

HOW to PLAY



OVERVIEW

Aquarius begins with an elegant system of tile matching, introduces bluffing with secret, dynamic goals, and ramps up the excitement with action cards that can change everything. The standard game is described below; preschool variations and other information can be found on the other side.

Setup: Shuffle the full deck of 95 Aquarius cards and deal 3 to each player. Also deal each player a random Goal. Place a random non-Action card face-up in the center, and put the deck on one side, forming the draw pile.

How to Play: Players take turns, first drawing a card, then either placing a card from their hand onto the playing surface according to the Placement Rules, or discarding an Action card and carrying out its function.

How to Win: If, at any time, a chain of seven connected panels of a player's Goal element is in place, they win!

PLACEMENT RULES

Element cards must be placed so that at least one portion of one edge matches an Element on a neighbor card's edge.

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

Illegal Placements

Example 2 shows two cards that are NOT connected – the Earth panels are adjacent diagonally, but they must share an edge to become connected.



Example 2: Not Connected



Example 3: 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.

Examples 4 & 5 depict other illegal 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

Remember: long side to long side, short side to short side.

Multi-Connection Bonus

If the card you play causes two different Elements to form connections at the same time, you draw one extra card immediately. You get two bonus cards if you connect three different Elements, and if you're very lucky and can connect four different Elements with one card, you get three extra cards.



GOAL CARDS

These cards are used to give each player a unique goal, which they keep secret and can bluff about. All five Goal cards are shuffled and dealt, with the leftovers taking up spots at the table as if in front of invisible players. You can peek at your Goal as often as you wish, but keep it hidden!



ACTION CARDS

Action cards are played instead of adding an Element card to the table. Place it face up on the discard pile, then carry out the function for that card as described below. It is permissible for players to look through the discard pile.



Trade Goals

Swap Goal cards with any player. This includes any of the "invisible" players.



Shuffle Goals

Gather up all 5 Goals, shuffle them together, and deal them back out.



Trade Hands

Swap hands (but not Goals) with the player of your choice. Remember, you must draw first, then play.



Shuffle Hands

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



Zap a Card

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



Move a Card

Select a card in play on the table and move it to a new legal location. This includes replaying it in the same spot but in the opposite orientation.

Note: When you Zap or Move a card, the gap you leave behind may create an "island," i.e. an isolated card not attached to the rest. This is acceptable even though you are NOT allowed to create an island in any other way.

WILD CARDS

The Wild Card is any and all Elements all at the same time. It can be played anywhere, and is treated as an Ace of all five Elements at all times.



You do NOT get a Multi-Connection Bonus for playing the Wild card, nor for playing next to it.

Wild cards can also be discarded for use as an Action card of any type.

WHO STARTS?

The player with the longest hair gets to go first!

HOW to PLAY



AQUARIUS with your PRESCHOOLER

CONTENTS

The deck has 100 cards:

- 75 Element cards
- 5 Goal cards
- 18 Action cards
- 2 Wild cards

TERMS

- **Ace:** Card with 1 Element
- **Double:** Card with 2 Elements
- **Triple:** Card with 3 Elements
- **Quad:** Card with 4 Elements
- **Element Names:** Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Space

LEARNING TO PLAY

These introductory games add new concepts one at a time, teaching new skills as your child grows... but many grown-ups also find these starter games enjoyable, particularly when they too are learning how to play.

Each game is a little more strategic than the last. Start with the version that matches the age of the youngest player, then move up as skill levels increase. Note that the ages listed are just guidelines. How quickly or gradually you decide to move to the next version will be greatly dependent on your particular situation. Be flexible, and have fun!

These variants provide practice for a large swath of preschool learning objectives, including counting, measurement, comparing, visual-spatial skills, motor skills, and social skills. For more details, visit the Aquarius home page at our website.

Maze Escape

Ages: 3-4

Setup: Set aside the Aces, Goals, Actions, and Wild cards to form a 60 card deck. Place a random Double in the middle of the table. Find a small object to place on this card to mark it as the starting point. Shuffle the remaining cards and deal 7 to each player.

How to Play: This is a cooperative game. Players take turns connecting a card from their hand to one of those already placed, following the Placement Rules (see other side). In this way, the “board” gets a little bit bigger each turn. Do not draw any more cards. Continue until everyone has played all of their cards.

How to Win: For each color on the starting card, trace a path of that color's panels outward with your finger. If every color on the starting card has a path all the way to the edge of the “board,” everybody wins!

Adjusting the Challenge: To make the game trickier, start with a Triple or a Quad. To win, all colors on the starting card must have an escape path.

We recommend playing both of these first two games with player's hands spread out on the table for all to see.

Collect Seven

Ages: 4-5

Setup: Shuffle the 60 card deck of multi-panel Element cards and deal 3 to each player. Place a random card face-up in the center, and set the deck off to one side, face down, to form a draw pile.

How to Play: Players take turns, first adding a card from the draw pile to their hand, then placing a card from their hand onto the table according to the Placement Rules. Draw an extra card for each Multi-Connection Bonus you create, then play passes to the person on your left.

How to Win: If, after completing their turn, a player has 7 cards, they win!

Connect Seven

Ages: 5-6

Setup: Shuffle the deck of 75 Element cards and deal 3 to each player. Also deal each player a random Goal card (see other side). Place a random card face-up in the center, and put the deck on one side, forming the draw pile.

How to Play: Players take turns, first adding a card from the draw pile to their hand, then placing a card from their hand onto the table according to the Placement Rules.

How to Win: If, at any time, a chain of seven connected panels of a player's Goal element is in place, they win!

For these games, all players should be holding their cards in their hands, not letting anyone else see what they have.

Get Moving

Ages: 6-7

How to Play: This game is the same as Connect Seven but with one new feature: Move a Card. Add all 3 copies of this Action to the deck before starting. You can use this card instead of playing an Element during your turn.

VARIATIONS AND OTHER NOTES

New players can jump into a game of Aquarius at any time just by taking one of the unused Goals and drawing 3 cards.

There are even more ways to play than the games described here, including variants, house rules, and entirely new games!

- **Kristin's Aquarius Solitaire:** Similar to classic solitaire.
- **Cooperjohn's Aqua-Chicken:** How long can you go without looking at your secret goal card?
- **The Rotate Option:** This house rule allows players to choose rotation instead of shuffling when playing a Shuffle Action. If you choose to rotate, all players pass their hands or Goals to the players next to them, in the direction you choose. For Goals, this includes those in front of the “invisible” players.
- **Aquarius Rising:** A 3-dimensional strategy game which combines an Aquarius deck with a set of Looney Pyramids.

You can find links to the rules for these games at:

LooneyLabs.com/games/Aquarius

QUESTIONS?

We've done our best to make these instructions clear, but if you have questions, the fastest way to get help is to check our extensive online database of Frequently Asked Questions, which you can find at the website address above.

If you can't find the answer you need there, please email us and we'll get back to you with a ruling as soon as we can.

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

CREDITS

GAME DESIGN & ILLUSTRATIONS: Andrew Looney

SPECIAL THANKS: to the countless playtesters who've made suggestions for improving Aquarius during the last 22 years



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