HOW to PLAY

Early American Chrononauts

Designed by Andrew Looney

OVERVIEW

In this game you're a Time Traveler with an unique Identity, a secret Mission, and a very important job: Paradox Repair.

The game is played entirely with cards, but has the feel of a board game since History is represented by a special grid of 32 cards called the TimeLine.
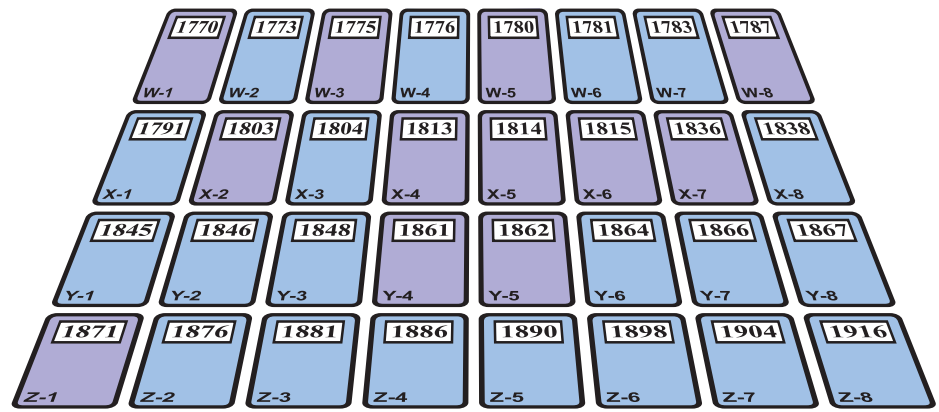
SETUP

Arrange the 32 double-sided TimeLine cards in an 8x4 grid on the table, according to the Time Index (W1-8, X1-8, Y1-8, and Z1-8) located in the lower left corner of each card, with all cards set to True History (i.e. Ripplepoints blue, and Linchpins purple).

Create shuffled draw piles for each of the other types of cards, and deal to each player:
• 1 Mission card
• 1 Identity card
• 3 cards from the main deck

1770	1773	1775	1776	1780	1781	1783	1787
W-1	W-2	W-3	W-4	W-5	W-6	W-7	W-8
1791	1803	1804	1813	1814	1815	1836	1838
X-1	X-2	X-3	X-4	X-5	X-6	X-7	X-8
1845	1846	1848	1861	1862	1864	1866	1867
Y-1	Y-2	Y-3	Y-4	Y-5	Y-6	Y-7	Y-8
1871	1876	1881	1886	1890	1898	1904	1916
Z-1	Z-2	Z-3	Z-4	Z-5	Z-6	Z-7	Z-8

WINNING

Accomplish ONE of the following goals:

There are three different ways to win:

1) Going Home: You win if your character can return to the alternate reality listed on your ID card. To do this, the 3 key events must appear on the TimeLine exactly as they do on your ID card, when your turn ends.

2) Completing Your Mission: The three Artifacts listed on your Mission card must be on the table in front of you at the end of your turn for you to win by completing your Mission.

3) Achieving Power and Success: If, after you've completed your turn, you have 10 cards in your hand (not counting your ID or Mission) you win!

NOTE: You can only claim victory at the END of YOUR turn.

HOW TO PLAY

To determine who goes first, all players will attempt to guess the current time. Whoever comes closest starts the game.

Players take turns doing the following:
• **Draw 1:** Take the top card off the main deck, and add it to your hand.
• **Play 1:** Choose any card in your hand, and either play it, or discard it. If you can't (or don't want to) play any of your cards, you must discard one.

If you choose to discard a card instead of playing, you may also choose to discard a second card, and draw one to replace it. This option is called Killing Time.

CARD TYPES

Artifacts
mission objectives

When playing an Artifact, place it face up on the table in front of you. These are amazing items from the Past or Future which only a time traveler can acquire.

Gadgets
things that do stuff

When playing a Gadget, place it face up on the table in front of you. Gadgets have their own special features you can use later. Follow the directions on the card.

