

# HOW to PLAY

# AQUARIUS

Designed by Andrew Looney

## OVERVIEW

This card game combines the tile-matching fun of dominos with the dynamic victory conditions of Fluxx. The “tile” cards feature five elements: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Space. The panels appear in various shapes & sizes. Each player has a secret goal, which is to connect together a chain of seven panels of their assigned element.

On your turn, you will draw a card, add it to your hand, and then either add a new card to the growing arrangement on the table, or play an Action card. The special options provided by the Action cards include swapping goal cards, moving a card on the table, and mixing-up everyone's hand of cards.

The game starts with one randomly-chosen card on the table. As soon as someone meets the goal of connecting seven panels of their secret element, they win!

## CONTENTS

The deck contains: 5 Goals, 18 Actions, 55 Elements, 1 Wild card (and an ad card).

## SETUP

First, mix up the 5 Goal cards and deal one to each player. Don't let anyone else see your Goal!

Shuffle the main deck and deal 3 cards to each player. Then deal out one more card, face up, in the center of the table. (If it's an Action, stick it in the middle of the deck and try again.)

## WHO STARTS?

The player with the longest hair goes first!

## HOW TO PLAY

Take turns doing the following:

- Draw one card from the main deck, and add it to your hand.
- Choose one card from your hand and use it as follows:

**Action:** Perform the action (as described below), then put the card onto the discard pile.

**Element:** Add the card to the arrangement on the table, following the connection rules (as described in the column on the right).

## WINNING

The object of the game is to create a connected chain of seven panels (of any size) of the Element shown on your current Goal card. As soon as you do this, you win!

## ACTIONS

After playing an Action card, place it face up in the discard pile next to the draw pile.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Element cards must be placed so that at least one panel is positioned alongside a panel of the same Element on a card next to the new card.

Example 1 shows a typical game in progress. You will notice that various panels are adjacent to unmatched Elements. This is acceptable because each card is “connected” to at least one adjacent card in at least one location.



Example 1: Six legally placed cards



Example 2: Not Connected

Example 3 shows another tricky situation. It might seem like these two cards connect, but the Air panels don't share an edge.



Example 3: Not Connected

Examples 4 & 5 show other types of illegal card placements. Cards can never be placed perpendicular to each other, nor can they be skewed or misaligned.



Example 4: Cards cannot be placed at right angles



Example 5: Cards cannot be skewed

## MULTI-CONNECTION BONUSES

If you play a two or four panel Element card and cause two different Elements to form connections at the same time, you get to immediately draw one extra card. If you connect three different Elements at once, you get two extra cards, and yes, you get three extra cards if you can pull off the amazing four-Element connection.



## THE WILD CARD

The Wild Card is any and all Elements all at the same time. It can be played anywhere, and is treated as a single full-sized panel of all elements at all times. It is Fire and Water and Earth and Space and Air all in one. However, you do NOT get a Multi-Connection Bonus for playing the Wild card. Also, the Wild card cannot be used as a wild Action.



### Trade Hands

Swap hands (but not Goals) with the player of your choice.



### Move a Card

Select a card in play on the table and move it to a new legal location.



### Zap a Card

Select a card in play on the table, pick it up, and place it in your hand.



### Trade Goals

Switch Goal cards with any player you want. (You can also Trade for an unused Goal.)



### Rotate Goals

All players pass their Goals to the player next to them, in the direction you choose.



### Shuffle Hands

Gather up all players' hands of cards, shuffle them together, and deal them back out, giving the first card to yourself.

