

# Switch & Signal

All Aboard the Cooperative Train Game!

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For 2-4 players, ages 10 and up

## GAME OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE

Together you control the train routes in Central Europe or North America, depending on which side of the gameboard you play. Pick up goods cubes from different cities and transport them to the destination port. Roll the special dice to see how far your slow, medium or fast trains will be able to travel. With action cards you determine where you set your switches and signals to enable your trains' progress. In addition, helpers on both sides of the gameboard support you with special actions.

At the beginning of each turn, a departure card is revealed that determines whether new trains will be deployed and which trains will run. The more trains come into play, the closer you need to keep an eye on what's going on. Once the final departure card has been revealed, you only have until the end of that turn to reach the goal.

**You all win as soon as you have delivered all goods to the destination port.**

## GAME COMPONENTS

1 Double-sided gameboard



Central Europe

North America



9 Trains

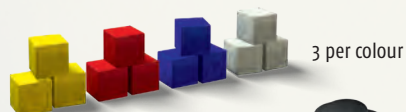


2 Deployment dice



3 Movement dice

12 Goods cubes



3 per colour



10 Signal discs



30 Switch discs

100 Cards of which:

81 Action cards (27 each of)



Signal setting



Switch setting

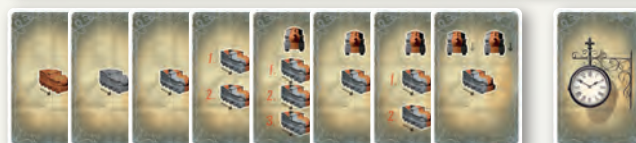
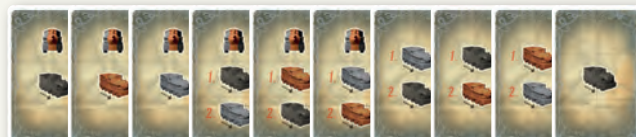


Train movement



Back of card

18 Departure cards



Back of card

1 Start card



Back of card

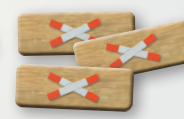
10 Time tokens



11 Location tokens



3 Cover tokens



## GAME PREPARATION

In your first game you use the gameboard that shows Central Europe. In later games you can choose which gameboard you wish to play. The rules for the North America map are largely the same as for Central Europe. You can find the differences on page 7 of this manual.

Carefully remove all parts from the punch board before the first game. You only need the octagonal location tokens for the variant.

1. In the first game you place the **26 switch discs** and **8 signal discs** as shown in the illustration: **1 switch disc** is placed on each junction with 3 converging tracks. **2 switch discs** are placed on each junction, where 4 tracks meet.
2. **8 green signal discs** are placed on red signal fields: **1** on each city, **3** on the tracks.
3. **8 goods cubes**, 2 of each colour, are placed on the 4 colour-corresponding goods cities.
4. **7 time tokens** are placed on the platform clock face.

**NOTE:** Remaining switch and signal discs, goods cubes and time tokens are put back in the box.

5. The **9 trains** are placed in the depot (bottom right) on their corresponding coloured locations.
6. The **2 deployment dice** and **3 movement dice** are laid out ready.
7. The **3 cover tokens** are placed next to the 3 helpers (top left).
8. The **18 departure cards** are shuffled, 2 cards are randomly drawn unseen and returned to the box. The remaining 16 departure cards are placed face down on the corresponding board space. The start card is placed face down on top of this draw pile.
9. The **81 action cards** are shuffled face down and **5 action cards** are dealt to each player. The remaining cards are placed face down on the corresponding space on the gameboard.
10. The person who last had to wait for a train becomes the first active player. If nobody has had to do this, decide amongst yourselves who will become the first **active player**.

**NOTE:** You are allowed to talk about the cards in your hand and discuss your actions during the game. If you cannot agree, the active player decides.

**IMPORTANT:** In later games you can place the **switch and signal discs anywhere**. One switch disc on 3-way junctions and 2 switch discs on 4-way junctions. 1 signal disc is placed on every city (regardless of whether it is a goods or port city), the remaining 3 discs can be placed on red signal fields as you like along the route.





**NOTE:** For technical reasons, the locations on the gameboard do not correspond to those on a real map. Similarly, the train routes may not show real connections.

# COURSE OF PLAY

A turn consists of 3 phases:

1. **Reveal departure card**
2. **Play action cards**
3. **Draw new action cards**

## 1. Reveal departure card



On your turn, take the **top departure card** and place it face up in front of you. Follow the instructions on the card from top to bottom which show the train colours you must move. You must move **all** trains of that colour which are on the tracks. This also applies to trains in the cities and starting locations. However, trains that are still in the depot stay where they are. Many of the instructions also state that a new train from the depot must **first** be deployed.