Actions
single-use event cards

When you play an Action card, do whatever it says, then discard it.

Timewarps
a special type of action

Timewarps are extra powerful Action cards. When you play a Timewarp card, do whatever it says, then discard it.

Inverters
how to change history

History is filled with important events that a time traveler could reshape, plus other events that "ripple" when history changes. The EAC TimeLine features 12 "linchpin" events, each of which is identified by a unique icon. Notice that these icons have two forms: black (True) and red (Prime).

Inverters are used to reverse Linchpins. There are several different kinds of Inverters, some of which can be used on any Linchpin card, and some of which can only be used on specific Linchpins.

When you play an Inverter, turn over the Linchpin you want to flip, then adjust all Ripplepoints that change as a result (see below for detailed examples), and lastly, place the Inverter on the discard pile.

NOTE: Inverters only flip Linchpins. (Ripplepoints flip indirectly.)

Patches
how to repair history

When a Linchpin changes, other events on the TimeLine will change as well. At first, holes called Paradoxes will appear. These holes are repaired with Patches.

A Patch can only be played onto its corresponding Paradox on the TimeLine (as indicated by the card's year and Time Index). To Patch a year, simply place the Patch card over the appropriate Paradox. When you do this, you immediately get to draw a card (as payment for your efforts by the Time Repair Agency).

Patches are Nullified (i.e. removed from the TimeLine and discarded) if history is changed back again. Just follow the symbols at the bottom of the Patch card.

NOTE: Patches are ONLY played on Paradoxes, not Ripplepoints.

TIMELINE EXAMPLES

TURN A

Here's a representative section of a generic TimeLine, consisting of three Linchpins and three Ripplepoints. At the start, all TimeLine are set to true history.

