INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your candidacy in The Primary! Outsmart your opponents during a presidential primary election by traveling the country, hosting rallies and fundraisers, advertising, and gaining the favor of powerful Super PACs.

Regions across the country will vote at different times during the eleven rounds of the game, and you will have to predict your opponents' strategies in order to earn the most delegates and win your party's nomination!

Good luck, candidates!

GAME CONTENTS

- **A.** This Rulebook *(1)*
- **B.** Game Board *(1)*
- **C.** Pawns *(5)*
- **D.** Scoring Stars *(5)*
- **E.** Action Cards *(70 total - 14 per player)*
- **F.** Candidate Cards *(12)*
- **G.** News Cards *(18)*
- **H.** Influence Cubes *(150 total - 30 per player)*
- **I.** Round Tokens *(17)*
- **J.** Voting Markers *(3)*
- **K.** First Player Token *(1)*
- **L.** Bot Cards *(18) [Solo variant]*
- **M.** Custom Die *(1) [Solo variant]*



OBJECTIVE

Your goal in The Primary is to become your political party's nominee for President of the United States, by winning the most delegates from regional elections. To do this, you must have the most Influence in a region at the time of its vote.

Influence cubes are both gained and deployed using seven different types of Action cards. Each round, you will play four Action cards face-down – committing to execute those actions in turn order. News cards provide unique events each round and Candidate cards give players special abilities that can change the course of the campaign!

SETUP

- Open the **game board** and place it the middle of your playing space.
- Shuffle the **News cards** and place them face-down next to the game board.
- Each player selects 1 **pawn**, 30 **Influence cubes** and 1 **Scoring Star** of the same color.
- Each player places their Scoring Star on the number 0 on the scoring track, located around the edge of the game board.
- Deal each player 2 random **Candidate cards**. Players choose to keep 1 card and can use its ability throughout the game. Candidate cards not kept by players are removed from play.

  IMPORTANT: *Candidate card abilities are public information and should be shared with all players now.*

- The number on the top right corner of the Candidate card shows the amount of starting Influence cubes for each Candidate *(See Fig. 1)*

Scan this QR code to watch a how-to-play video!



Figure 1 - Candidate starting Influence cubes

- Each player takes their starting Influence cubes from their personal bank, creating their hand of available Influence cubes.

  IMPORTANT: *Players may only spend Influence from their hand of available Influence cubes.*

  Note: *It is recommended to keep your personal bank of Influence cubes in its plastic zip bag, in order to avoid confusion with your hand of available Influence cubes.*

- Give each player their 14 **Action cards** *(See page 3)*

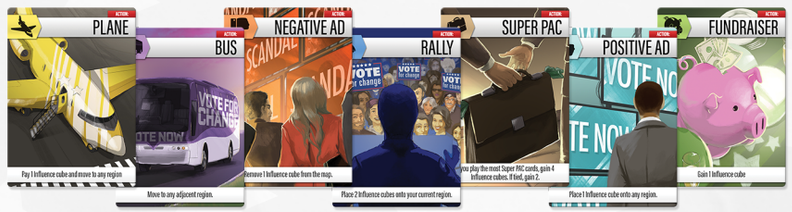


Figure 2 – The Action cards

- Assign first player by determining who was the first person to cast a vote in a presidential primary election. Give them the **First Player Token** and pass it left to the next player at the end of each round.
- Place 3 **Round Tokens** in the "Non-Voting Tokens" area of the board *(See Fig. 3)*

  Note: *It is recommended to use Round Tokens 1, 4, and 9 here for your first few games, but any 3 Round Tokens can be used.*



Figure 3 – The Non-Voting Tokens area of the board

- Randomly place 1 of the remaining Round Tokens on each region, with the numbers face-up.

  Note: *There are 2 Round Tokens numbered 3, 6, 8, and 10 and there are 3 Round Tokens numbered 11. Multiple regions may have Round Tokens of the same number on them.*

- Place a **Voting Marker** next to the Round Token numbered 1. The Voting Markers are used to show the current round. The dots on each Round Token show how many total Round Tokens of each number there are.

