

THE HOBBIT

— CARD GAME —

A trick-taking game by Martin Wallace for 2–5 players ages 12 and up

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This rulesheet, 5 Character cards, 60 playing cards in five colours.

OVERVIEW

In this trick-taking game, the good side (Bilbo, Gandalf, and Thorin) competes against the evil side (Smaug and Bolg). By winning tricks, players can assign cards to themselves or their opponents. Only by assigning cards wisely can one side win victory over the other.

GAME SETUP

To prepare a game of *The Hobbit Card Game*, consult the “Dealing Character Cards” table below and take the appropriate Character cards for the number of players in the game. Return any leftover Character cards to the game box. Then randomly deal one Character card facedown to each player. Each player reveals his Character card and places it faceup in front of himself.

Note: To prepare a two-player game of *The Hobbit Card Game*, see “Two-Player Game” on the back of this rulesheet.

Dealing Character Cards

Side	3 Players	4 Players	5 Players
Good	Bilbo, Thorin	Bilbo, Thorin, Gandalf	Bilbo, Thorin, Gandalf
Evil	Smaug	Smaug	Smaug, Bolg

Then shuffle the 60 playing cards and deal them randomly to the players as indicated in the “Dealing Playing Cards” table below. Then each evil-side player chooses and discards cards from his hand until he has the same amount of cards in his hand as the good-side players have in theirs.

Dealing Playing Cards

Side	3 Players	4 Players	5 Players
Good	9 cards each	8 cards each	7 cards each
Evil	12 cards; must discard 3 cards of his choice	13 cards; must discard 5 cards of his choice	9 cards; must discard 2 cards of his choice


PLAYING THE GAME

The player with the “Thorin” Character card opens the first trick. He plays one card from his hand faceup in the middle of the table; its colour determines the colour of that trick. Proceeding clockwise, each player must play one card of matching colour from his hand faceup onto the table, if possible. If a player does not have a card in his hand that matches the colour of the trick, he plays one card of any other colour. Purple cards are **TRUMPS** and follow special rules (see below).

After players have each played one card, they check to see who has won the trick. If there is no trump card in the trick, the player who played the highest value card of the trick’s colour wins the trick. If there is only one purple trump card in the trick, the player who played the purple card wins the trick. If there are two or more purple trump cards in the trick, the player who played the highest trump card wins the trick.

The player who wins the trick takes all the cards played in that trick. Then he proceeds to assign them (see “Assigning Cards” below). After assigning cards, the player who won the trick begins the next trick.

The round ends when players have no more cards in their hand and the cards from the last trick have been assigned.



Gandalf

Bilbo

Thorin

Smaug

Example of Winning a Trick

Bilbo starts with the yellow “6” and defines yellow as the colour for the trick.

Smaug has one yellow card in his hand. He must play it, as yellow is the colour of the trick. He plays the yellow “7.”

Thorin has no yellow card in his hand and plays the blue “11.”

Gandalf also has no yellow card in his hand and plays the purple “3.”

Gandalf wins the trick (he has the highest trump card in the trick).

ASSIGNING CARDS

The player who wins the trick consults his Character card for the rules he must observe when assigning cards. When a player assigns a card, he places it faceup under the Character card to which he is assigning the card. The symbols on the assigned card must be visible to all players.

A player can accumulate any number of cards that damage him (e.g., Bilbo can have three or more orc helmets). If a player is assigned a card which heals him (see “Card Symbols”), he chooses one card which damages him from beneath his Character card (if he has any) and immediately discards it, along with the healing card. If a player receives a card which heals him and he has not been assigned any cards which damage him, he immediately discards the healing card. If a player is assigned a card which has no symbols, he immediately discards it. When a player discards a card, he places it faceup in the communal discard pile.

CARD SYMBOLS



Each card with white stars does one point of damage to an evil-side player or heals one point of damage for a good-side player.



Each card with orc helmets does one point of damage to a good-side player or heals one point of damage for an evil-side player.



Each card with brown pipes entitles the player to which it is assigned one extra card in round two.

Characters Assigning Cards

Bilbo must assign one card to himself, assign one card to another player, and discard the remaining cards.