Notice that all three Ripplepoints are dependent on the Linchpin X, and that Year 5 also depends on another event (Linchpin Y), as does Year 6 (linked to Linchpin ◖). Furthermore, notice that Year 5 has an OR, and Year 6 an AND.
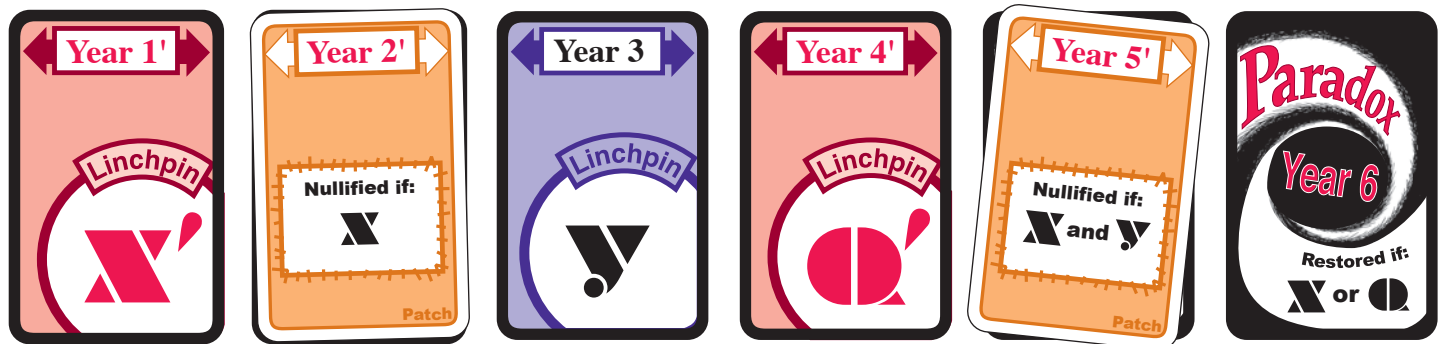
TURN B
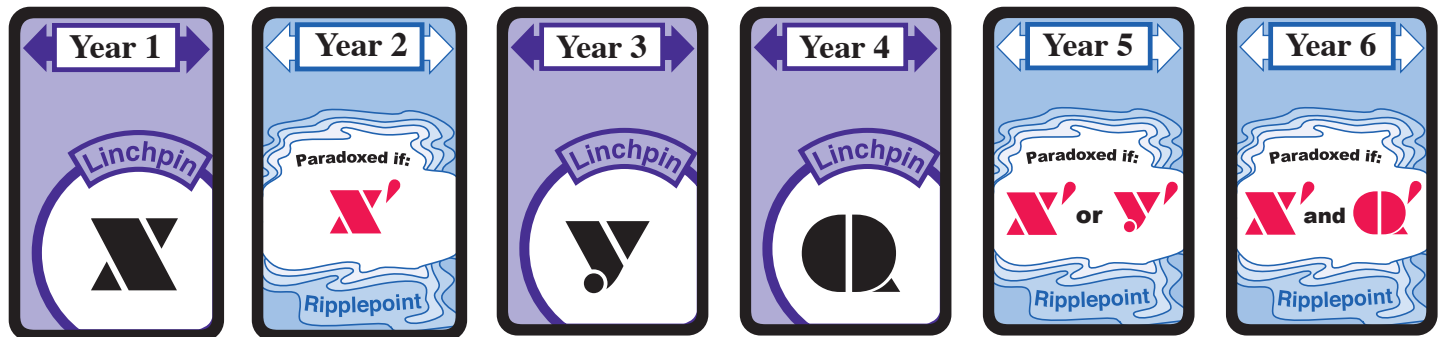
Here's the same section of TimeLine after someone has used an Inverter card to change history at Year 1. Linchpin X has been turned over, revealing the alternate outcome for that event. The Year 2 and Year 5 cards have also been flipped as a result, since they depend on Linchpin X. Year 6 is unflipped because it shares an AND dependency with ◖ and that event has not yet been inverted. (It has been placed askew, as some players prefer, to note the partial paradox.)
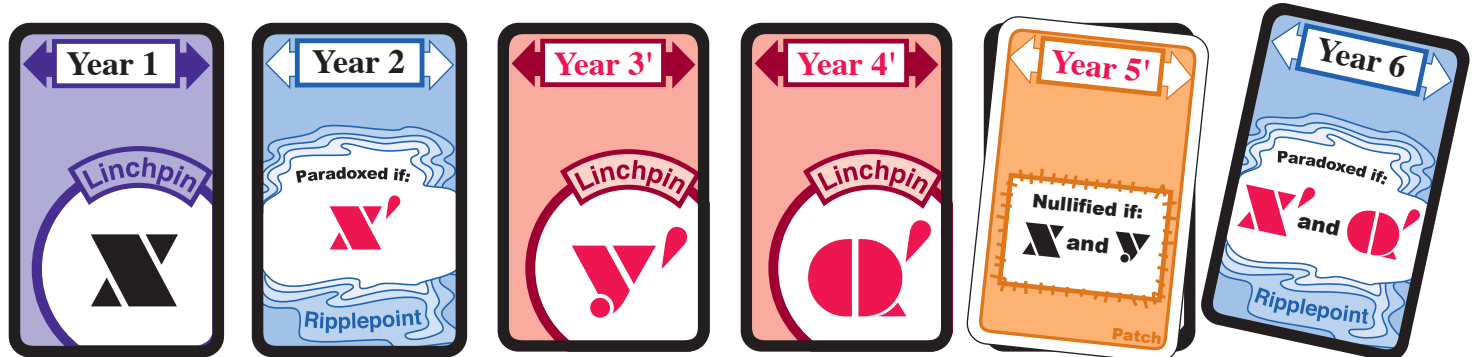
TURN H
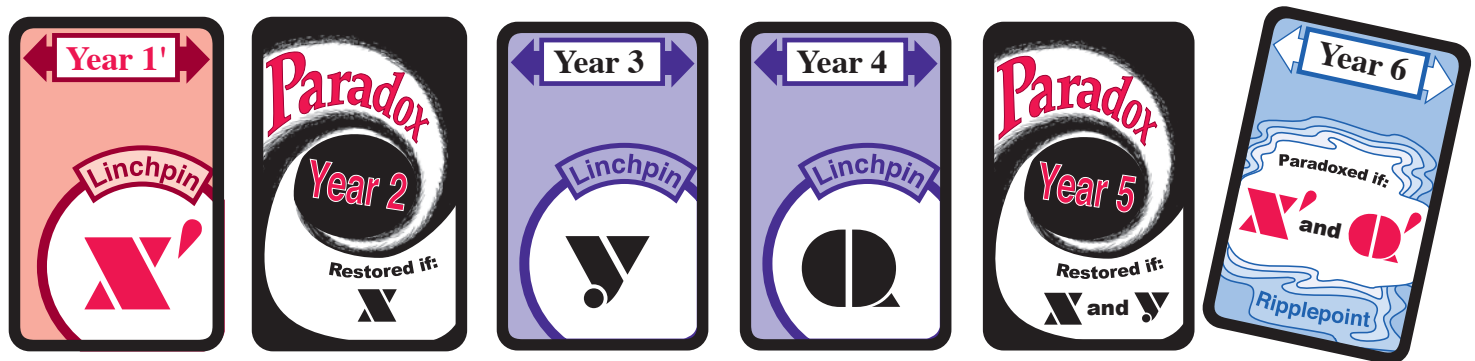
Here's the same section of TimeLine at a later stage in the game. Two Patch cards have now been used to repair the Paradoxes at Years 2 and 5. Note also that Linchpin ◖ has now been inverted, causing Year 6 to be fully paradoxed.

