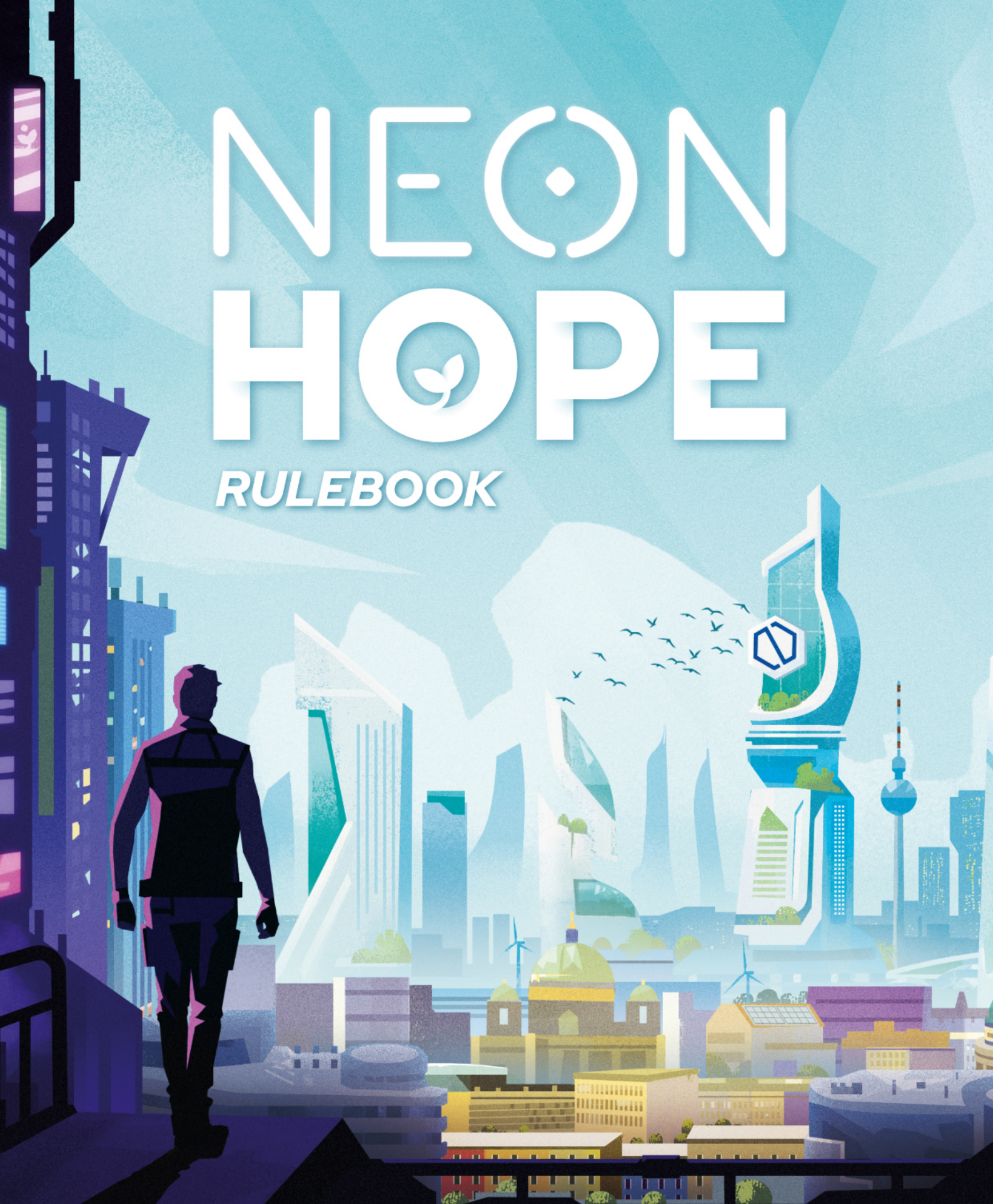


# NEON HOPE

*RULEBOOK*



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# Contents

Quickstart Rules	4-11
<b>Comprehensive Rules</b>	13
The Campaign	14
The Storybook	14
The Campaign Log	14
Starting a New Campaign	14
Set Up the Episode	15
Essential Rules	16
Winning and Losing	16
The Chapter	16
Stress & Endurance	16
Surveillance	17
The Board	18
Settings	18
Leads	18
Other Areas	18
Characters	19
Character Card	19
Action Cards	19
Tools & Allies	19
Round Structure	20
Actions	20
Change Location	20
Connected Settings	20
Perform a Task	21
Task Type and Impact	21
Playing an Action Card	21
The Grid	22
Threat Value	23
Completing a Task	23
Retreat Value	23
Focus	23
Leads	24
Encounter Cards	24
Dilemmas	24
States	24
Enemies	25
Retreat Box	25
Retreated Cards	25
Enemy Activation	25
Encounter Phase	26
Regular, Elite, and Story Cards	26
Effects	26
Effect Boxes	26
Activated Effects	26
Arrow Symbol	26
Recycle & Trash	26
Trash Pile	26
Support Markers	27
Attribute Marker	27
Resource	27
Hope	27
Key	27
Attribute Die	27
Campaign Progression	28
Solo Rules	28
Character Customization	28
Credits	29
Character Traits	30
Keywords	32

# Component Overview

## 400 CARDS

- 140 player cards
  - ◆ 4 Character cards
  - ◆ 4 Character Tools
  - ◆ 32 Tools
  - ◆ 96 Action cards
  - ◆ 4 Allies
- 256 episode cards
  - ◆ 20 Chapter cards
  - ◆ 14 Surveillance cards
  - ◆ 22 Setting cards
  - ◆ 94 Leads
  - ◆ 10 Story Allies
  - ◆ 2 Special cards
  - ◆ 94 encounter cards
    - ▶ 22 Enemies
    - ▶ 4 Elite Enemies
    - ▶ 18 States
    - ▶ 6 Elite States
    - ▶ 35 Dilemmas
    - ▶ 9 Elite Dilemmas
- 4 other cards
  - ◆ 1 Archive card
  - ◆ 3 Rules overview cards

## TOKENS

- 82 support markers
  - ◆ 9 Hope (1|2)
  - ◆ 6 Hope (3|4)
  - ◆ 9 Resources (1|2)
  - ◆ 6 Resources (3|4)
  - ◆ 40 Attribute Markers
  - ◆ 12 Keys
- 10 Secrets (1|2)
- 10 Secrets (3|4)
- 8 Damage (1|2)
- 4 Damage (3|4)
- 26 modifiers
- 16 action trackers (incl. 4 additional action trackers)
- 4 endurance trackers (1 blue, 3 regular)

## OTHER

- 1 surveillance dial
- 25 Hacking Cubes
- 4 attribute dice
- 8 character standees (4 are for characters included in the *A Hopeful Cause* expansion.)

## BOOKS

- 1 rulebook (this book)
- 1 storybook

# Learning the Rules

This rulebook contains the **Quickstart Rules** and the **Comprehensive Rules**. For your first game, we suggest reading the **Quickstart Rules**. They will teach you all the rules you need to play your first game.

