AGE OF STEAM

2002	1-6 Players (4)	120 Mins.	Economic / Trains / Transportation

Can be played 1 or 2 players with the included 'Barbados / St. Lucia' expansion map and rules.

Object

The railroads of America are just beginning to set their tracks across the great Eastern side. There is money to be made and players must work to finance their rail lines while also making sure not to fall too far into debt. When routes are secured, goods can be shipped, earning the player victory points. The player with the most VP by the end of the game will be the winner.

Setup

- Set the game board out on the middle of the table.
- Place the Goods/Actions display and Income Track beside the board. Place the New City tiles, Dedicated Town Track tiles, and the 8 Town disks close to the board as well. Lastly, elect one player to be the banker. They should be able to access the money and are responsible for dealing out cash to all players.
- Place the Turn Track marker on the start of the Turn Track.
- Place all Goods cubes into the black bag. Draw out one cube at a time, placing the first cube on the upper left hand square of the Goods display, then the next on the square to the right of it, and so on, until the entire row is filled. Continue to fill the rows on the Goods display until each square for both Starting Cities tables and both New Cities tables contains a cube. (There should be 52 cubes on the Goods track at this point.)
- Draw 3 Goods cubes from the bag and place them in Pittsburgh. Then draw 3 Goods and place them in Wheeling. Draw 2 Goods cubes from the bag for each of the remaining Cities. (Note that Cities are coloured hexes with City names on them. White circle hexes are Towns.)
- Each player takes 5 round wooden disks and 20 Locomotives in their colour. Each player places a disk on the Engine Track on the '1 Link' square and one disk on the Income Track on the '0' Square.
- Each player rolls 3 dice. The highest roller places a disk on the '1st' place on the Player Order track. The next highest roller places a disk on the '2nd' place space, and so on, until all players are represented on the Player Order track.
- Each player places a disk on the '2 shares' box of the Issued Shares Track and receives $10.
- Note that each player has a disk remaining. This disk will be used to mark which action they take during the game.
- Note that the Turn Track shows when the game ends.

Rules of play

Sequence of Play

- The game is played over a series of turns, with each turn having 10 steps. The game ends at the completion of the indicated turn, depending on the number of players in the game (shown on the Turn Track).
- The steps are: 1) Issue Shares; 2) Determine Player Order; 3) Select Actions; 4) Build Track; 5) Move Goods; 6) Collect Income; 7) Pay Expenses; 8) Income Reduction; 9) Goods Growth; 10) Advance Turn Marker.

Step 1: Issue Shares

- One way players earn money in the game is for their railroad to issue shares. Each player starts the game with 2 shares issued. Each share issued grants the player $5 (which is why each player starts with $10).
- Shares are issued in Player Order. A player is not required to issue shares beyond the 2 shares with which they started the game.
- A player may issue as many shares as they like, with each additional share issued giving them $5. Players may not issue more than 15 shares in the game. For each additional share they issue, they move their 'Issued Share' token one space forward on the track and take $5.

- Players should note that during 'Step 7: Pay Expenses' players must pay the bank $1 for each share they have issued.

Step 2: Determine Player Order

- Starting with the first player, players will now bid for player order. The first player starts the bid at a minimum of $1, or they may drop out immediately, taking the last place position, given the number of players in the game.
- Players continue to bid, either raising the last called bid of another player or dropping out and taking the next available position from last place.
- When a player is the first to drop out, they take the last position and pay no money for it, even if they called money out in a previous bid. Remaining players continue to either raise the bid from the last called amount, or drop out. When dropping out, the remaining players pay half the amount they bid before dropping out (rounded up). The last two players remaining in the bid continue to bid for position. When one drops out, they pay the full amount they last bid and take the 2nd place position. The last player bidding will take the first position and play the full amount that they last called.
- Later in the game, a player may be able to take the 'Turn Order' action. This allows them to pass once during Step 2: Determine Player Order. Instead of dropping out, this player simply says "pass". They may continue being in the bid. The player who takes this action can only pass once.
- Note that if a player makes a bid and the rest of the players clockwise from them drop out and the bid gets back to that player, they do not need to raise their own bid. They simply state that their current bid stands. (You only need to raise the bids called by other players.)