Notice that the Patch cards are simply placed atop the Paradox cards; the basic TimeLine cards are never removed from the table, only flipped from one side to the other and back again.

TURN M

Here's the TimeLine once more, still later on. Notice that Linchpin X has now been flipped back to the purple side. This has caused Year 2 to revert, which has both discarded the Year 2 patch, and flipped the underlying Ripplepoint back to blue. Notice also that the Year 5 Patch is still intact, even though Linchpin X is now black... this is legal because Linchpin Y has also been flipped. Lastly, note that Year 6 is halfway paradoxed again, this time because Linchpin ◖ has flipped.

KNOW YOUR ID CARD

Your ID card provides all the details you need to know about the character you are playing. The bottom half is purely informational, while the top half lists the 3 events that define your home reality. One of these will always be a real event, with the other 2 being alternate realities that are described on Patches. To win by getting home, you must reshape the TimeLine to match all 3 of these years.

ID   Your Name

Year¹	First Headline
Year	Second Headline
Year¹	Third Headline

Title of Your Story
Here there appears a very short bio of your character, written in the 55 word short story format created by Steve Moss, which Andy calls Nanofiction.

NOTE: Paradoxes block your way. You win ONLY if all 3 of your headlines are on the TimeLine.

IDENTITY MULLIGAN

If the character you get is someone you've just played, or someone you've gotten too many times, or just someone you really don't care for, you can try again. But no whining the second time!

KNOW YOUR MISSION

To win with your Mission, the items listed must be on the table in front of you (not just in your hand) so make sure you play them before you reveal your secret Mission. Note that some Missions require any 3 from a list of 4 Artifacts.

GOLD WATCHES

Included with this deck is a set of Gold Watch cards. These are meant for use when playing ÜberChrononauts (as described below) but can also serve as reminders of the third way to win when playing the basic game.

REGARDING MEMOS

Players may only play their cards during their own turns, with one exception: the Memo From Your Future Self. This card can be played at any time, to negate a card being played by someone else. Note that playing a Memo just cancels and discards the card being played; it doesn't change whose turn it is.

Memo   Timewarp
Memo From Your Future Self
Play at any time to cancel a card as it's being played.

Be Punctual: Remember that a Memo must be used to stop a card as it's being played. Obviously it takes a little bit of time to absorb another player's action and decide to use the Memo on it, but you also can't let too much time go by and still expect to have the Memo honored. Here's a good rule of thumb: once another card has been played, or drawn, it's too late.