  Note: *When a Voting Marker is next to a Round Token within a region, it shows that the region will vote during the current round.*

  Note: *When a Voting Marker is next to a Round Token in the Non-Voting Tokens area of the board, it shows that the Round Token does not correspond with a regional vote.*

  Note: *In a random setup, it is possible for Round Tokens with the same number to be in a region and in the Non-Voting Tokens area. The Round Token(s) in a region will still correspond with a vote.*

- First player chooses their home region where they will start the game, followed by the other players in clockwise turn order. Each player places their pawn and 2 Influence cubes from the bank in their chosen home region *(See Fig. 4)*

  Note: *Players may choose to start in the same home region.*



Figure 4 – Setup for a 3-player game

GAMEPLAY

The game lasts a total of 11 rounds, and each round contains 4 phases:
NEWS, ACTION, VOTE, and **ORGANIZE.**

1 NEWS

- Move the Voting Marker(s) next to the Round Token(s) that match the current round.
- First player draws the top News card and reads its effect to the other players.
- Resolve any effects of the News card.

  Note: *News card effects only apply to the current round, unless stated otherwise.*

  Note: *News card effects apply to all players, not just the player reading it.*

  Note: *When applicable, execute News card effects in turn order, starting with first player.*

- Place the News card face-up in a discard pile next to the game board.

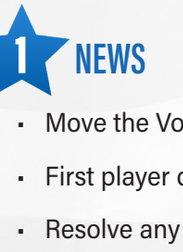
2 ACTION

The Action cards and their quantities in each player's hand are listed below:



BUS (1x)
Move your pawn to any region adjacent to its current region.

Note: *You must travel to a new region.*



PLANE (1x)
Pay 1 Influence cube **from your hand** to the bank and move your pawn to any region.

Note: *You must travel to a new region.*



RALLY (3x)
Place 2 Influence cubes **from your hand** onto your current region.

Note: *If you play a Rally card and only have 1 Influence cube, you must still place it in your current region.*



FUNDRAISER (3x)
Gain 1 Influence cube from the bank and place it into your hand.



POSITIVE AD (1x)
Place 1 Influence cube **from your hand** onto any region.



NEGATIVE AD (1x)
Remove any 1 Influence cube from any region and return it to the bank.



SUPER PAC (4x)
The player with the most Super PAC cards played at the end of the round gains 4 Influence cubes from the bank and places them into their hand.

IMPORTANT: *If there is a tie between players with 1 or more Super PAC cards played, all tied players gain 2 Influence cubes from the bank and place them into their hands.*

- From their hand of 14 Action cards, each player simultaneously selects 4 Action cards. These cards are placed face-down in their desired order of execution from left to right, forming a queue.
- Starting with first player and proceeding in clockwise order, each player executes the action of the leftmost face-down Action card in their queue. When executing the Action card, flip it face-up.

  IMPORTANT: *Players must execute each of the Action cards they commit to their queue. Action cards may not be skipped or forfeited.*
- Each player continues to execute their leftmost face-down Action card in turn order, until all 4 Action cards in each player's queue are executed *(See Fig. 5)*
- Determine who played the most Super PAC cards during the round. That player gains 4 Influence cubes from the bank into their hand.

  Note: *If there is a tie between players who played 1 or more Super PAC cards, all tied players gain 2 Influence cubes from the bank into their hands.*

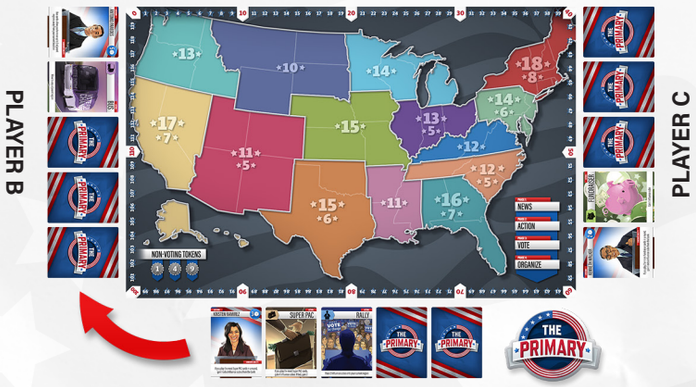


Figure 5 - It is player B's turn to execute an Action card

3 VOTE

If 1 or more regions are voting (they will have Voting Markers on them and their Round Tokens will match the current round) follow the instructions below:

WINNER-TAKES-ALL REGION

- These regions only have a 1st place delegate award *(See Fig. 6)*
- The delegates from these regions are awarded to the player with the most Influence in the region.

