

# **CANON: THE CARD GAME**

## **RULES**

### **Objective**

Get your own personal canon of up to seven cards to match the central canon as closely as possible.

### **Components**

One deck of cards.

### **How to play**

Each person begins with a hand of five cards (and may have as many as seven in their hand at one time). There is a draw pile face down, seven spaces in the center for the collaboratively-determined canon (to and from which any player may place or take cards), seven spaces in front of you for your own canon, and a spot for a discard pile where cards are placed face up. The draw pile and discard pile should be oriented the opposite way from the seven canon slots, so that they are not confused with one another.

**Possible moves:** In any given turn, a player may do one of the following:

- Take a card from the draw pile into their hand
- Take the visible card from the top of the discard pile into their hand
- Place a card from their hand into the central canon
- Take a card from the central canon into their hand
- Place a card from their hand into their personal canon
- Take a card from their personal canon into their hand
- Place a card from their hand on top of the discard pile, face up

One cannot move a card directly from the discard pile to one of the canons or vice versa, nor from one's own canon to the central one or vice versa. Such moves must be mediated by moving the card into one's hand on one turn, and then moving the card from there to the desired destination on the second turn.

You can place a card from your hand onto an identical card either in the central canon or your own personal canon.

The game ends when the draw pile is empty, and then each player makes one further move. Any additional cards that players have then go on the discard pile.

**Scoring:** One's score at the end of play is determined by:

- 1) Multiplying each card in one's personal canon by each matching card in the central canon, and
- 2) Subtracting one point for each individual card in one's own canon that does not have an equivalent in the central canon.

Note that there is no penalty related to cards still in your hand if you are the last player holding cards. These are simply discarded. Only what is in your canon determines your score.

**Strategy:** The reasons one might want to place more than one copy of a card onto a space in the central canon is to reinforce its status there, since it would be more difficult for another player to eliminate it from there, since they can only take one card at a time. If you build up more copies of a card in your own personal canon, with only one matching it in the central canon, then another player can simply remove the card from the center, and you will have gone from earning that many points at the end of the game, to losing that many points. But obviously you can do the same to them.

## Variations:

- Shuffle the deck and remove ten cards at random, to replicate the fact that there may be more copies of some works than others, or some works may be more widespread than others, since these are aspects of canon formation in real life.
- Modify and/or print customized cards to reflect the specific elements of your favorite sci-fi franchise or religious tradition.
- Play until the first person empties their hand of cards, let all players make one more move each, and then end play.
- Have the game end when only one player has cards remaining, and makes one final move. This makes for a longer and more dramatic finale.

## Credits

**Game Concept/Design:** James F. McGrath