You can continue the campaign without reading the full **Comprehensive Rules**. When new concepts are introduced, the storybook will tell you which sections you need to read.

The **Comprehensive Rules** contains the full ruleset of NEON HOPE. Whenever you want to look up a rule, you can find it in the **Comprehensive Rules**. There is no need to go back to the **Quickstart Rules** after your first game. When the wording of the **Comprehensive Rules** and **Quickstart Rules** contradict each other, the **Comprehensive Rules** take precedence.

In addition, there is an **Online Rules Reference** document. It explains each game mechanic in great detail and provides clarification for special cases. You can find it by scanning the QR code on the back of this rulebook.





# QUICKSTART RULES

## Overview

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### Story and Concept

NEON HOPE is a cooperative game that tells a story in which you are the main protagonist. You and your friends take on the role of an everyday person in the not-so-distant future, stumbling into an affair much bigger than what you are prepared for.

Each game in NEON HOPE represents one part of an overall story. Imagine it like an episode of a TV show that culminates in a grand season finale. After every game (called episodes), your characters recover their strength, improve their abilities, and continue their adventure in the next game.

The places you visit, the people you meet, as well as the forces that work against you are represented by cards. On your turn, you will spend actions to interact with these cards (namely investigating leads, fighting enemies, hacking computer systems, or asking for support). After all players have acted, the level of surveillance increases, and you will have to face new challenges.

### Winning or Losing the Game

Each episode has a stack of chapter cards. Your current objective is on the top card of this stack. If you fulfill it, flip the card and advance to the next chapter. If you fulfill the objective of the last chapter card, you win the game together!

You lose the game together when one character becomes exhausted – by taking too much Stress – or when the Surveillance becomes too high.

Until the final episode, the story continues, regardless of whether you win or lose. However, your luck, misfortune, and the decisions from your previous game will impact the next – and how the grand finale will play out.

# Playing Your First Game

Follow these steps to set up the game:

## A. Set Up the First Episode

1. **Assemble the staging deck and the encounter deck** by combining all cards with the respective set icons listed in the storybook.

For the first episode these are:

- ♦ **Staging Deck:** and »Mark 'Steelskin' Caspar« from the *A Better Humanity* set ()
- ♦ **Encounter Deck:** and the following cards from the *difficulty set* (): 4x »At the Darkest Hour« and 1x »Rigged System«

**Set the staging deck aside.** It is used over the course of the episode to bring more cards into play.

This is the setup for normal difficulty. For future games you can increase the difficulty. Details can be found in the *Comprehensive Rules* (p. 14).

2. **Stack the Chapter cards** from the staging deck face up on top of each other in sequential order so that Chapter 1 is on top, continuing with chapter 2 and 3.
3. **Each episode has two Surveillance cards.** Find the **Surveillance card for story mode** and place it next to the encounter deck with its front side up. This zone is called the Network.
4. **Set the surveillance dial to 0** and place it above the Network.
5. Read aloud the introduction of episode 1 in the storybook. **Perform the episode setup of episode 1, namely:**

- ♦ “Find the »Syphon« Setting in the staging deck and put it into play. (Also find the necessary Leads mentioned in the card’s setup instructions and put them into play.)”

**Rules explanation:** Whenever you put a setting into play you are instructed to bring specific Lead cards into play either at the top or the bottom of the setting. In this case, you place the »Barkeeper« and the »Bar« at the top of the »Syphon« and the »Dance Floor« at the bottom.

Leads come into play with their front side up. The front side can be recognized by the card number in the bottom right-hand corner beginning with A. There are two versions of the »Bar« and the »Dance Floor«. Select one copy of each at random and return the other to the staging deck.

Place the appropriate Secrets and support markers on each Lead in play. The appropriate type and number are shown in the top right-hand corner of a Lead.

- ♦ “Search the encounter deck for all (5) regular Enemies and add them to the staging deck. (These are: 3x »Corp Loyalist«, 2x »Freelance Security Officer«.)”
- ♦ “Search the encounter deck for 1 copy of »Data De-Anonymization«. It appears in the Network (next to the Surveillance card). Reshuffle the encounter deck.”
- ♦ “All characters start at the »Syphon« (top).”  
**Rules explanation:** Once you have chosen your characters, place the corresponding standees at the top of the »Syphon«.



## B. Set Up Characters

Each player chooses and sets up their character. All 35 cards belonging to your character share the same icon in the bottom right corner (📄, 🗨️, 🎮, or 🧑).

1. Place your Character card in front of you (card #1).
2. Take an endurance tracker and set it to your starting Endurance. The starting Endurance is based on the number of characters:
  - ♦ Solo play: 10 Endurance
  - ♦ Two characters: 8 Endurance each
  - ♦ Three characters: 7 Endurance each
  - ♦ Four characters: 6 Endurance each

One character takes the blue endurance tracker. They are the responsible character for this episode. This has no inherent effect, but can be referenced by other effects.

(If possible, »Larx Krajewski« should be responsible in the first episode.)

3. Decide which side of your double-sided Character Tool you want to use (card #2).
4. Place the other 8 Tools and 1 Ally under your Character Tool (cards #3 to #11). They form your tool kit and are out of play.
  - ♦ Solo play: Add 1 Ally with the [Universal] trait from another character to your tool kit.
5. Take 3 action trackers. Flip them to their unspent side (blue).
6. Take 3 Hope.
7. Take the 8 Action cards with LVL 1 (cards #12 to #19). Return the remaining Action cards with LVL 2 and 3 to the game box for later use (cards #20 to #35).
 

From the 8 Action cards with level 1, select a number of cards equal to your Endurance. These cards form your starting hand. Place the remaining Action cards into your discard pile.

  - ♦ Solo play: Add 2 Action cards with the [Universal] trait from other characters to your Action cards.

## C. Set Up the Grid and the Supply

1. Assemble the modifier pool according to the image below.
2. Shuffle all modifiers from the modifier pool. Place 16 modifiers at random face down on the table. These form the Grid. Place the remaining 3 modifiers face down on the Archive card.
3. Set all other tokens, cubes and dice aside out of play. They form the supply.



# Gameplay

Each episode is played over several rounds until the characters fulfill the objective of the final Chapter card or lose by either taking too much Stress or increasing the Surveillance to the highest threshold.

Each round consists of a character phase where the characters act (taking their individual turns) and an encounter phase where the game acts.

## Character Phase

During the character phase, each character can perform 3 actions during their turn. The characters can choose the order in which they take their turns. However, a character must finish their turn before another character starts theirs.

The available actions are:

- Change Location
- Perform a Task (Investigate, Get Support, Fight, Hack)

## Change Location

To change the location, move your character standee to another location in play. This location can be at any setting.

## Settings, Locations, and the Network

The world, places and people of NEON HOPE are all represented by cards.

**Settings** represent large areas and form the basic structure of the board. **Settings have a top and a bottom location** where several characters, Enemies, and Leads can be at. In addition to settings and their associated locations, there is a global zone called the Network.

**The Network** contains cards that are active regardless of the location. In general, characters can only interact with cards at their location or in the Network, but can support each other as long as they are at the same setting.