### Deploying a train

If this 'deploy train' icon is shown at the top of your card then you **must** take a new train from the depot and put it onto the map.

**Decide together which colour** you would like to use. The active player then rolls the **deployment dice** and adds them together. The result indicates the **starting location** for this train. The player places the train in the direction of travel on the starting location. If there is already a train at this location, **no** new train will be deployed. Instead you must remove **2 time tokens** from the clock face.

If you need to deploy a train and there are none in the depot then you must also remove 2 time tokens from the clock face. The more time tokens you lose, the harder it will be to win the game. More about this on page 6 'Time Tokens'.

**NOTE:** If the card shows that you should deploy 2 trains, you must choose trains of different colours.

**IMPORTANT:** The first active player reveals the **start card**, and each colour train is deployed as shown – first a black, then a brown and finally a grey. For this first turn only: If a starting location is already occupied, the dice are rerolled until a free starting location is available. You do not lose time tokens on this occasion.



### Moving trains

**All trains of the colour specified** on the departure card must now travel. The number of travel spaces is determined by a roll of the respectively coloured movement die.

If there is more than one train of this colour, the active player decides in which order the trains will travel before rolling the die. The die is thrown **individually** for every train.

If all trains of this colour are in the depot, the trains are not moved.

If a **multi-coloured** train is depicted on the card, you can **decide** which one colour of train you would like to move. If two multi-coloured trains are depicted on the card then you must choose **2 different colours** of train to move. This can also be a colour train where all trains are still in the depot. You decide which train to move first.

**NOTE:** If a card shows 3 multi-coloured trains then you must move all trains currently on the tracks, goods towns and starting locations. The active player determines the colour order in which the trains will move.

**IMPORTANT:** There is a specific die for every colour of train. These dice determine the speed of travel.



Black is the express train (numbers 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5)



Brown is the medium train (numbers 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4)



Grey is the slow train (numbers 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3)

When all trains of the colours shown on the card have been moved, the active player places the departure card on the discard pile and may play any action cards.

## 2. Play action cards

In this phase, you may play **any number** of your action cards. You may play all cards (which is common) or even no card (which is more rare). The following actions are available:



### Signal Setting Card

If your route is blocked by a red signal, you may switch it to green. To do this you transfer the green signal disc to a red signal space anywhere on the board and unlock your desired route.

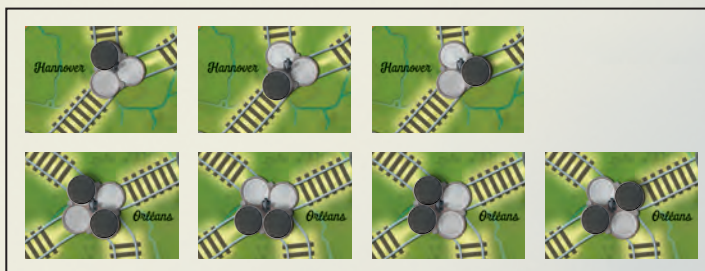
**IMPORTANT:** Every city must have **at least one** signal disc at any time.



### Switch Setting Card

If you wish to adjust a switch, you may do so. A 3-way junction requires you to move one switch disc to another in the same junction. A 4-way junction may require you to move one or even **both** switches. This ensures that your desired route becomes free.

**Examples:** This shows how switches can be moved when playing an action card.



### Train Movement Card

As active player you may **choose any one train** to move (except those in the depot). To do this, you roll the corresponding colour die and drive this train forwards according to the movement rules (see page 5 "Movement rules").



### Wild Action

By discarding any **2 action cards** the active player may perform any of the 3 mentioned actions.



### Loading the train

If there is an **unloaded** train in a city with goods cubes, the active player can discard any action card to load the train with 1 goods cube.

**IMPORTANT:** Only empty trains can be loaded. It is not possible to unload a train in a goods city and then reload a new goods cube.

When you have played an action card it is placed on the face-up discard pile next to the relevant draw pile.

### 3. Drawing new action cards

At the end of your turn, the active player draws **5 action cards** from the draw pile. If you still have cards in your hand you add these to your total. You may not hold more than 10 cards in your hand.



If necessary you must take fewer or no cards from the draw pile.

If the draw pile is empty, the discard pile must be shuffled and then becomes the new draw pile.