  Note: *If there is a tie, the delegates are evenly split between all tied players, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*



Figure 6 - A winner-takes-all region with one delegate award

PROPORTIONAL REGION

- These regions have both 1st and 2nd place delegate awards *(See Fig. 7)*
- The larger delegate award is given to the player with the most Influence in the region.

  Note: *If there is a tie for the most Influence, the 1st and 2nd place delegate awards are summed up and evenly split between all tied players, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*

  Note: *If there is only 1 player with Influence in the region, they are given both delegate awards.*
- The smaller delegate award is given to the player with the second most Influence in the region.

  Note: *If there is a tie for the second most Influence, the 2nd place delegate award is evenly split between all tied players, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*

IMPORTANT: *A player's pawn counts as 1 Influence in the region where it is located.*

Note: *If there is no Influence in a region when it votes, its delegates are not given to any player.*

- Add the amount of delegates won to each corresponding player's total, using their Scoring Star.



PLAYER	INFLUENCE CUBES	PAWNS	TOTAL INFLUENCE
Blue	2	1	3
Red	3	0	3
White	1	0	1

Figure 7 - A tied vote in a proportional region

4 ORGANIZE

- Remove all the Influence cubes from each region that voted and return them to the bank.
- Flip over the Round Token(s) for the completed round to show the checkmark.
- Move the Voting Marker(s) next to the Round Token(s) corresponding to the next round.
- Return all played Action cards back into their owners' hands. All Action cards are available for use every round, unless specified by a News card.
- Pass the First Player Token one player to the left.
- Begin the next round, starting with the News phase.

ENDING THE GAME

After the final region votes in round 11, the player with the most delegates wins the game!

Note: *In the case of players tied with the most delegates at the end of the game, the tied player with the most Influence cubes in their hand wins!*

Note: *If there is still a tie, hold a runoff vote between the tied players and play another game of The Primary!*



GAMEPLAY VARIANTS

SOLO VARIANT

In this variant, you play against an incumbent "Bot" candidate whose actions are determined by a random **Bot card** played each round. The rules below are used in addition to the standard rules.

SETUP

- Decide the level of difficulty for your game and begin with the corresponding number of initial Bot Influence cubes:

  Hard *– 24 Bot Influence cubes*

  Normal *– 20 Bot Influence cubes*

  Easy *– 16 Bot Influence cubes*



Figure 8 - A 2 was rolled and 2 Bot Influence cubes were placed in the region

- Starting with the region worth the most total delegates, roll the **custom die**. Place Bot Influence cubes in the region equal to the number rolled. Continue this process for each region, in descending total delegate value, until you place all the initial Bot Influence cubes *(See Fig. 8)*

  Note: *If you have extra initial Bot Influence cubes remaining after rolling for all the regions, re-roll and add more Bot Influence cubes, starting with the region that has the least Bot Influence cubes in it.*

- Place the Bot's pawn in the region worth the most total delegates, where it has Influence.
  Note: *The Bot does not get 2 extra Influence cubes in its home region.*

- Shuffle the Bot cards and place them face-down next to the game board.

GAMEPLAY

During the Action Phase, follow this order:

- Commit 4 Action cards, in the left to right order of how they will be executed.
- Execute your first 2 Action cards.
- Draw the top Bot card and resolve its effects *(See Fig. 9)*
- Move the Bot's pawn according to the numbered criteria. If criterion #1 isn't sufficient to determine the Bot's new region, continue to criterion #2 (while still applying criterion #1)
- If criteria #1 and #2 aren't sufficient to determine the Bot's new region, continue to criterion #3 (while still applying criteria #1 and #2)

  Note: *There may be a scenario where the Bot does not move due to the numbered criteria*

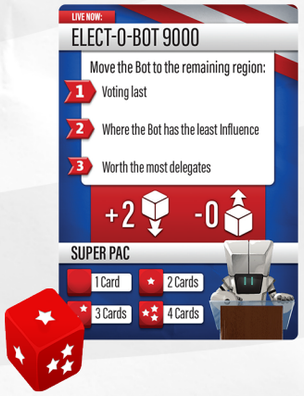


Figure 9 - A 1 was rolled and the Bot "plays" 2 Super PAC cards that round

- Place Bot Influence and/or remove player Influence cubes in the Bots current region, according to the Bot card *(See Fig. 9)*
- Roll the custom die and compare it to the Super PAC dice values on the Bot card, in order to determine how many Super PAC cards are "played" by the Bot *(See Fig. 9)*