## Perform a Task

Performing a task is the main way you interact with the game. When you perform a task, you will use one of the four attributes of your character. You then modify your attribute by revealing a random modifier from the Grid and compare it to the difficulty of the task. To increase your chances of success, you can play an Action card.

Tasks can be found on Leads, Enemies, and States. You can perform a task on a card at your location or in the Network.

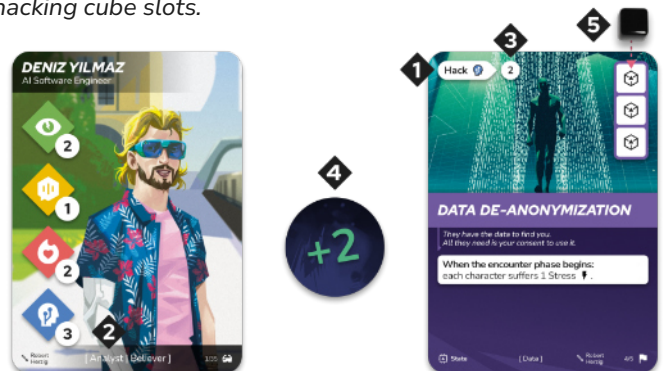
There are four different tasks (Investigate, Get Support, Fight, Hack) which have different effects but follow the same procedure. To perform a task, follow these steps in order:

1. **Determine the type, attribute, and difficulty of the task.** Your value in the matching attribute is your starting value.



2. **You may play 1 Action card** matching the type of the task.
3. **Characters at your setting may spend charges from Attribute Markers** matching the attribute of the task. Each charge **adds +2**.
4. **Reveal 1 modifier from the Grid** and modify your attribute by the revealed number. For details, see *The Grid* on the next page.
5. If the task has a threat value, **check if you must resolve the threat**. For details, see *Threat* on page 9.
6. **Check if you succeed or fail.** If your modified attribute is equal to or higher than the difficulty, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail, and there is no effect. (There is no penalty for failing a task.)
7. **If you succeed, resolve the basic effect** of the task. This depends on the type of the task and is explained in the following section.
8. **If you complete the task, gain 1 Resource.** For details, see *Completing a Task* on page 10.

**Example:** You play as Deniz and perform the Hack task on »Data De-Anonymization« 1. As you have 3 Technology 2 against a difficulty of 2 3, you decide to not play an Action card. You reveal 1 modifier from the Grid which is a [+2] 4. This brings your Technology to 5. You succeed and place 1 Hacking Cube on »Data De-Anonymization« 5. You did not complete the task, as there are still uncovered hacking cube slots.



## The Grid

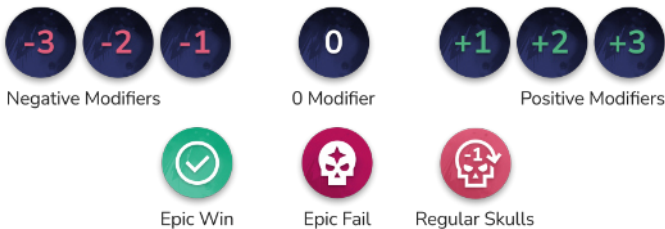
When you perform a task, you must reveal a random modifier from the Grid, which modifies your attribute by adding or subtracting a value.

Revealed modifiers stay revealed until you reset the Grid. You must reset the Grid when all modifiers – except those in the Archive – are revealed.

To reset the Grid, flip all modifiers – including those in the Archive – face down and shuffle them. Then, place 16 modifiers at random on the table and place the remaining 3 modifiers on the Archive card.

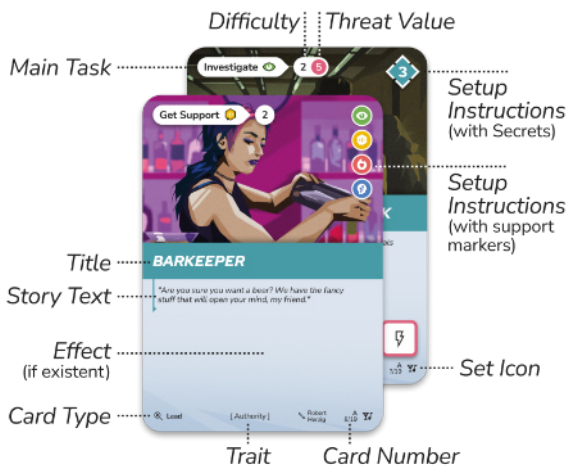
In addition to the number modifiers, there are three symbol modifiers which have the following effects:

- **Epic Win:** You stop revealing modifiers, add +99, and get 1 additional Impact. For details on Impact, see *Playing an Action Card* on page 10.
- **Epic Fail:** You stop revealing modifiers, apply -99, and activate Enemies after the action. See *Enemy Activation* on page 9.
- **Regular Skull:** You apply -1, reveal an additional modifier, and activate Enemies after the action. See *Enemy Activation* on page 9.



## Leads

Leads are double-sided cards that represent the places you visit and the people you talk to.



When a Lead enters play or is flipped, place Secrets or support markers according to its set-up instructions (top right-hand corner) onto it. Attribute Markers come into play with 2 charges.

When the last Secret or support maker is removed, flip the Lead if it is on the front (card number starts with A) or place it on the trash pile if it is on the back (card number starts with B).

## Investigating Leads

You can Investigate Leads with Secrets.

**When you successfully Investigate a Lead, remove 1 Secret from it.**

Return the removed Secret to the supply.

## Getting Support From Leads

You can Get Support from Leads with support markers.

**When you successfully Get Support from a Lead, obtain 1 support marker of your choice from it.**

Place it in your play area. There are different kinds of support markers you can spend for various effects.

## Support Markers

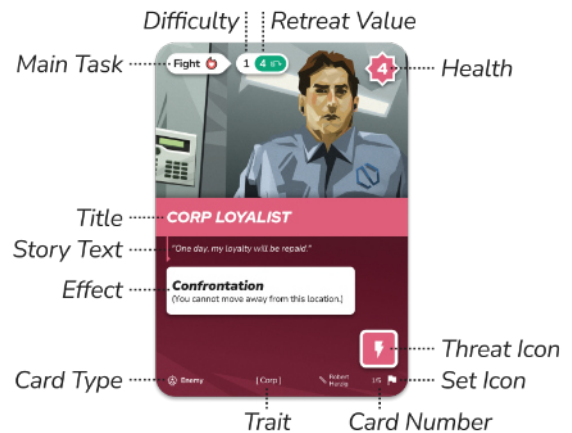
**Attribute Markers** enter play with 2 charges. You can spend 1 charge during a task matching the attribute of the support marker to add +2. This can be done by you or other characters at your setting. For a single task, characters may spend charges from any number of Attribute Markers, but only 1 charge from each individual marker. After you spend the last charge of an Attribute Marker, return it to the supply.

**Hope** can be spent to ignore Stress. Each Hope spent ignores 1 Stress. For details, see *Stress and Surveillance* on page 9.

**Resources** can be spent when you Focus to purchase Tools and/or Allies. For details, see *Focus* on page 10.

## Fighting Enemies

**When you successfully Fight an Enemy, you deal 1 Damage to it.** If an Enemy has Damage equal to or higher than its health, the Enemy is defeated and placed in the encounter discard pile.