**Then it is the turn of the next player**, moving in a clockwise direction, to reveal the top departure card.

### MOVEMENT RULES

1. A train can be moved for two reasons; either with a departure card or through playing the action card 'moving a train'.
2. In both cases the active player rolls the corresponding colour movement dice. The number rolled indicates the **movement points** and with it how far the train **must** move. Every piece of track and each city counts as 1 movement point. Signal fields and junction points are not counted.

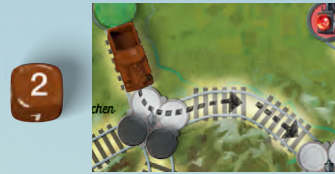


3. If your train cannot travel the full number of movement points specified, you must remove **1 time token from the clock face for every move not taken**.

4. A train always moves in the direction it is facing. If it is in a city, it may leave in any direction – if there is a green signal in that direction.



5. **Only 1 train** is allowed to stand on any one track section, city or starting location.
6. The train only moves through the **open direction** at junctions, **switch discs** block the other routes.



7. You are only allowed to drive **through green signal discs** and have to **stop in front of red signal fields**.



8. A train may **not collide** with another train, but must **stop at the track section behind it**.



9. A train has to **stop in goods cities** and in the **port city**. If movement points would take you further than this, you do **not** lose any time tokens.

10. **When a train reaches the port city** it is immediately returned to the depot. If the train was carrying goods, it is first unloaded and the goods are placed on the port storage spaces of the corresponding colour.



11. **If 2 trains collide head-on**, you must **remove 2 time tokens from the clock face for each movement point not fulfilled**. The train that was moving is returned to the depot.

If it is loaded, the goods are returned to the associated city.

12. If a train drives onto a **starting location**, you lose **2 time tokens**, regardless of how many movement points remain untaken. The train is then returned to the depot and any goods are returned to the associated city.



**NOTE:** See page 8 for a detailed example of a game turn.

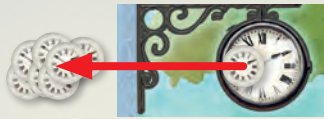
## Time tokens

You must remove time tokens from the clock face:

- for each unfulfilled movement point: 1
- if you cannot deploy a train: 2
- if you drive a train onto a starting location: 2
- If 2 trains collide head-on, for each unfulfilled movement point: 2



As soon as the **last** time token has been removed from the clock face, the game is paused. Now you must take the **top face-down departure card** from the draw pile and put it back **in the box** unseen. This means you have one less movement card available to use. Next, all time tokens are replaced back on the clock face.



**IMPORTANT:** If there are fewer time tokens on the clock face than you are required to remove then, after your pause, you should return correspondingly fewer tokens back to the clock face.

**Example:** *There are 2 time tokens on the clock face but you have to remove 3 tokens. You remove the 2 time tokens and then only put 6 out of 7 back on the clock face.*

## Helpers

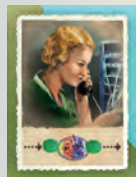
3 people are depicted in the top corner of each gameboard. Each brings an advantage that may only be **used once** in the entire game. As the active player, you may decide to call on one or several helpers at any time. You should discuss this together before making this decision. After you have used a helper, you place a cover token on the associated symbol field. This helper is no longer available to help you.

### Helpers in Central Europe



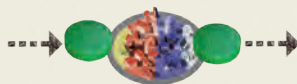
#### Logistician

A **rolled movement die** can be ignored and rerolled. The reroll number must be used.



#### Dispatcher

On this turn only, your trains may **move through any city** as if all signals are set to green. You may still stop in a city if that fits better with your planning, for example, if the signal on your route is not on green when you wish to leave the town. You may **not** use the train movement card to travel through a city and load your cargo. The Dispatcher can be called upon at any time to help you during this turn.



#### Train conductor

All trains of **one** colour depicted on the drawn departure card do not move.



**Example:** *There are 3 black trains on the route. You can decide that no black train moves. But it is not possible that 2 black trains remain in place and only 1 black train moves.*

## END OF THE GAME

As soon as you have delivered the eighth and last goods cube into port the game immediately ends and **you have all won!**

If the final departure card has been played and the active player did not manage to bring the last goods to the port then **you have all lost!**

If, on your last turn, you must remove a departure card, you immediately lose the game without completing this turn.

Try again. If you still don't manage to win the game then you can change the difficulty level to make the game a little easier.

## Adjusting the difficulty

### Easier rules

If, after several games, you have still not won, you may take an additional signal token to place on the board at the beginning of the game. You may also decide at the beginning of the game to remove only 1 or even no departure cards from the game.

If you still don't win, you can raise the number of time tokens that you have available to use before you lose a departure card.