Step 3: Select Actions

- In player order, each player selects one of the seven special 'Selected Actions' that are available to use during the round. Each action may only be selected once by each player. The actions will be detailed here and also referred to later on as to the timing and circumstance of their use:
- *First Move*: Used during 'Step 5: Move Goods', the player who selects this action may choose to be the first player to move goods in both phases of this step, regardless of Player Order.
- *First Build*: Used during 'Step 4: Build Track', the player who selects this action may choose to be the first player to build track during this step, regardless of Player Order.
- *Engineer*: Used during 'Step 4: Build Track', the player who selects this action may build 4 track tiles instead of just 3 track track tiles.
- *Locomotive*: The player who selects this action may immediately move their Links disk on the Engine Track up one link. The maximum number of Links is still 6.
- *Urbanization*: Used during 'Step 4: Build Track', the player who selects this action may place one of the New City tiles on a Town before they build their track.
- *Production*: Used during 'Step 9: Goods Growth', the player who selects this action may, at the beginning of the step, randomly draw two Goods cubes from the bag and place them on any two empty boxes on the Goods Display, one cube per box. If there is none or only one box empty, they draw zero or one cube, respectively.
- *Turn Order*: Used during 'Step 2: Determine Player Order', the player who selects this action may say "pass" during the next bid for Player Order. They have the opportunity to bid the next time the bid comes around to them. The player taking this action can only pass once during this step.

Step 4: Build Track

- The gameboard is the centre of the game and where rail track is built. The board shows a variety of geographic features, including mountains and rivers. Any area where there are no hexes (including the Great Lakes) cannot be built on.
- There are two types of track tiles: simple and complex. Simple track tiles only show one piece of track, entering and exiting from two sides of the hex. Complex track tiles show two or more pieces of track. These tracks may be crossing each other or simply coexist on the same tile. (Note that there are many more simple track pieces available in the game than complex pieces).

- Some track pieces are known as 'Dedicated Town' track pieces. They show a grey circle in their centre. These hexes can only be placed on the towns on the game board (that are also marked with grey circles).
- Towns that are printed on the board can also have simple or complex track placed on top of their hexes as well. When this is done, the player immediately places a Town counter (white wooden disk) on top of the track tile to show that a Town is present here.
- During this step, the player who chose the 'Urbanization' action in the previous phase (if any) is able to build a 'New City' tile on top of a Town hex. (The New City tile is taken from the supply) New City tiles can only be placed on top of Town hexes. (New City rules will be explained later.)

Building Track
- Track is built in Player Order. A player may place (or replace) up to 3 track tiles on their turn.
- The very first track tile every player builds at the start of the game must be adjacent to a City and the track must connect to the City. Each player may only connect their first tile to a City with a simple track tile. While Cities do not show printed tracks on their hexes, it is assumed that tracks can be connected on all six sides of the City hex and connect to every other hex-side on the City hex. Thus, all track built from now on will connect to at least one City.
- Track tiles may not be built so that the track runs off the board or into one of the Great Lakes. A track cannot be built so it directly connects to another player's track. Lastly, track tiles can never be built on top of a City hex.
- A line of Track tiles that connects a City or Town to another City or Town is called a 'Completed Railroad Link'. Track cannot connect itself back to the same City or Town from which it originated (it cannot double-back). Track that does not connect at least two Cities or Towns is called an 'Unfinished Track Section'.
- Whenever a player finishes building some track, they place one of their locomotives on the track to denote ownership. Locomotives can be placed on either finished or unfinished track sections.
- If on the player's next turn they do not contribute more track tiles to an Unfinished Track Section, they lose the ownership of that track and must remove their locomotive. If on a later turn another player extends this now unowned track section, they may claim it for themselves, placing a locomotive on it. A player must actually lengthen the line to claim ownership, not simply replace a tile.
- Completed Railroad Links do not have to be extended each turn as they are already complete. As soon as an Unfinished Line is connected to another Town or City, it is considered Completed and the ownership of the Line is permanent.
- Note that the player who took the Engineering action in the last step (if any) is able to build up to 4 tracks this turn, not just 3.
- Note that the player who took the First Build action in the last step (if any) is able to build track before any other player, regardless of Player Order.

Building Track Costs
- It costs money to place track. The costs are:
    - Simple Track = $2 each tile
    - Complex Track (Coexist) = $3 each tile
    - Complex Track (Crossing) = $4 each tile
    - Building in river hex = +$1 each tile
    - Building in mountain hex = +$2 each tile
    - Building in a Town hex = $1 and +$1 for each track connected to the Town in the Town tile. (Note that each Complex Track tile has track coming in on 4 sides, so the total for building Track in a Town with a Complex Track tile would be $5.)

Replacing Track
- As part of their regular track tiles that a player builds, they may replace track instead of building new track. They may wish to do this to cross a formerly laid track, or to coexist with another track, or to enter a town.
- Terrain features are ignored when replacing track and do not add to the cost of replacement.

