

QUICK REFERENCE

ACTIONS

During a turn, a player **must** perform one claim action, **may** perform any number of investigate actions, and **may** perform one accuse action.

CLAIM

A player claims to be a particular character and then uses that character's privilege as described on his reference sheet.

INVESTIGATE

A player spends one of each type of resource and chooses another player. The chosen player passes his true identity and three random identities from the suspicion deck facedown to the active player.

ACCUSE

A player accuses another player by passing a suspicion card facedown. If the suspicion card matches the accused player's identity, he is eliminated. If it does not match his identity, the player who passed the card is eliminated instead.

CALLING HOAX

While another player is making a claim to use either a privilege or an immunity, any other player can take the hoax card and say, "Hoax!" to force a vote.

If there is a thumbs-down vote, the player making a claim either wins the game by revealing that his claim was truthful or he is marked as an imposter by revealing that his claim was false.

RESOURCES



Cash



Prestige



Evidence

PROOF OF
PURCHASE

Hoax
VA94



Hector Vargas was a legendary business magnate who built an empire on a string of shady promotions and Ponzi schemes. He also left a tangled personal life in his wake. He pursued a decadent lifestyle until his demise during his 56th birthday celebration, when the cork from a bottle of champagne ricocheted off the chandelier and into his windpipe.

Before anyone could render aid, Vargas died. In ominous silence, guests began filing out until only a few remained in the mansion's parlor—a circle of those claiming the right to Vargas' fortune: his domineering ex-wife, coy current lover, sycophantic son-in-law, enigmatic distant cousin, haughty chef, shifty gardener, and laconic butler.

Several facts rapidly became apparent to the would-be heirs. First, no one knew the location of their late host's will. Next, the scandalous state of Vargas' personal affairs meant that only a few of those present had ever laid eyes on each other. Finally, the mansion lay open, offering up its hoard of ill-gotten riches for the most brazen of them to claim.

There was no trust between this greedy and conniving lot. Gate crashers and con artists had always swirled around these gatherings. The claimants could only agree on one condition as the inevitable accusations flew: only those who had actually endured a life with Vargas could remain. Any imposters would be discovered and booted from the mansion.

So, with crossed fingers the claimants each silently vowed that they would be the last to remain!

OVERVIEW

Hoax is a game for three to six players, each of whom seeks to inherit the fortune of a famous tycoon. Player identities are secret, so players must use their skills of deception and deduction to impersonate other roles while at the same time discovering the identities of the other players in order to eliminate them. The last remaining player wins the game.

COMPONENTS



7 Character Cards



7 Suspicion Cards



6 Reference Sheets



1 Hoax Card



25 Imposter Tokens



27 Resource Tokens
(9 of each type)

THIS EDITION OF HOAX

Fans of classic *Hoax* will recognize much of the original gameplay in this updated version. This edition of *Hoax* has been revamped and reimagined for a new setting in collaboration with the original Eon design team.

SETUP

To set up the game, follow these steps:

1. **Create Supply:** Separate the tokens by type and place them in the center of the play area. Also, place the hoax card in the center of the play area.
2. **Distribute Reference Sheets:** Give one reference sheet to each player.
3. **Distribute Character Cards:** Shuffle the character cards and deal one facedown to each player. Return all remaining character cards facedown to the game box; they will not be used this game. A player can look at his character card, but he cannot reveal it to other players.
4. **Shuffle Suspicion Cards:** Shuffle the suspicion cards and place them facedown in the center of the play area.
5. **Determine First Player:** The youngest player is the first player and takes the first turn when the game begins.
6. **Gather Starting Resources:** Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player takes one resource token of his choice from the supply and places it in his play area.

CHARACTER CARDS

Each player receives a character card during setup. The character card shows a name and image of a character, which represents that player's **IDENTITY**. A player can look at his character card at any time, but he cannot reveal it to other players.

PLAYING THE GAME

During a game of *Hoax*, each player attempts to discover the other players' identities while keeping his identity a secret. To accomplish this goal, a player performs actions to collect resources. Then, the player spends these resources to discover information about other players so that he can eliminate them.

Hoax is played over a series of turns. During the active player's turn, he performs one or more actions. Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, players continue taking turns until one player wins the game (see "Winning the Game" on page 8).