Thorin must shuffle all the cards that were played in the trick facedown and randomly assign one to each player, flipping it faceup.

Smaug may assign up to one card to each player, including himself. Then he discards any cards he did not assign (this could be all cards in the trick).

Gandalf assigns cards exactly like Smaug does.

Bolg must assign one card to another player and discard the remaining cards.



Example of Assigning Cards

Gandalf assigns the cards he has just won in the “Example of Winning a Trick”:

He assigns the yellow “7” with a star to himself and heals the damage he has suffered from an orc helmet earlier. He discards both cards (i.e., places them in the discard pile).

He assigns the purple “3” with a star to Smaug, which causes Smaug a damage.

He assigns the blue “11” with a pipe to Bilbo. Bilbo will receive one additional card at the beginning of the second round.

Gandalf discards the yellow “6” with an orc helmet.

END OF THE FIRST ROUND

After each player has played all the cards in his hand and the cards from the last trick have been assigned, the first round ends and each player checks to see if he is **ELIMINATED**. If a player's Character card has suffered two or more points of damage, that player is eliminated. An eliminated player returns his Character card to the game box and discards all cards assigned to it.



Example of Elimination

At the end of the round, Smaug has two stars under his Character card and is therefore eliminated from the game.

GAME END AFTER ROUND ONE

At the end of the first round, if it is impossible for the good side to fulfill its victory condition (see “Winning the Game”), the evil side immediately wins the game. If all players are eliminated at the end of the first round, the evil side wins. If at the end of the first round all evil-side players are eliminated and the good-side players fulfill their victory condition (see “Winning the Game”), the good side wins.

THE SECOND ROUND

If neither side has won at the end of the first round, play a second round. Shuffle all unassigned playing cards together and deal cards to each player in the same manner as in the first round (see “Dealing the Playing Cards”) with the following exception: for each card with pipe symbols assigned to his Character card, deal that player one additional playing card. That player must then openly choose and discard from his hand a number of cards equal to the number of additional cards he was dealt (both from pipes and from being on the evil side, if applicable).

Players must discard their additional cards simultaneously. If Thorin is still in the game, he opens the first trick of the second round. If not, Bilbo opens the first trick. If Gandalf is the only good-side survivor of the first round, he opens the trick. The second round proceeds in the same manner as the first. At the end of the second round, the game ends.

WINNING THE GAME

The good side wins the game if:

3-Player Game	4-Player Game	5-Player Game
One or more good-side characters survive.	Two or more good-side characters survive.	The number of surviving good-side characters is equal to or greater than the number of surviving evil-side characters.

If the good side does not fulfill its victory condition at the end of the second round, the evil side wins, even if all evil-side players have been eliminated.

TWO-PLAYER GAME

The game for two players is played with the following changes: one player places Smaug in front of himself, and the other player places both Bilbo and Thorin in front of himself. Deal each **player** (not character) a hand of nine playing cards. The good-side player opens the first trick of each round.

When the good-side player wins a trick, he can either assign one card to Bilbo and one to Thorin, **or** he can assign one card to either Bilbo or Thorin and the other card to Smaug. The good-side player cannot discard cards from tricks he wins. If Bilbo is eliminated before Thorin, the good-side player must assign the cards randomly to himself and Smaug after winning a trick.

When Smaug wins a trick, he can assign the cards to any of the characters, but he can only assign one card per **character**. When assigning cards with orc helmets to the good-side player, Smaug must assign the first card with orc helmets to Thorin. If he has two cards with orc helmets in a trick that he wants to assign to the good side, he may assign one to Thorin and one to Bilbo.

If Bilbo or Thorin has **three or more** points of damage at the end of a round, that character is eliminated (it is possible for both characters to be eliminated in the same round). If Smaug has **two or more** points of damage at the end of a round, he is eliminated. If after two rounds of play at least one good-side character survives, the good side wins. The good side also wins if at least one good-side character survives and Smaug is eliminated at the end of round one. If Smaug eliminates both good-side characters, he wins the game.

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Martin Wallace wishes to thank the playtesters Simon Bracegirdle, Andy Ogden, Hannah Bryan and Dave Beale Stamford.

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