  Note: *The Bot does not gain Bot Influence cubes by winning or tying the Super PAC - it only prevents you from gaining Influence cubes.*

- Execute your remaining 2 Action cards *(See Fig. 10)*



Figure 10 - Play 2 Action Cards, 1 Bot Card, and then 2 Action Cards

TWO-PLAYER VARIANT

When setting up a two-player game, you may choose to use the custom die to place Influence cubes for an incumbent "Bot" candidate. In order to win a delegate award in a region, either player must have more Influence than their opponent and the Bot, as if there were 3 players.

To set up, roll the custom die for each region. Place Bot Influence cubes in the region equal to the number rolled *(See Fig. 8)*

Rally and Positive Ad cards may place either your Influence cubes or Bot Influence cubes, depending on your strategy.

TEAM VARIANT

In this variant, 4 players are divided between 2 teams. During the Vote phase, each team's Influence in a voting region is added together in order to determine which team wins the delegate award(s) from that region *(See Fig. 11)*

TEAM	PLAYER	INFLUENCE CUBES	PAWNS	TOTAL INFLUENCE	TEAM TOTAL
A	Blue	1	1	2	4
A	Green	2	0	2	
B	Red	3	1	4	5
B	Yellow	0	1	1	



Figure 11 - Team B has the most Influence and wins 11 delegates. Team A wins 5 delegates

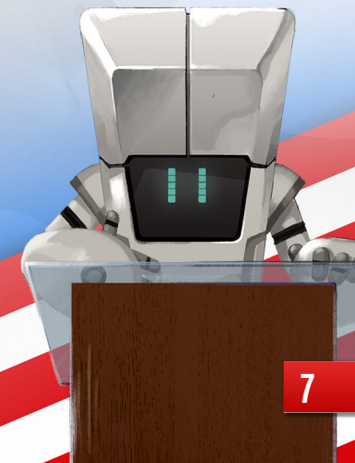
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For more rule clarifications and frequently asked questions, please visit the following website:
www.mountaintop.games/games/the-primary/faq

Q: Is there a penalty for misplaying an Action card? For example - I played a Plane card, but do not have an Influence cube to pay for it."
A: There is no penalty for misplaying an Action card - you just have less valid actions that round!

Q: What should I do if I run out of Bot Influence cubes in the solo variant?
A: You can use a secondary color for the Bot, if all the Bot Influence cubes are in use.

Q: On the Bot cards, does the "smallest margin of victory" include regions that are tied, or have no Influence cubes in them?
A: Yes - a tie (whether 0 – 0 or 3 – 3, etc) counts as the smallest margin of victory.



RULES SUMMARY

NEWS

- At the beginning of every round, first player draws a News card and all players resolve its effect.

ACTION

- Each player commits 4 Action cards face-down, in the left to right order they will be executed.
- Players take turns flipping over their leftmost Action card face-up and executing its action.
- The player with the most Super PAC cards each round gains 4 Influence cubes. If there is a tie of at least 1 Super PAC card, each tied player gains 2 Influence cubes.

VOTING

- The player(s) with the most Influence (remember, Influence cubes and pawns all count as 1 Influence each) in a region voting at the end of the round wins its delegate award(s).
- If there is a tie, the delegates are split evenly, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

ORGANIZE

- Remove all Influence cubes from any regions that voted and return them to the bank.
- Move the Voting Marker(s) to the Round Token(s) for the next round.
- Flip over the Round Token(s) from the completed round, to show the checkmark.
- Pass the First Player Token one player to the left.

ENDING THE GAME

- The player with the most delegates at the end of 11 rounds wins the game!
- If there is a tie, the tied player with the most Influence cubes in their hand wins the game.
- If there is still a tie, hold a runoff vote between the tied players and play another game of The Primary!

CREDITS

GAME DESIGN
Matt Quock

ILLUSTRATIONS
Rocio Ogñenovich

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Sebastian Koziner

GAME DEVELOPMENT
Justin Hertz, Abby Schultz, and Nate Zabel

SPECIAL THANKS:
All the amazing Kickstarter backers, all the incredibly helpful playtesters, Keith Matejka, and Kirk Dennison.

MOUNTAINTOP GAMES

© Copyright 2018 Mountaintop Games LLC