UNUSED GOALS

When playing with 2-4 players, one or more Goal cards will be out of play. These unused Goal(s) should be placed at a specific spot at the table when the game begins, between two players. (It's helpful to imagine an extra person is sitting at that spot, holding the extra Goal cards for you.) When Rotate Goals is played, take the topmost Goal in the pile, then put the incoming Goal on the bottom of the stack.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q:** What happens if I can't make a legal play?  
**A:** You must pass and play nothing. (This usually happens only at the beginning of the game.)
- Q:** After using Zap a Card, am I supposed to have an extra card in my hand?  
**A:** Yes.
- Q:** With Move a Card, is it OK to leave the card in the same location but in a different orientation?  
**A:** Yes.
- Q:** Can someone join a game already in progress?  
**A:** Totally! (Well, assuming there are fewer than five players, that is.) Aquarius is a game you can arrive to late and still have a chance at winning. Just pull up a chair, grab an unused Goal and the top 3 cards from the deck, and you're in!
- Q:** What happens if the deck runs out of cards?  
**A:** If the deck runs out before someone wins, keep playing even though you don't get to draw new cards. Keep taking turns as long as someone has cards left; if there is no winner when all of the cards have been played, then the player whose number of connected elements is closest to 7 is the winner.
- Q:** To win, you need 7 panels of your color connected together. Does it need to be one continuous group, or do you win if you have 3 connected in one place and 4 connected in another?  
**A:** It must be one continuous group of 7.
- Q:** Do they have to be a chain, so you can count a string of 7 without backtracking, or can there be branches?  
**A:** The 7 panels all just have to be touching each other (contiguous). It's okay if it's a branching blob, rather than a single chain. As long as you can travel from one panel to all of the others through the same group, it counts as contiguous.
- Q:** To make a winning group, do the panels themselves all need to be touching, or does it count if 7 cards with your Element are connected in any way?  
**A:** The panels themselves must all be connected together in one big group. If two cards are next to each other but they don't share an elemental connection, they are not connected.
- Q:** Suppose on the very first turn of the game, the first player zaps the center card. What happens next? Do we replace it from the deck or does the next player get to play any card they want?  
**A:** Flip the next card as you would at the start of the game.
- Q:** Do you draw before you play, or after? (If you draw after you play, then it's unfair for the person you Trade Hands with.)  
**A:** No, you should draw a card before you play one.
- Q:** What happens if a single play causes two players to get seven elements at the same time?  
**A:** The winner is the player whose turn made the win happen.
- Q:** If another player creates a group of seven of my elements, do I win immediately or only at the start of my turn?  
**A:** You win immediately.
- Q:** With less than 5 players, can I Trade Goals with an unused goals, or must I trade with someone who is already playing?  
**A:** When trading goals, you can trade with an unused one. Take the topmost card from the Goal pile and put yours on the bottom of the stack (assuming there's more than one).
- Q:** Can you Move a Card to a separate location (its own island) similar to the first card on the table?  
**A:** No. While Move a Card might create some strange holes or even islands, the card being moved must be reconnected to another card.
- Q:** Is it permissible to look through the discard pile?  
**A:** Yes.



OVERVIEW

Aquarius was designed as a game for adults, but with a few simple modifications, it's also a great game to play with children as young as 3. The idea is to start with just the most basic parts of the game, then add more features later as the child grows and becomes capable of following more complex rules. The ages listed below are loose guidelines. How quickly or gradually you decide to move from one of these versions to the next will be greatly dependent on your particular situation. Be flexible, and have fun!

ELEMENTAL CONNECTIONS

Ages: 3-4

This game uses just the Element cards (no Goals or Actions) and consists entirely of matching up the elements. At first, it can be a simple puzzle-like form of play, just discovering how the patterns match up and form. Just flip over the cards one by one and let your child choose a place to play it, teaching the placement rules as you go.

For the actual game, give everyone 3 cards and put one in the center of the table as usual. Then, each player draws and plays a card, continuing until the deck is all gone and all cards have been played. Whoever plays the last card wins!

BASIC AQUARIUS

Ages: 5-6

This variation uses only the Goals and the Element cards (no Action cards). It's played just like the full game, except that your Goal will never change, nor will your hand, and cards played can't be moved. This makes for a much simpler game, but one which is still quite engaging. A fun added rule is to say that anyone under 7 needs only to connect as many panels as they are years old to win.

SINGLE-ACTION AQUARIUS

Ages: 6+

This final variation is just the complete game but with only one type of Action card – usually Trade Goals. This version allows you to introduce just one new concept instead of needing to try to explain all six actions at once. After the youngest player has become familiar with one action, you could add one or two more, continuing until everyone is playing the complete game.

CREDITS

Look for other Looney Labs games at a game store near you: <http://roster.looneylabs.com>

**GAME DESIGNER:** Andrew Looney

**MUSE:** Kristin Looney

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Original artwork by Andrew Looney

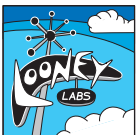
**PACKAGING & ARTWORK REVISIONS:** Strategia Design

**ORIGINAL PLAYTESTERS:** Kristin Looney, Gina Mai Denn, John Cooper, and the Wunderland Toast Society

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