- A player may never modify the track that another player has laid, but they may be able to replace a track tile laid by another player if it does not affect the current layout of that player's track. The new track, however, must always at least link to a rail that is being created by the current player.
- The current player may also wish to redirect a track they own or a track that is currently unowned. This is to allow a player to redirect track that might have become blocked or put in a bad position during the game. Only the last tile placed in a Track section can be redirected; a Track tile cannot be removed from the middle of an existing Track section for the purposes of redirection.
- A player may also wish to replace a Track tile that is entering a Town. They may do so as long as the new Track tile also enters the Town.
- Replacing a simple Track tile with a Complex Crossing Track tile or replacing any Track tile in a Town costs $3. All other replacements cost $2 (including redirections). Remember that terrain is ignored when determining costs.

Placing New City Tiles
- The player who chose the Urbanization action (if any did) gets to place one of the New City tiles on any Town hex. This is a free placement and they still may build track as normal.
- If any Track tiles exists on a Town hex, it is removed before placing the New City tile on top of the Town hex. Of course, New City tiles cannot be placed on other Cities.

Step 5: Move Goods
- In Player Order, each player may move one good (cube) following the rules regarding Moving Goods (more later). After each player has moved one good, each player (again, in Player Order) may move a second good, following all of the rules as normal.
- The player who chose the First Move action (if any) has the option of moving a good first in both movement rounds, regardless of Player Order.
- Goods are moved across Completed Rail Links into Towns and Cities. The objective is to move a Good into a City that matches the colour of the good.
- Each cube can only enter and exit a City or Town once during a turn. As soon as it enters a City that matches its colour it must immediately stop movement.
- Goods cannot be moved more than the number of Links allowed by that Player's disk on the Engine Track. Once a good has finished moving, the cube is returned to the bag of unused goods. Goods can only be moved if they would end their movement in a City that matches its colour.
- Each different Completed Railroad Link a good travels over increases the income of the Completed Railroad Link's owner by 1 on the Income Track. Their Income disk is moved immediately. Players can move goods over other player's tracks, so players must keep a close eye on whose tracks are being used so that these players are awarded the Income increase on the Income Track.
- In one of the two rounds to move goods, the player may instead opt to move their disk on the Engine Track up one link. (The maximum is still 6 links.)
- Players may also opt to not do anything on either or both of their movement rounds.

Step 6: Collect Income
- Players now collect the income shown by their disk on the Income Track.

Step 7: Pay Expenses
- Players must now pay for their expenses. Each player must pay $1 for every share they issued (as shown on the Issued Share track) plus $1 for every Link their locomotives can traverse (shown on the Engine Track). Expenses are paid for in cash.
- If a player is unable to pay the full amount of their expenses, they must reduce their income by one for every dollar that they owe, by moving their disk on the Income Track. If a player ends up having $0 or less on the income track, they are immediately eliminated from the game (insolvency). All of their Locomotives and Uncompleted Railroad Links are removed from the game board. All of their disks are also removed from the displays.

Step 8: Income Reduction

- Each player's income is reduced depending on the amount shown on the Income track. The Income Reduction is marked on the Income track by moving each player's marker back on the track to reflect the reduction. The results are: Over $50 (-$10); $41-$50 (-$8); $31-$40 (-$6); $21-$30 (-$4); $11-$20 (-$2).

Step 9: Goods Growth

- During this step, goods are removed from the Goods Display and added to the game board. The Goods Display is divided into two sides: the light section on the left is resolved first and the dark section on the right is resolved last.
- A number of dice are rolled equal to the number of players at the start of the game. Place each die above the column on the light side that matches the number rolled. For each die that is above the indicated column, remove a Goods cube from the Display (starting from the top and moving down) adding them to the indicated City.
- Columns 3-6 on the light side and 1-4 on the dark side also have corresponding New City goods that might go out to the gameboard as well. For example, if a '3' is rolled, one good will go out to the City marked '3' and one good will go out to the New City marked 'A' (or 'G', depending on the side). Note that if the indicated New City is not yet on the board, then no good goes out.
- If more dice are rolled for a City than the number of goods in that City column then they are just excess dice.
- If a player chose the Production action during 'Step 3: Select Actions' they may randomly draw two goods cubes from the bag at the beginning of this step and place them on any two empty boxes on the Goods Display, one cube per box, before the Goods Growth dice are rolled.
- Once the left-hand light side is resolved, roll dice for the right-hand dark side, placing cubes out as normal.

Step 10: Advance Turn Marker

- Advance the Turn Marker on the Turn track. After the last turn, proceed to Victory Point Computations. If it is not the last turn, return to the Issue Shares step and begin a new turn. (Note that the Turn track notes how many turns there are, depending on the number of players.)

End of Game and Victory Point Computations

- Players receive:
    - 3 VP for every dollar of income shown on the Income Track.
    - 1 VP for each section of Track the comprises part of a Completed Railroad Link
    - Minus 3 VP (-3) for every share they issued as shown on the Issued Shares Track.
- Money has no value at the end of the game.
- The player with the most VP at the end of the game is the winner. Ties are possible.