In addition to difficulty, many fight tasks have a retreat value. During the resolution of a task, when your modified value is equal to or higher than the retreat value, the Enemy retreats:

Flip the Enemy face down. This is **not** optional. As long as an Enemy is face-down, it can not attack you, its effects are inactive, and you cannot fight it. In the encounter phase, the Enemy will flip back.

## Enemy Activation

When you reveal a Skull from the Grid, you must activate Enemies after the action. For each Skull you revealed, perform the following steps in order:

1. All Enemies at your location attack you (ignore retreated Enemies). Sum up their threat icons and suffer as much Stress and/or trigger as much Surveillance.
2. One Enemy at a location without a character moves to your location (ignore retreated Enemies). Prioritize the Enemy with the highest remaining health.

Enemies are only activated after all other effects of an action have been resolved. This includes retreating or defeating Enemies.

## Stress and Surveillance

For each point of **Stress** you suffer, discard 1 card from your hand.

For each point of **Surveillance** you trigger, increase the Surveillance on the surveillance dial by 1.



Stress



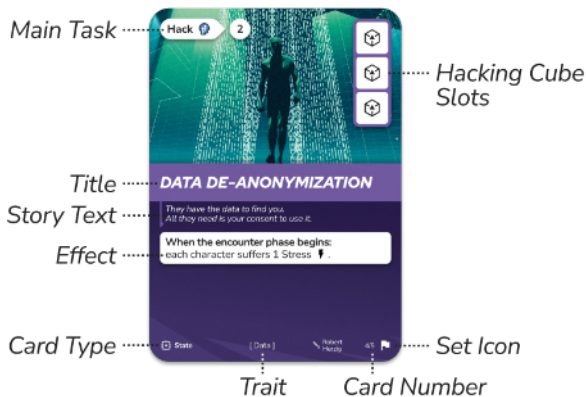
Surveillance

## Hacking States

When you successfully Hack a State, you place 1 Hacking Cube on one of its empty hacking cube slots. If all hacking cube slots are covered, the State is defeated and placed in the encounter discard pile.

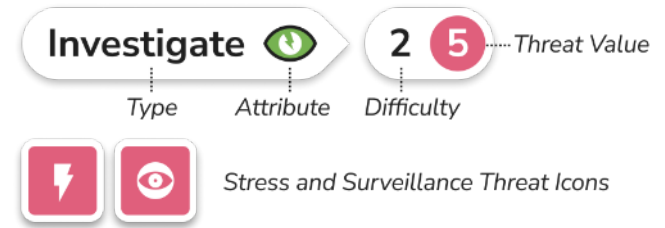
Characters at any location can Hack States in the Network.

Hacking Cubes are also placed automatically on States in the Network during the encounter phase, see *Encounter Phase* on page 11.



## Threat

In addition to the difficulty, some tasks have a threat value. **During the resolution of a task, when your modified value is lower than the threat value of the task, you must resolve the threat:** According to the threat icons, you must suffer Stress or trigger Surveillance.



## Hacking as a Secondary Task

In addition to the main task, some Leads and Enemies have a secondary Hack task. Just like when Hacking States, you place 1 Hacking Cube on an empty hacking cube slot when you successfully Hack a Lead or Enemy. Those hacking cube slots can be part of a threat icon or inside a retreat box.

When a threat icon is covered by a Hacking Cube, that icon is ignored when you resolve the threat.

When a retreat box is fully covered by Hacking Cubes, discard all Hacking Cubes and retreat the Enemy.




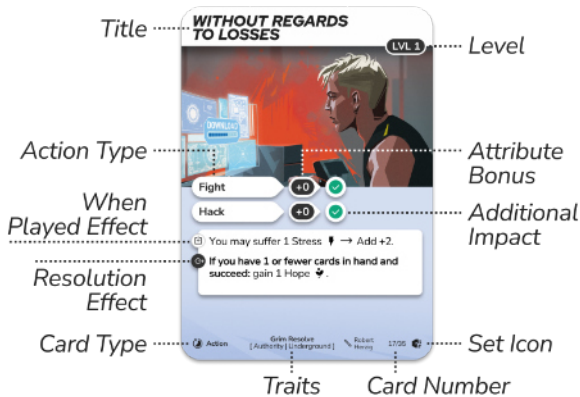
## Playing an Action Card

When you perform a task, you may play 1 Action card from your hand. The action type of the Action card must match the type of the task. If you played an Action card, place it in your discard pile at the end of the task.

An Action card can provide an attribute bonus, additional Impact, and/or special effects:

The attribute bonus of the Action card is added to your attribute.

For each additional Impact (each ) you resolve the basic effect of the task an additional time if you succeed, e.g., you remove an additional Secret during an Investigate task.








Special effects can resolve directly when the card is played (indicated by the when played icon) or during the resolution of the task after the modifier was revealed (indicated by the resolution icon).



## Completing a Task

You gain 1 Resource as a reward after you complete a task. A task is completed if you remove the last Secret from a card, obtain the last support marker from a card, deal the last point of damage to defeat a card, or place enough Hacking Cubes to cover the final hacking cube slot on a card.

**Example:** You play as Larx and perform the Investigate task on the »Dance Floor« which has a difficulty of 3 . You play »Kicking in Doors« and decide to suffer 1 Stress to add +2 , bringing your Courage to 5. You reveal 1 modifier from the Grid which is a [-1] . The revealed modifiers bring your final Courage to 4 which is enough to be successful.

Because of the additional Impact from »Kicking in Doors«  you remove both Secrets from the »Dance Floor« . Because you removed the last Secret, you completed the task and gain 1 Resource.



## Focus

Whenever you have no cards in your hand, you must automatically Focus. When you Focus, perform these steps in order:

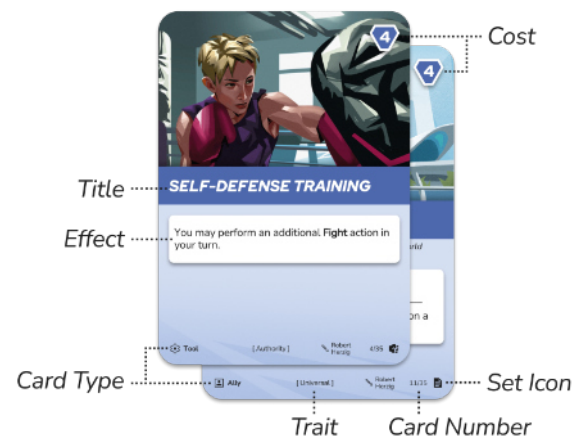
### 1. Recover cards

- ◆ Lower your Endurance by 1.
- ◆ Select a number of Action cards from your discard pile equal to your new Endurance. Take these back into your hand.

### 2. Purchase Tools and/or Allies

To purchase a Tool or Ally from your tool kit, spend Resources equal to the cost of the Tool or Ally. Purchased cards are placed in your play zone.

You can purchase any number of cards as long as you have enough Resources.