ACTIONS

During a player's turn, he can perform the following three actions in any order:

- **Claim:** The player declares that he is a character and uses that character's ability, known as a **PRIVILEGE**.

Take either 1 evidence or 1 prestige.

A Privilege on a Reference Sheet

- **Investigate:** The player discovers information about another player's identity.
- **Accuse:** The player guesses another player's identity. Then, one of the two players is eliminated.

During a turn, a player **must** perform one claim action, **may** perform any number of investigate actions, and **may** perform only one accuse action.

Some characters also have an **IMMUNITY**, which is shown on the reference sheet. Players should become comfortable with the basic rules presented in this section before playing with immunities (see "Immunities" on page 10).

CLAIM

To perform a claim action, a player declares that he is one particular character. To do this, he uses the phrase “as the” or “I am the” when making this declaration. For example, when a player claims to be the Gardener, he says, “I am the Gardener.” Then, he uses the Gardener’s privilege.

Each character has at least one unique privilege (see “Privileges” on page 8) shown on each reference sheet. Each privilege allows a player to acquire resources to pay for investigations (see “Investigate” to the right). There are three types of resources, each of which is represented by one of the following resource tokens:



Cash



Prestige



Evidence

When a privilege instructs a player to take a resource token, he takes that token from the supply, unless specified otherwise.



Example: During Anne’s turn, she decides to claim to be the Butler. Anne says, “I am the Butler, so I’ll take some cash. Ben, you help yourself to a token.” Anne takes one cash token from the supply. Ben takes one prestige token. Anne has performed the Butler’s privilege, and her claim action is complete.

A player can claim to be any character, regardless of his identity. However, if a player is claiming to be a character other than the one that corresponds to his character card, he is making a **FALSE CLAIM**. If other players believe that the active player is making a false claim, they can call him out and attempt to label him as an imposter (see “Calling Hoax” on page 7).

INVESTIGATE

The investigate action allows a player to discover information about another player’s identity.

To perform an investigate action, the active player must spend one of each type of resource. To spend a resource, a player takes that resource from his play area and places it in the supply.

After spending resources, the active player declares another player as the target of his investigation. The targeted player must use the suspicion deck to provide a clue about his identity to the active player.

The targeted player takes the suspicion deck and removes the suspicion card that matches his character card. Then, he randomly removes three additional cards from the suspicion deck. He looks at the four cards removed from the deck, but he cannot reveal them to the other players. After looking at the cards, he shuffles them and passes them facedown to the active player. The active player looks at the four suspicion cards that were passed to him, one of which is the targeted player’s identity; he cannot reveal any of these cards to other players. After examining the cards, the active player shuffles them back into the suspicion deck and places it in the center of the play area.

For a detailed example of how to perform an investigate action, see the “Investigate Example” sidebar on page 6.

The active player can perform an investigate action multiple times during the same turn if he has enough resource tokens to spend; he may target the same player multiple times per turn.

ACCUSE

The accuse action allows a player to guess another player’s identity.

To perform an accuse action, the active player chooses another player as the target of his accusation and privately guesses that targeted player’s identity. To accomplish this, the active player takes the suspicion deck and removes the suspicion card that matches the identity he wishes to guess. Then, he passes that card facedown to the targeted player. The targeted player looks at the suspicion card that was passed to him. If the card matches his identity, he must respond, “Yes,” without revealing his identity to the other players. Then, he is eliminated from the game and his resource tokens are given to the active player. Any imposter tokens must remain on the eliminated player’s reference sheet.

If the card does not match the targeted player’s identity, he must respond, “No.” Then, the active player is eliminated from the game and returns his resource and imposter tokens to the supply. After performing the action, the eliminated player shuffles all suspicion cards and places the suspicion deck back in the center of the play area. The active player can accuse only one player during his turn. Any player who is eliminated **cannot** reveal his identity.

INVESTIGATE EXAMPLE



During Sarah's turn, she decides to investigate Bill. Sarah spends one cash, one prestige, and one evidence token by taking them from her play area and placing them in the supply (1). After Sarah has paid for the investigation, Bill takes the suspicion deck (2) and secretly removes "The Son-in-Law" card—Bill's identity (3)—as well as three random cards (4).

