP

One player starts as the critic. The critic deals 7 culture cards to the other 2 players, face down in front of each of them in a stack. Then the critic draws opinion cards, discarding any with blanks and redrawing until the critic has a hand of 7. The 2 players put one hand behind their backs - they can't use that hand during the duel. The critic says "READY - GO!" and the duel begins.

DUEL

The critic starts placing opinion cards face-up in a column. Meanwhile, the other players draw a single card at a time with their free hand and play it face-down next to an opinion card, on their side of the column. They can only have one card next to each opinion card - but they can swap the positions of cards they have already played. The first player to place all of their cards yells "DONE!" The slower player can only play 6 of their 7 cards - they must leave their last card unplayed.

VERDICT

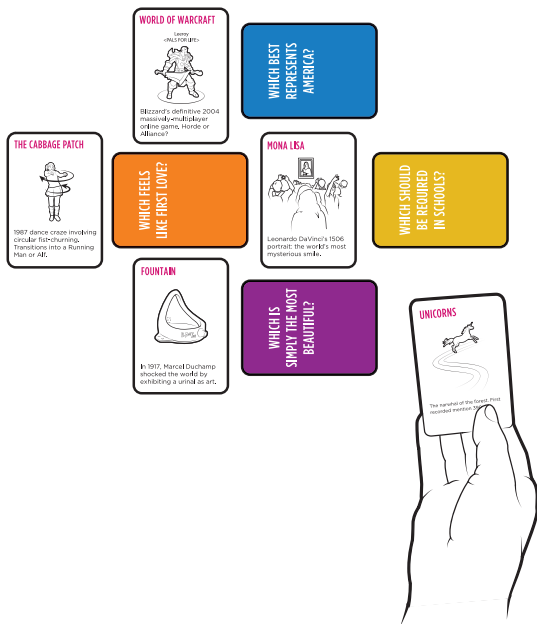
The critic shuffles the 2 cards played on each opinion card, turns them over, and picks a winner. (Keep quiet about who played which card during judging.) If you win a comparison, keep the opinion card. One of the opinion cards will be an automatic win (for the faster player who got all of their cards out).

WINNING

Play 3 rounds - each player is the critic once. Whoever won the most opinion cards wins the game.

METAQUILT

 3-7



It's got strategy. It's got debate. And it turns your tabletop into a crazy-quilt of culture. Lose all your cards to win.

SETUP

Deal everyone 5 culture cards and 5 opinion cards. Keep your hand hidden—but other players should be able to see how many cards you have. Your goal is to get rid of all of your cards.

Draw and place a single opinion card in the center of the table—this is the start of the quilt. If the starting opinion card has a blank on it, draw another one. Begin with the first player and take turns clockwise.

ON A TURN

Each turn has 3 phases. When it is your turn:

- 1: **PLAY** a card from your hand to the quilt
- 2: One player can **CHALLENGE** your card
- 3: You or your challenger **REDUCE** your hand

PHASE 1: PLAY A CARD

On your turn, play a card from your hand into the quilt.

In the quilt, culture cards are played vertically and opinion cards are played horizontally. The two types of cards alternate, so culture cards only touch opinion cards (and vice-versa). For example, on the very first turn you can only play a culture card.

If you play a opinion card with a blank, fill it however you want. The blank is filled with your word for the rest of the game.

When you play a card, try and make it match every card it touches. To play in the lower-right corner of the example game in the illustration, you need a culture card that *should be required in schools* and *is simply beautiful*. The card doesn't have to be a better match than other cards on the table – it just needs to somehow fit the cards it touches.

PHASE 2: CHALLENGES

When someone plays a card, if you think you have a better match for that particular spot in your hand, you can challenge. The first player to say “CHALLENGE!” and place their supposedly better card face-up on the table gets to make the challenge.

The challenger makes a brief argument for their card. Then the challenged player makes a counter-argument for their own card. On the count of “1-2-3-POINT!” the rest of the players simultaneously point to vote on a winner. On a tie vote, the challenge fails.

If the challenge succeeds: The challenger's card is added to the quilt. The challenged card is discarded and the player who played it draws another card of either type.

If the challenge fails: The original card is added to the quilt. The challenger discards the card they used in the challenge and as a punishment for the failed challenge draws 2 cards of either type.

PHASE 3: REDUCE YOUR HAND

At the end of every turn (after any challenges are resolved), whoever successfully played a card into the quilt reduces their hand. For every card that the new card in the quilt touches, you reduce your hand by one. So if you played a card that touches 2 cards, you discard 2 cards from your hand.

If a challenge was made, whoever won the challenge and successfully placed a card in the quilt gets to reduce their hand. If there was no challenge, then the player who put the unchallenged card into the quilt reduces their hand.

WINNING

If you successfully play your last card into the Metaquilt you win the game. You CAN win by making a challenge. However, you cannot get rid of your final card by reducing your hand. You can only win by playing your last card into the quilt.

MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER 5-50+ METAGAME



A highly social Metagame. Play it over dinner conversation or at big parties and events. Like the name says, it works with hundreds or even thousands of players.

SETUP

Players get a hand of 4 culture and 2 opinion cards. Your goal: win debates and collect the most culture cards.

START A DEBATE

At any time, anyone can say “DEBATE THIS!” and reveal an opinion card and become the instigator of a debate.

If there is a blank on the opinion card, the instigator fills it however they want. The first 2 players to jump in and show a culture card will debate. Each debater has a minute to argue for their card. The instigator moderates.

JUDGMENT

Anyone nearby can vote on who was more persuasive. The instigator’s vote breaks any ties. The winner of the debate takes the loser’s culture card.

WINNING

At the end of the party or event, the player with the most culture cards is the victor.

Tips for big events: Yes, we really have played this with thousands of players over multiple days—and it works!

- Distribute cards to everyone as they arrive.
- Demonstrate how to play to everyone.
- For longer games, give players a new card each day.
- Hold a final tournament to determine the champion.
- Each basic set supports 50 players.

MORE?

Visit our website for more info about The Metagame, including new expansions, more games to play and how-to-play videos.

www.metaga.me

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THANKS

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