If you discarded your last card due to Stress and there is still excess Stress, you must spend Hope to ignore that Stress. If you have no Hope left and there is still excess Stress, you must trigger 1 Surveillance, regardless of how much excess Stress remains. After that, any excess Stress is ignored.

## Becoming Exhausted

If any character reaches 0 Endurance, they become exhausted and the current episode ends. Read the conclusion specified in the last surveillance threshold.

## Focus Voluntarily

You can also Focus voluntarily during your turn by discarding all cards in your hand. This is not an action and can be done at any time while you are not performing an action.

## Encounter Phase

After all characters have taken their turn, the encounter phase starts. Perform these steps in order:

1. Resolve all effects that happen "When the encounter phase begins" in an order of your choice.
2. Place 1 Hacking Cube on each State in the Network.
3. Trigger 1 Surveillance per character.
4. Trigger 1 additional Surveillance for each Enemy that is at a location with one or more characters. (Ignore retreated Enemies.)
5. All retreated cards flip face up.
6. Flip all action trackers to their unspent side.
7. Each character draws 1 encounter card.
8. In clockwise order, starting with the responsible character, each character resolves their encounter card.

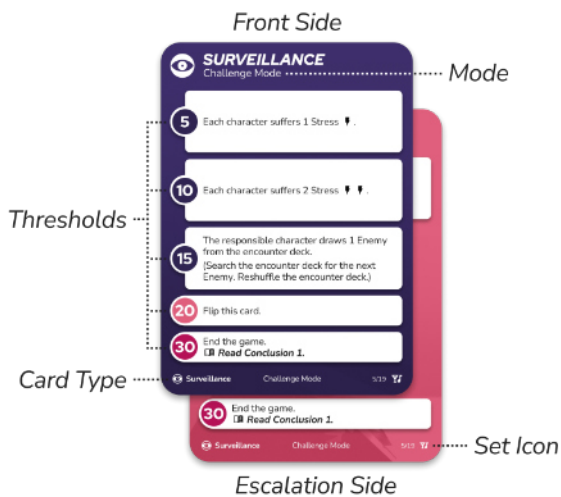
Characters are normally allowed to discuss their cards and strategy freely. But when resolving encounter cards, they are not allowed to consult with each other and must make all decisions on their own.

## Surveillance Thresholds

Whenever the Surveillance meets or exceeds one of the thresholds on the Surveillance card, the threshold effect is resolved.

At a certain threshold, the Surveillance card is usually flipped to its escalation side. While flipped to the escalation side, the Epic Fail modifier will gain an additional negative effect.

If the final threshold is reached, the episode ends. Read the conclusion as instructed.



## Other Rules

### Recycle & Trash

Some Tool or Ally effects instruct you to **Recycle** or to **Trash** the card. Unless otherwise stated, such effects can only be activated during your turn.



Recycle



Trash

When you **Recycle** a card, return it to your tool kit. It is not in play anymore, but can be purchased again when you Focus.

When you **Trash** a card, place it on the trash pile. It is permanently out of play.

### Effect Boxes

Some cards have colored boxes that indicate standardized effects. They are highlighted by the words: **Revealed**, **Completed**, and **Follower**.

- **Revealed** effects are resolved when the card enters play or is flipped to the side showing the effect.
- **Completed** effects are resolved when the main task of the card is completed.
- **Follower** effects are also resolved when the main task of the card is completed: Move the card to the play area of any character at your setting, granting them a permanent bonus.

### Attribute Die

Some effects instruct you to roll the attribute die to determine a random attribute. If the die shows 2 attributes, you must choose one of them. To indicate this, turn the die to the chosen side.

### Regular & Elite Cards

Some encounter cards are **Elite**.

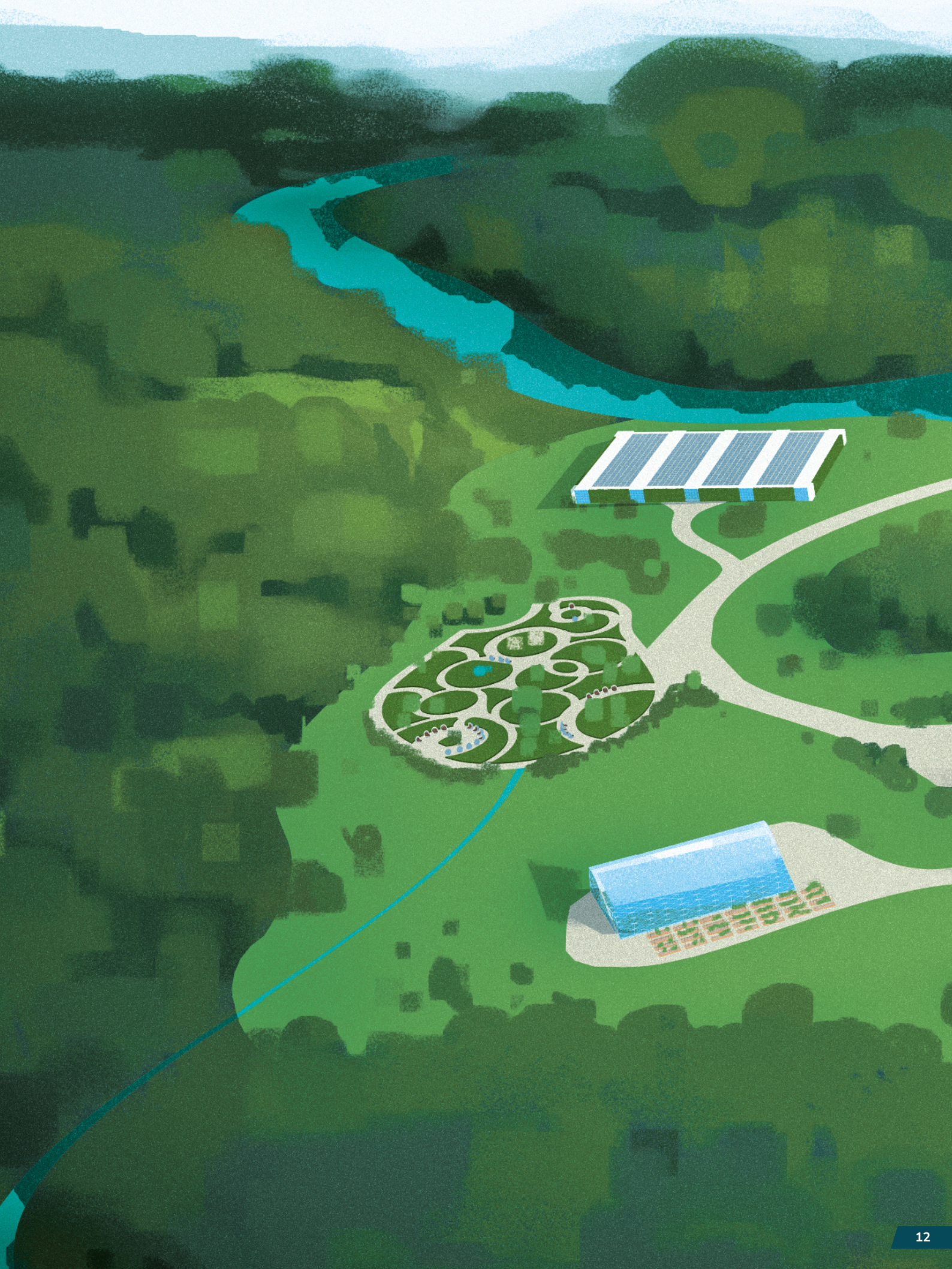
This has no inherent effect, but can be referenced by other effects. A card that is not Elite is regular.