Bill looks at the four cards he removed from the deck, shuffles them, and passes them facedown to Sarah (5). Sarah looks at the cards, then she shuffles them back into the suspicion deck, and places the suspicion deck back in the center of the play area.

CALLING HOAX

During each claim action, another player may interrupt that action by calling hoax. To do this, the player says, "Hoax!" aloud and places the hoax card in her play area. The active player pauses his claim action so that all other players can discuss and vote on whether they believe the active player is making a false claim (see "Claim" on page 4). After any discussion, all players except the active player must participate in a vote (see "Voting" below). A player cannot call hoax if the hoax card is already in her play area. As such, a player cannot call hoax two times in a row.

VOTING

When the players are ready to vote, each player except the active player raises a hand above the play area and makes a fist. Then, the player who called hoax says, "Vote," and each player simultaneously makes either a thumbs-up or thumbs-down gesture.

A player makes a thumbs-down gesture if she believes the active player's claim is a hoax (the active player is making a false claim). Otherwise, a player makes a thumbs-up gesture.

The player who called hoax concludes the vote as follows:

- **Thumbs Down:** If a majority of the votes are thumbs down, the active player must say whether he was making a truthful claim or a false claim.
- **Thumbs Up:** If the majority of votes are thumbs up, or if there is a tie, the active player immediately resumes his claim action.

TRUTHFUL CLAIM

If the active player was making a **TRUTHFUL CLAIM**—if he was claiming to be the character that matches his character card—he reveals his character card and immediately wins the game (see "Winning the Game" on page 8).

FALSE CLAIM

If the active player was making a false claim, he takes one imposter token and places it on the character name on his reference sheet that corresponds to the character he was falsely claiming to be. His claim action ends without completing the privilege (or immunity), and he cannot claim to be that character for the remainder of the game. Then, the game resumes as normal.



Imposter Token

Example: During Jessica's turn, she decides to claim that she is the Son-in-Law, whose privilege allows her to name a resource type and then take one of that resource from each other player. Baxter believes that Jessica is making a false claim, so he takes the hoax card and places it in his play area. Then, he says, "Hoax!"

The game pauses while all players debate whether or not they think Jessica is making a false claim. After a brief discussion, the players decide it is time to vote. Baxter says, "Vote," and all players simultaneously make either a thumbs-up or thumbs-down gesture. Baxter tallies the votes and the majority of them are thumbs-down gestures. Jessica concludes the vote by declaring that she was making a false claim. She places an imposter token over the "Son-in-Law" name on her reference sheet, preventing her from claiming to be the Son-in-Law again this game. She cannot complete the Son-in-Law's privilege, and her claim action ends.



WINNING THE GAME

Players continue taking turns until the game ends in one of the following two ways:

- All but one player is eliminated. The last remaining player wins.
- A vote determines that a player was making a truthful claim. That player wins.

At the end of the game, all players flip their character cards faceup to reveal their secret identities and return their resource and imposter tokens to the supply.

ADDITIONAL RULES

This section describes additional rules.

PRIVILEGES

Each character has a privilege shown on each reference sheet. Privileges allow players to acquire resources. When a player takes resources, he takes them from the supply unless a privilege specifies otherwise. If a privilege instructs a player to give resources, those resources come from his play area. If a player does not have resources to give, he ignores the effects of that privilege. If multiple players must give resources, they do so in clockwise order.

TABLE TALK AND SECRET INFORMATION

Hoax is a game of bluffing and deception. The game requires each player to keep his identity secret, as well as any information that he has about other players' identities. Players cannot take notes.

Each player is encouraged to engage in table talk; however, a player cannot reveal his character card or specific names of cards passed to him during an investigate action. Additionally, a player cannot engage in any discussions after he is eliminated from the game.

TIMING AND INTERRUPT ACTIONS

Hoax is a social game. The rules encourage player interaction and roleplaying to enhance the game's humor and fun. To successfully play the game, players often need to interrupt another player's turn.

To help these interactions function smoothly, the active player should briefly pause after performing each claim action to give the other players the opportunity to call hoax, and if that claim continues, to use immunities (see "Immunities" on page 10).

MULTIPLE GAMES

Hoax is a fast-paced game that can end quickly. It is intended to be played as a series of multiple games in which players use a pen and paper to track each player's score to determine the overall winner of the series.