Memos Aren't Retroactive: Since certain cards allow you to play more than one card in a row, it must be noted that a Memo only cancels the most recently played card. If you play a Memo as soon as another player reveals a Fast Forward, then the entire Fast Forward is canceled; however, if you wait until the player has revealed one of the cards being played as a result of the Fast Forward, then it is only the new card that is canceled. In this case, the Fast Forwarding player may still play a second card.

Memos Can't Stop Victory Itself: The Memo cannot be used to cancel an ID or Mission card. Once a player declares victory by revealing one of these cards, it's too late to use a Memo to cancel the card they used to achieve that victory. Given this, though, etiquette (and coolness) suggests a good solid pause after making a play that's going to let you win, to make sure no one wants to use a Memo on you, before revealing your ID or Mission (and doing the Chrononauts Victory Dance).

THE 13th PARADOX

It must be understood that Paradoxes are BAD. Really, really bad. Each one is a dangerous hole in the space-time continuum and needs to be patched. If too many are open at once, they will cascade into a chain reaction that will rip apart the fabric of history and destroy the entire universe. (That's what we mean by "bad.") **This collapse will occur immediately anytime there are 13 Paradoxes showing at once.** If this ever happens, the game ends and all players LOSE.

Because Paradox repair is so important, the Time Repair Agency rewards everyone for doing this work. Thus, you get to draw one extra card every time you Patch a Paradox.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Q: Can someone use a Memo From Your Future Self to cancel someone else's Memo From Their Future Self?
A: Yes! (And it's mighty satisfying, too!)

Q: What happens if the draw pile runs out of cards?
A: Shuffle the discard pile and continue playing. But don't shuffle early! The discard pile should be maintained until someone needs to draw a card and finds no cards available in the draw deck.

Q: Do you get an extra card if you erase a Paradox by flipping a Linchpin?
A: No, only for playing a Patch.

Q: Can I look through the discard pile?
A: Yes, anyone may look through the discard pile at any time.

CONTENTS

This game contains the following cards:
- 32 TimeLine cards
- 14 ID cards
- 10 Mission cards
- 4 Gold Watches
- 80 Chrononauts cards:
  - 14 Artifacts
  - 6 Gadgets
  - 16 Inverters
  - 20 Patches
  - 14 Actions
  - 10 Timewarps

TOPICS FOR DEBATE

Wouldn't history be radically more different if the past were changed?
Time Travel literature tells us there are three possible ways it could work:

1) History cannot be changed at all
2) History is totally changeable
3) History is somewhat flexible

In case #3, Fate or the Time Police will prevent you from making big changes, though they will allow you to alter the destiny of someone unimportant.

This game combines these ideas. History CAN be changed – but only at specific hotspots in the time-space continuum. One could argue, for example, that World War II would never have happened if it weren't for World War I; however, in Chrononauts, time isn't so volatile. Preventing the first great war simply renames the second one.

Isn't it in poor taste to include Tragedy X in a game like this?
Chrononauts is a work of fiction, and no disrespect is intended towards the memory, or the survivors, of anything in this game. Tragedies are included because these are the sorts of events that would-be time travelers fantasize about undoing. Surely, more than anyone else, those touched by these tragedies would welcome a chance to erase them.

Why would Event X cause Event Y?
Some of the alternate realities in this game make total sense, but others are harder to understand. Sometimes you need to read all of the stories on the ID and Patch cards to make sense of things.

ÜBER QUESTIONS

Q: When playing ÜberChrononauts, how does the Very Clean Time Machine's special power work?
A: You draw 2 cards and look at both. Then you decide either to keep both, or to put one back and instead draw the topmost card from the discard pile.

Q: Can someone use Get There First to steal your completed Mission or ID or Gold Watch card?
A: No. They are reminders of completed tasks, not tangible objects.

Q: Can a Gold Watch be used as something gold for a Mission?
A: No. (See previous question.)