**Example:** An effect that retreats a regular Enemy **cannot** retreat an Elite Enemy.

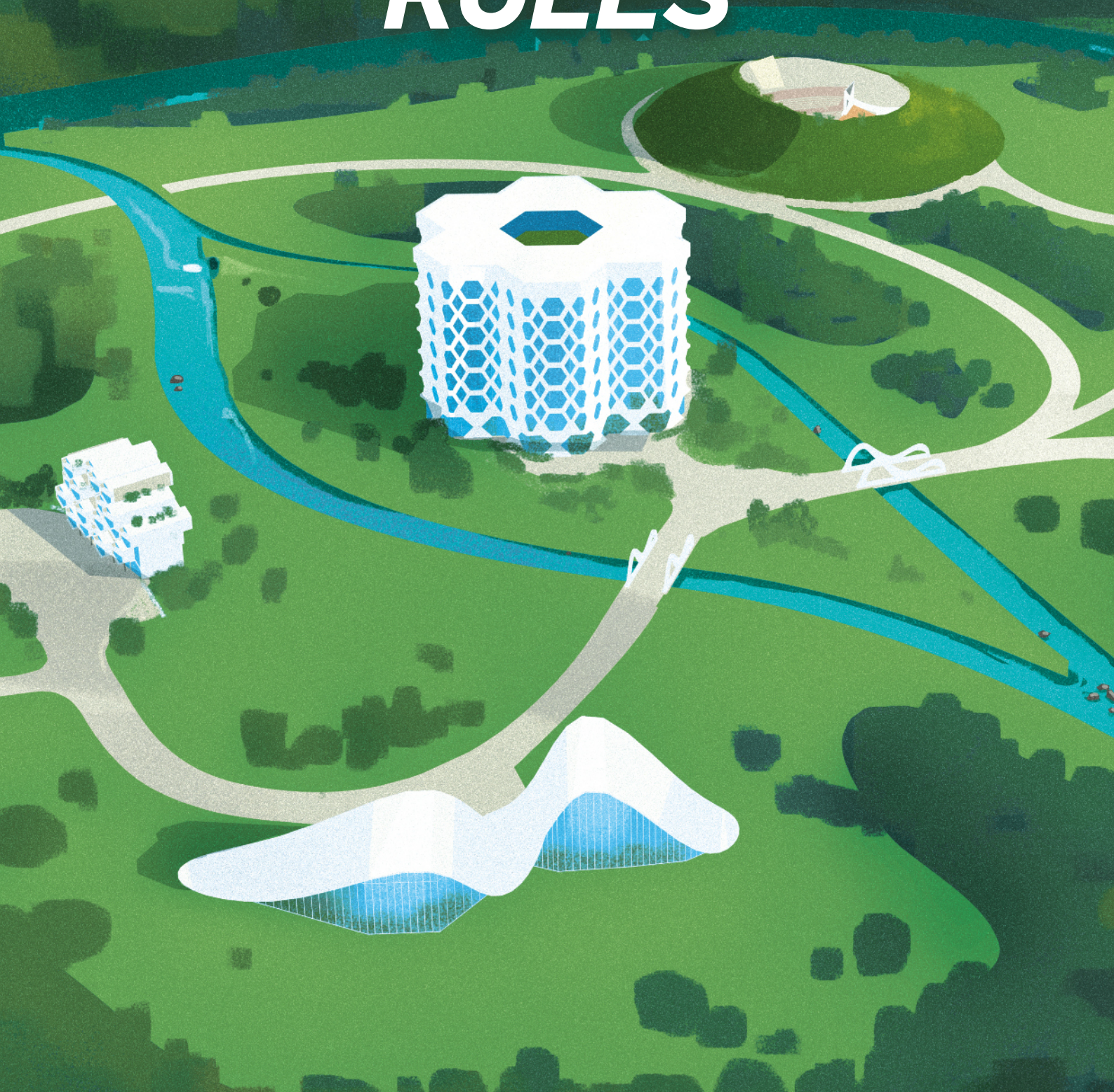
### Solo Rules

All effects that affect "another character" affect you instead. All effects that choose "another character" allow you to choose yourself. However, effects that affect "all other characters" or "each other character" do not affect you.

**Reminder:** You start with 10 Endurance, 2 additional Action cards, and 1 additional Ally as described in the character setup.



# COMPREHENSIVE RULES



# The Campaign

In NEON HOPE, you experience a thrilling campaign with evolving characters and branching narratives.

A single game is called an episode and represents a section of the campaign. An episode lasts about 90 to 120 minutes. The campaign of the base game is called *A Better Humanity* and consists of 5 episodes.

A single episode can be won or lost, or it can end in a resolution that cannot be clearly classified as a victory or defeat. In most cases, the campaign continues even if an episode is lost. However, your luck, misfortune, and the decisions from your previous episodes will impact the next – and how the grand finale will play out.

## The Storybook

Each campaign has its own storybook. Only use that storybook during a campaign. The storybook contains the introduction to the campaign, chapters for each episode, and various endings. When you are instructed to read a specific section, find that section in the storybook and read it aloud.

Sometimes you will have to make a decision and then proceed to the selected section, and sometimes you will have to continue with the section whose condition you fulfill. If you fulfill several conditions, proceed with the first section whose condition you fulfill.

## The Campaign Log

In the campaign log you note down things that have happened during the campaign. Regardless of the number of characters, you only use one campaign log. Entries in the campaign log apply to every character.

Each campaign comes with its own campaign log, which can be found at the end of the storybook. You can make copies or find a printer-friendly version on our website ([neonhopegame.com](http://neonhopegame.com)).

# Starting a New Campaign

To start a new campaign, follow these steps.

## Read the Campaign Introduction

Read the introduction from the storybook out loud.

## Assemble the Modifier Pool

Take all modifiers listed after the campaign introduction in the storybook. These modifiers form the modifier pool and are used in all episodes.

The modifier pool can change throughout the campaign, but only when explicitly stated. Such changes are permanent for the remainder of the campaign.

# Choose Difficulty

The difficulty of the game is adjusted using two mechanisms:

- **Surveillance card:** Each episode has two Surveillance cards. Depending on the selected difficulty level, use either the story mode or challenge mode version.
- **Difficulty set:** The **difficulty set** (🎯) is individually assembled at the beginning of the campaign and used in each episode. To do this, take the 5 cards of your chosen difficulty from all (9) cards in the **difficulty set**. Put the remaining cards back in the box. For the entire campaign, these 5 cards are referred to as the **difficulty set** and are indicated by the difficulty icon 🎯.