When playing games with scoring, players set a point value as the goal. Four points is the recommended value to use for a series. When a player wins, he earns the following points for his score based on how he won:

- Three points for winning by being the last remaining player.
- One point for winning by revealing a truthful claim during a vote.

When a player wins a game, he is the first player for the next game and takes the first turn. When a player's score equals or exceeds the goal, he wins the series.

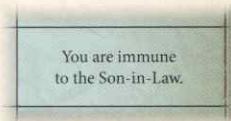
COMPONENT LIMITATIONS

Resource and imposter tokens are unlimited. If a player needs to use resource or imposter tokens and none are available, he can use other available markers, such as coins, as proxies for these tokens.

IMMUNITIES

After their first game, experienced players should play the game using **IMMUNITIES**.

Like privileges, immunities are shown on each reference sheet and they correspond to specific characters.



An Immunity on a Reference Sheet

Immunities allow a player to ignore privileges that would force him to lose or exchange resource tokens. That is, if a privilege forces a player to lose resource tokens, he can use an immunity to cancel that privilege's effect on him.

To use an immunity, a player exhausts his character card by turning it 90° clockwise. Then, he performs a claim action (see "Claim" on page 4), but instead of using his declared character's privilege, he uses that character's immunity.



Exhausting a Character Card

While a player is performing a claim action to use an immunity, he is treated as the active player for the duration of the action. As such, other players can call him out for making a false claim by calling hoax following normal rules (see "Calling Hoax" on page 7). If a player is caught making a false claim, he cannot use his declared character's immunity. Rather, he places an imposter token on his reference card following normal rules. After all votes are concluded, the player who was using a privilege at the start of the turn resumes his action.

A player cannot use a character's immunity if that character has an imposter token over its name on that player's reference sheet. Additionally, a player cannot use an immunity if his character card is already exhausted. At the start of his turn, he refreshes his character card by turning it 90° counterclockwise.

It is possible for two players to use the same immunity at the same time. If this happens, they can each individually be called out for making a false claim, which would conclude with two separate votes that are concluded in the order in which they were called (see "Calling Hoax" on page 7).

***Example:** During Heather's turn, she claims that she is the Gardener. She uses the Gardener's privilege to take two prestige tokens from Joe. However, Joe interrupts Heather and claims that he is the Chef, which grants him immunity so Heather cannot take prestige tokens from him. Pat takes the hoax card and says, "Hoax!" Pat believes Joe is making a false claim. After a discussion and a vote resulting in a majority of thumbs-down gestures, Joe reveals that he was making a false claim and places an imposter token on his reference sheet over the name "Chef." Then, Heather resumes her claim by taking two prestige tokens from Joe.*

CREDITS

Game Design: Bill Eberle, Ned Horn, Jack Kittredge, and Peter Olotka

Game Development: Michael Gernes

Producer: Michael Gernes

Graphic Design: Evan Simonet

Technical Writing and Additional Layout: Adam Baker

Editing and Proofreading: Autumn Collier, Christopher Meyer, and Heather Silsbee

Cover and Interior Art: Lucas Soriano Beltrán

Art Direction: Deb Freytag

Managing Art Director: Andy Christensen

Managing Graphic Designer: Brian Schomburg

Project Coordinator: Mark Larson

FFG Licensing Coordinator: Amanda Greenhart

QA Coordinator: Zach Tewalthomas

Production Management: Megan Duehn and Simone Elliott

Production Coordination: John Britton, Jason Glawe, and Johanna Whiting

Board Game Manager: Steven Kimball

Executive Producer: Michael Hurley

Executive Designer: Corey Konieczka

Publisher: Christian T. Petersen

Special thanks to Sam Bailey and to all of our beta testers!

Playtesters: Adam Baker, Sam Bailey, Max Brooke, Nick Cyr, Rob Crandall, Mackenzie Dalla-Lana, Curtis Hill, Justin Kempainen, Steven Kimball, Jeffrey "Leach" Klein, Corey Konieczka, Trevor Kupfer, Mark Larson, Lukas Litzinger, Matt Newman, Daniel Schaefer, Evan Simonet, Tyler Soberanis, Sam Stewart, Zach Tewalthomas, Jason Walden, and Jonathan Ying

