

How to Play Codenames

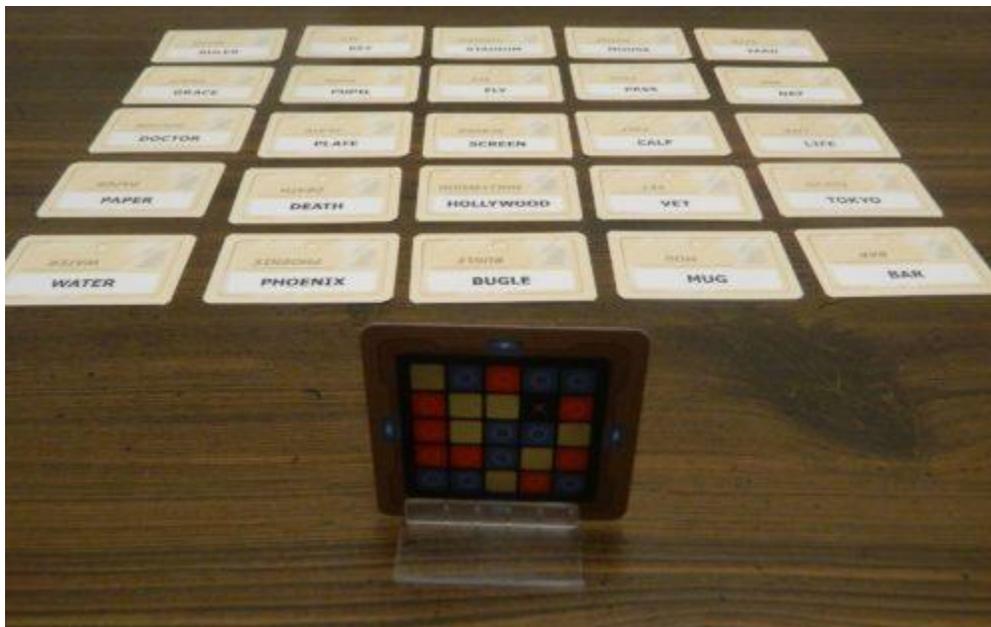
Setup

- The players split into two teams with each team choosing one of the colors.
- Each team will choose one player to be their spymaster. Both spymasters must sit on the same side of the table. The rest of the players sit on the other side of the table.
- The agent cards are placed in front of the corresponding spymaster. The innocent bystander and assassin cards are placed between both spymasters.
- The players randomly choose 25 of the word cards and place them in a 5 x 5 grid.
- The spymasters will choose one of the key cards and place it into the stand facing them.
- The team whose color is on the sides of the key card starts the game. The team that starts the game is given the double agent card to add to their pile of agents.



Playing the Game

Before starting the game both spymasters should study the grid. Each spymaster is trying to get their teammates to guess all of the words corresponding to their color. The pale squares are the innocent bystanders and the assassin is the black X. The spymaster wants to avoid having their teammates guess the word corresponding to the assassin.



The red team has to guess stadium, grace, day, doctor, paper, death, Tokyo, and mug. The blue team has to guess key, mouse, yard, screen, calf, Hollywood, water, phoenix, and bar. If either team picks “pass” during the game they will automatically lose.

Starting with the spymaster for the first team, each team will take turns trying to get their teammates to pick the words corresponding to their agents. Each spymaster gives their team a one-word clue. When giving clues the following rules must be followed:

- A player can't give a clue that is the same or similar to one of the face up word cards. Once the word is covered up the player can then give the clue. The player can also not use part of a face up compound word until it is covered up.
- The clue should be based off the meaning of the word(s) they are trying to get their teammates to guess.
- A player can only give letter and number clues if it relates to the meaning of the word(s). For example a player can't use a letter clue to refer to words starting with a given letter.
- All clues should be in English unless the word is commonly used in English.
- A spymaster cannot give any visual clues to help lead their team towards choosing a word.

If a spymaster gives an invalid clue their turn ends immediately. The other team's spymaster also gets to cover up one of their agent words.

After giving the clue the spymaster decides how many of their agents' codenames can be described by the clue they gave. This number can't be used as a clue for the word(s) they want their teammates to guess.



This team's spymaster has decided to give the clue "movie 2". With this clue the player is trying to get their teammates to choose Hollywood and screen.

The other players on the team then have to try and figure out what words the spymaster was hinting towards. When the players have agreed on a word one of the players points to the word they choose. The spymaster then reveals the identity of the word chosen.

- If the chosen card is the identity of the assassin, the current team automatically loses the game.



This team has

unveiled the assassin so they have lost the game.

- If the chosen card is one of the innocent bystanders, the spymaster places one of the innocent bystander cards on the word. The current team's turn ends.



This team has

revealed an innocent bystander so their turn ends immediately.

- If the chosen card is one of the other team's agents, the spymaster places one of the other team's agent cards on the word. The current team's turn ends.
- If the chosen card is one of the current team's agents, the spymaster puts one of their own cards on the word. The current team will then continue their turn.



This team has found one of their agents so their turn continues.

If the team guessed one of their own agents they may have the opportunity to make another guess. The team can make as many guesses as the number the spymaster gave as part of their clue plus one. The team can also choose to end their turn at any time after they have made one guess. Once a team has either made all of their guesses, picked a word that doesn't match one of their agents, or have decided to stop; play passes to the other team.

End of Game

The game can end in one of two ways.

If a team picks the assassin, the other team wins automatically.

Otherwise whichever team has all of their agents revealed first wins the game.



The blue team has revealed all of their agents so they have won the game.