Difficulty	Surveillance card	Difficulty Set
Normal	Story mode	4x »At the Darkest Hour« 1x »A Rigged System«
Advanced	Story mode	2x »At the Darkest Hour« 3x »A Rigged System«
Hard	Challenge mode	2x »At the Darkest Hour« 3x »A Rigged System«
Hopeless	Challenge mode	5x »A Rigged System«

**If you play a campaign for the first time, it is recommended to play on normal difficulty.**

The game is intended to be played at the same difficulty throughout a campaign. A good story experience will be provided, even if you lose a few games. But if you feel the game is overall too easy or too hard, you can adjust the difficulty between episodes.

# Choose Characters

Each player chooses 1 character to play for this campaign and takes all cards showing the character's set icon. Each character comes with the following cards:

- 1 Character card
- 1 double-sided Character Tool
- 8 regular Tools
- 1 Ally with the [Universal] trait
- 24 Action cards (8 of level 1-3 each)

It is also possible to customize your character. This is explained under *Character Customization* (p. 28), but only recommended for experienced players.

Choose which side of your Character Tool you want to use for the campaign and note your decision in the campaign log. Set all level 2 and level 3 Action cards aside. These are not available yet, but can be unlocked throughout the campaign. All level 1 Action cards are available at the start of the campaign.

**Solo play:** Add 2 Action cards (level 1-3 each) with the [Universal] trait from other characters to your Action cards. Add 1 Ally with the [Universal] trait from another character to your tool kit.

# Set Up the Episode

To set up an episode follow these steps.

## Read the Episode Introduction

Read the introduction from the storybook out loud.

## Episode Setup

Follow these steps:

- Assemble the staging deck and the encounter deck** by combining all cards with the respective set icons listed in the storybook.  
  
The encounter deck is shuffled when assembled. There is no need to shuffle the staging deck.
- Determine responsibility.** Give the blue endurance tracker to the character determined by the storybook.  
  
Being the responsible character does not have an inherent effect, but they are encouraged to read the story texts and manage the encounter deck during the episode.
- Take all Chapter cards** from the staging deck and turn them front side up. **Stack them in sequential order** so that Chapter 1 is on top, continuing with chapter 2 and so on. These cards form the chapter deck.
- Depending on your selected difficulty, find the story mode or challenge mode Surveillance card in the staging deck. **Place the Surveillance card next to the encounter deck with its front side up.** Leave the other version in the staging deck.
- Set the surveillance dial to 0** and place it above the Network.
- Perform the episode setup instructions** in the storybook.

## Grid Setup

Flip all modifiers from the modifier pool face down and shuffle them. Place 16 modifiers face down at random on the table. These form the Grid. Place the remaining modifiers face down on the Archive card.

## Supply Setup

Set all remaining Hope, Resources, Attribute Markers, Keys, Secrets, Damage tokens, Hacking Cubes, attribute dice, and modifiers aside out of play. They form the supply.

## Character Setup

Each player performs these steps:

- Place your Character card in front of you.**
- Set your endurance tracker to your starting Endurance.**  
The starting Endurance is based on the number of characters:
  - ◆ Solo play: 10 Endurance.
  - ◆ Two players: 8 Endurance each.
  - ◆ Three players: 7 Endurance each.
  - ◆ Four players: 6 Endurance each.

The responsible character uses the blue endurance tracker. All other characters use the regular endurance trackers.

- Place your Character Tool next to your Character card** with the side marked in the campaign log face up.
- Place your tool kit under your Character Tool.**  
Your tool kit contains your other Tools and your Allies.
- Take 3 action trackers.**  
Flip them to their unspent side (blue).
- Gain 3 Hope** (from the supply).
- Gain one Resource for each checkmark under Starting Resources** in the campaign log.
- From your available Action cards, **select a number of Action cards equal to your Endurance.** These cards form your starting hand. Place the remaining available Action cards in your discard pile.
- You can immediately use any of your Resources to **purchase Tools and/or Allies from your tool kit.**



# Essential Rules

## The Golden Rule

If any effect on a card contradicts the general rules of the game, the card text takes precedence.

## The Rule of Contradiction

If there is a direct conflict in the game where one effect says that you can do something, while another effect says you cannot do the same thing, the effect that says you **cannot** do something takes precedence. In cases where a player card and an episode card contradict each other, the episode card takes precedence.

## The Rule of Cool

If you do not know how to resolve a rules conflict, or if you are not sure how a particular rule works in conjunction with other rules or effects, resolve it in a way that makes most sense for the story. *The rule of cool* should only be used to resolve rules disputes that cannot be resolved in a reasonable amount of time so that the game can continue.

## Ambiguity

If you are asked to do something that could be fulfilled in multiple ways, you can choose one way.

**Example:** *If you draw a State that appears at the location with the most Secrets, but there are two locations with the most Secrets, you can choose one of them.*

## Table Talk

NEON HOPE is a cooperative game where the characters are not only allowed to discuss strategy, but are encouraged to do so. This includes talking about cards in any character's hand, discard pile or other game areas that are known by at least one character. Characters are also free to reveal cards to other characters or show them any game component that they have access to. There is an exception to this rule when drawing and resolving encounter cards, which is explained under *Encounter Cards* (p.14).

# Winning and Losing

NEON HOPE is a cooperative game that means that **you all win or lose together.**

You can win or lose an individual episode. Even if you lose an episode, the campaign does not end and you do not have to replay the episode. Instead, the story deals with your failures, which may lead to very interesting or tragic consequences. To reach the most fortunate conclusion you should try to win as many episodes as you can.

## The Chapter

In each episode, the characters must fulfill specific objectives. These are represented by the chapter deck. The Chapter card on top of the chapter deck shows your current objective. If you fulfill it, advance to the next chapter by flipping the current Chapter card, reading the plot twist out loud and following the game progression instructions. Then, place the current Chapter card onto the trash pile and read the objective of the new Chapter card. If you fulfill the objective of the last Chapter card, you win the episode!

Some Chapter cards have additional rules on them. Rules on the topmost Chapter card are active as long as it is in play.

## Stress & Endurance

When opposing the power of the corporation, you have to push yourself beyond your limits. But if you push too hard, you will eventually collapse.

In the game, this is represented by **Stress and Endurance**. Enemies and various effects can inflict Stress on you.



Stress



Surveillance

**For each point of Stress you suffer you must discard 1 card from your hand.** You can choose which cards to discard.

Whenever you have no cards in your hand, you must automatically **Focus**, which will reduce your Endurance. If one character reaches 0 Endurance, the episode ends (with a less desirable outcome). This is explained in detail under *Focus* (p. 23).



## Surveillance

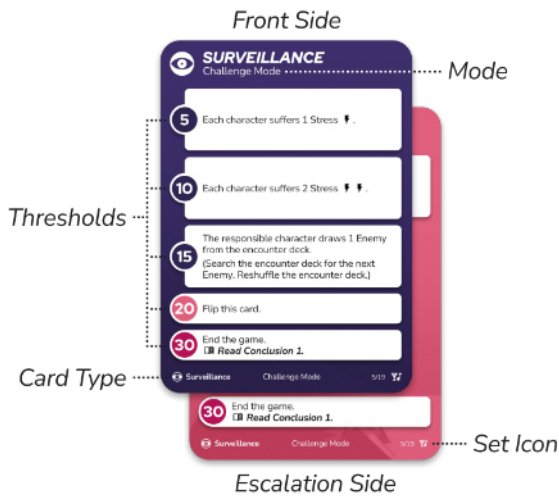
In NEON HOPE you are up against an international mega corporation. Fortunately, its surveillance network monitors millions of other activities in addition to yours. But if you act too suspicious, the corporation will take notice.