To do this, place 8, 9 or even 10 time tokens on the clock face.

### Need a tougher challenge?

Have you won the game and find it too easy? You may decide at the beginning of a game to remove an extra departure card from the game. If you would like an even harder game, you may put an extra 2, 3 or more departure cards into the box.

You can also decide before the game that you must bring **10 goods cubes** rather than 8 into dock.

To do this, place 3 goods tokens of each colour on their corresponding cities. When you have delivered the initial 8 goods cubes to port you must then deliver 2 more goods cubes before your time runs out.

On the North America gameboard, an extra goods cube must be brought into each port.

## Variant 'The location tokens'



### Variable starting locations

You can set the numbers for the starting locations at random. To do this, mix the location tokens and place them face down on the locations and then reveal them. The location tokens remain on these areas throughout the game. By changing the starting locations, the deployment of trains leads to a harder game.

## Removing the deployment dice

Do you want to reduce the chance of new trains being deployed? Then leave the deployment dice in the box!

At the beginning of the game, the 11 location tokens are shuffled and three of them individually drawn at random. These successively determine the starting locations for one black, brown and grey train.

Then all 11 location tokens are shuffled again and stacked as a face down pile. If a departure card specifies that a train has to be deployed, just reveal the topmost location token and deploy the train to that location. This happens after you have decided on a train colour.

## Special rules for the North America gameboard

Unlike the map of Central Europe, the North America map has 2 port cities. You need to transport 1 goods cube of each colour to both New York and San Francisco port cities.

**IMPORTANT:** On this map your trains are basically allowed to **drive straight through any cities**, as long as at least 2 switches are green.

You can still stop in a city, if that fits better into your planning, e.g. to load goods there. However, you are not allowed to drive through a city and to load goods in one move.

To do this, you have to use two 'move train' action cards and any one card can be played to load.

**IMPORTANT:** Unlike on the Central European map, you are allowed to stop at the Port cities with **empty** trains or drive through them if the signals are green.

At the beginning of the game, 9 signal discs are placed (6 on the goods and port cities and 3 on the routes). For your first game, use the setup shown below.

All other rules of the game from the "Central Europe" gameboard also apply to the North America map.



## Helpers in North America



### Track manager

The drawn **departure card** may be ignored completely and put face down **under the draw pile**. The next departure card is then drawn and the instructions must be followed.



### Shunter

**Instead of throwing the deployment dice**, you may **decide the starting location** where a new train is deployed.



### Rail traffic controller

A **single train** depicted on the drawn departure card **does not move**. E.g. If 2 black trains are on the tracks, you can decide that one of them **stays where it is**. You must roll the dice to move the other black train.



**NOTE:** There are more switch discs than you require for this game. These are provided as spares and may be used in later expansion games.

## EXAMPLE OF A TURN

First the top departure card is revealed. The card shows that a new train must be deployed. You decide the colour of this train together. You decide to choose a black express train.



**A** The active player rolls a 6 and moves the black train from the depot to Calais (start location 6). If there had already been a train there, then the new train would have stayed in the depot and 2 time tokens would have been removed from the clock face. Then, the departure card instructions are followed, with first black and then grey trains moving, according to the individual dice rolls.

**B** A 4 is rolled for the new black train. As the signal is on green, the train can enter the city with 3 movement points. You do not have to take a time token for the unfulfilled fourth movement point as you always have to stop when entering a city.



After all trains have been moved as per the instructions on the departure card, the active player may use any action cards. If you did not use 1 of your cards on your last turn, you would now have 6 cards in your hand to use.



1. You load your black train up in Paris by using any one action card. You use one of your 'move train' cards.
2. Then you move a green signal disc to Paris, ensuring that at least 1 green signal remains in each city.
3. Next, you adjust the switch so that the black train has a clear route.
4. Then you play a 'move train' card and roll the die for the black train. You roll a 3 and therefore move your train 3 pieces of track along the free route.
5. Then you adjust the switch that you have just passed.
6. You then play a 'move train' card and roll a 4 for the brown train. As you can only move 3 spaces before you have to stop at the red signal, you have 1 unfulfilled movement point. This means that 1 time token is removed from the clock face.

Finally, you draw 5 new action cards from the draw pile. The next player in a clockwise direction is the new active player and reveals the top departure card.



**The author:** David Thompson, born 1979, lives with his wife and the three children in Dayton, Ohio. He works as an intelligence analyst for the US Department of Defence. This has proved helpful in his previous game designs which often reflect historical conflict. Switch and Signal is his first original cooperative game, developed for his parents who have a joint love of railway games.



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"For my parents, Warren and Carol Thompson"

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