Q: What happens when Chrono-FRED or the Head in the Jar meet their needs?
A: Discard the Gadget (and your own ID or Mission cards) and claim the Gadget's assigned card as if it were your own.

CREDITS

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OTHER WAYS TO PLAY CHRONONAUTS

SOLONAUTS

Overview: This is a solitaire game in which the challenge is to get eight Chrononauts home on a single pass through the deck. It's a great way to learn the ins and outs the TimeLine when you don't have any opponents on hand for a full game.

Number of Players: one

Setup: Remove and set aside all the Artifacts, Gadgets, Actions, Timewarps, and Missions. Shuffle the Patches and Inverters together, and set up the TimeLine as usual. Then deal out eight random ID cards, and arrange them face-up underneath the TimeLine. Finally, deal out five cards from the reduced play deck, and line them up under the characters.

How to Play: Choose one of your five cards and play it just as you would in the full game, except without drawing an extra card after playing a Patch. Feel free to discard any Patches you know you aren't going to need. Draw back to five cards and keep playing until one of the characters can get home. Move that character up to the space above the TimeLine, and carry on. Remember, you only get one pass through the deck, so plan carefully!

How to Win: To win, you must get all eight of your characters home before you run out of cards.

To Adjust the Challenge: To make the game even more challenging, try increasing the number of IDs you start with. (Or, to make it easier, play it with just 6 or 7 characters.)

ARTIFAXX

Overview: This is a fast and easy time travel game that uses a subset of the cards from the Chrononauts deck. It's a faster, lighter-weight version of the game that leaves out all the complexities that crop up when people use time travel to change history. Artifaxx is also good if you've got younger players, who may have trouble grasping all the historical events on the TimeLine. Finally, Artifaxx is a great variation for the airplane or the lunch counter, where space for the entire TimeLine isn't available.

Number of Players: 2-4

Setup: Sort out all the Artifacts, Actions, Timewarps, and Missions. The rest of the deck is not used for this game (but it can be used by someone else to play Solonauts). Also set aside the Gadgets, and the Action called "Your Parents Never Met." Shuffle the Artifacts, Actions, and Timewarps together, and deal three cards to each player, along with one random Mission card.

How to Play: Players take turns drawing one and playing one until someone achieves their secret Mission. To play an Artifact, just set it out on the table in front of you, face-up. To play an Action or a Timewarp card, do whatever it says, then place it on the discard pile.

How to Win: You win if you have the three Artifacts listed on your Mission on the table in front when your turn ends.

Look for Looney Labs games at a game store near you:
roster.looneylabs.com

ÜBERCHRONONAUTS

Overview: Early American Chrononauts is designed first and foremost to be a complete, playable game; however, if you also have a copy of the original game, Chrononauts, you can combine it with this game for epic, double-TimeLine fun.

Setup: Shuffle both decks together. Arrange the TimeLines by date with 1865, 1868, & 1916 intermingling in the middle as needed.

Double Identities: Each player gets 2 ID cards and 2 Mission cards.

New Basic Rules: On your turn:
- Draw 2 cards & add them to your hand
- Discard 1 card from your hand
- Play 1 card

New Win Conditions: To win, you must complete ALL 3 of the standard winning conditions, in any order:
- When you complete a Mission, turn it face up and discard the Artifacts. Return your other Mission card to the stack.
- When one of your IDs can get home, turn it face up. Return your other ID.
- The Gold Watch cards are used to represent the retirement gift you receive from the Time Repair Agency when you get to ten cards. Once gained, this card cannot be lost or stolen from the player who received it, even if their hand size is reduced to under ten.

The Four-Row Rule: The universe is only destroyed if the 13 Paradoxes are within 4 consecutive Timeline rows.

In Case of ÜberParadox: Artifacts or Gadgets from "The Future" cannot be played down in front of you, or stolen from you during an ÜberParadox. If already in play before the ÜberParadox occurs, however, they still count towards your Mission (or, in the case of Gadgets, their power may still be used).