In the game, this is represented by the **Surveillance**. The Surveillance is tracked on the surveillance dial. There is only 1 surveillance dial, which is shared by all characters.

The Surveillance starts at 0 in each episode.

**When you trigger Surveillance, increase the number on the surveillance dial by 1 for each point of Surveillance.**

In each episode, there is a **Surveillance card** in the Network that varies depending on the selected difficulty. The Surveillance card shows multiple **surveillance thresholds** and their effects.



**Whenever the Surveillance meets or exceeds one of these thresholds, the threshold effect is resolved.** If the Surveillance was reduced below a threshold, the threshold effect is resolved again as soon as the Surveillance meets or exceeds that threshold again.

At a certain threshold, the Surveillance card is usually flipped to its **escalation side**. While flipped to the escalation side, the Epic Fail modifier will gain an additional negative effect.

Usually, if the **final threshold** is reached, the episode ends (with a less desirable outcome). Read the conclusion as instructed.



# The Board

The explorable world of the current episode is represented by Setting and Lead cards.

## Settings

Settings represent larger areas in the world of NEON HOPE. They have setup instructions on their front. Follow these instructions when you put a Setting card into play. Then, flip the card.

**Settings have a top and a bottom location where several characters, Leads, Enemies, and States can be at.** Being at a location also means being at the setting that location belongs to.

## Leads

Leads are double-sided cards that represent the places you visit and the people you talk to. They are placed above or below a setting and are part of the corresponding location. Leads are explained in detail under *Leads* (p. 24).

## Other Areas

In addition to the central area, where settings and Leads are located, there are also the following additional areas:

### The Episode Area

The episode area contains the chapter deck, staging deck, trash pile, encounter deck, encounter discard pile and the surveillance dial.

### The Network

The Network is a global zone which contains cards that are active regardless of the location and for all characters. States are placed in the Network unless otherwise specified.

### The Grid & Archive

The Grid and the Archive contain the modifiers used to modify your attribute during a task.

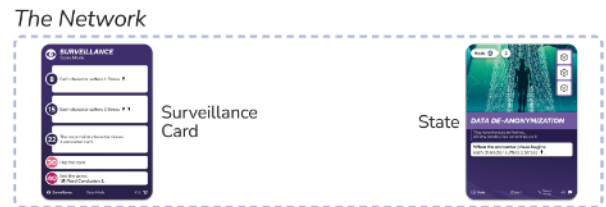
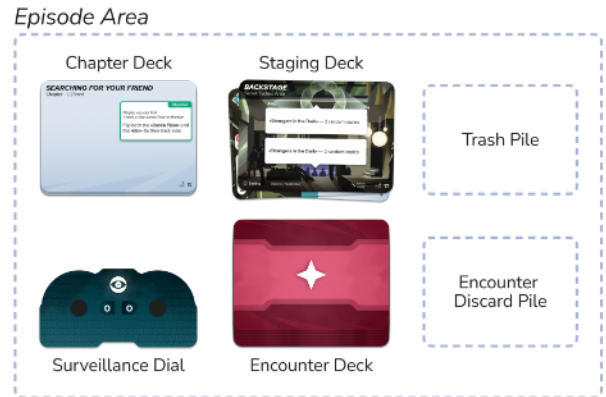
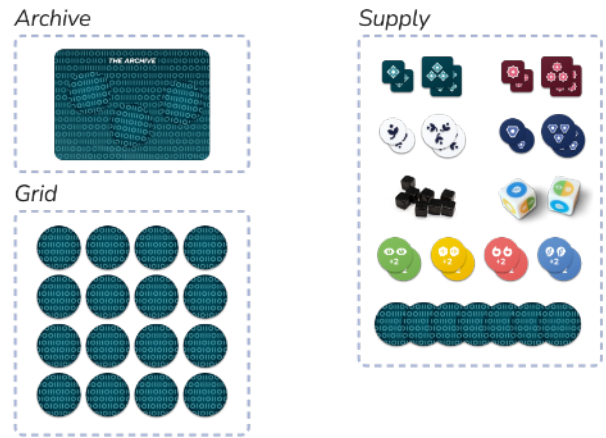
### The Character Area

Each character has their own area which contains their play zone and their discard pile.

Your play zone contains your Character card, Character Tool with your tool kit under it, and all cards and tokens you acquire during the game. Face-up cards and markers in your play area are active or can be used.

### The Supply

All tokens, cubes, and dice currently not in play are in the supply.

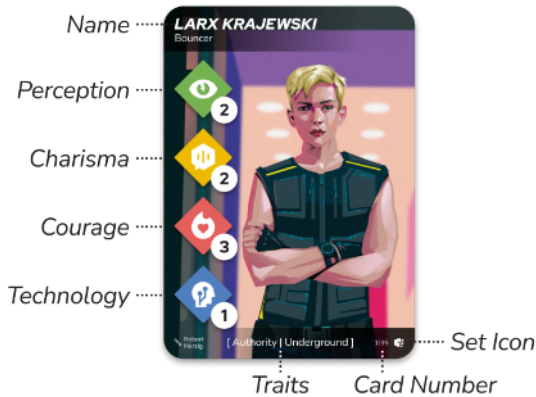


# Characters

Each player plays one character throughout the campaign. A character comes with 1 Character card, 1 Character Tool, 8 regular Tools, 1 Ally, and 8 Action cards.

## Character Card

The Character card shows your four attributes and your two traits. Having a high attribute value will increase your chances of succeeding at tasks that rely on that attribute.

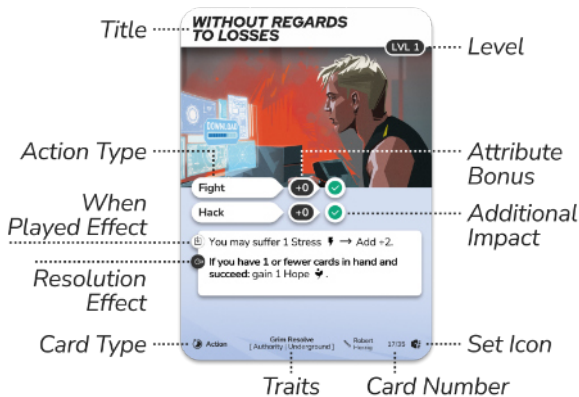


Your traits determine which Action cards and Tools you can use when customizing your character. These are explained under *Character Customization* (p. 28).

Furthermore, the background story of your character is written on the back of your Character card.

## Action Cards

A character's 8 Action cards define its unique play style.



When you perform a task, you may play 1 Action card from your hand. This is explained in detail under *Playing an Action Card* (p. 21).

The traits of your Action cards are only relevant during character customization.

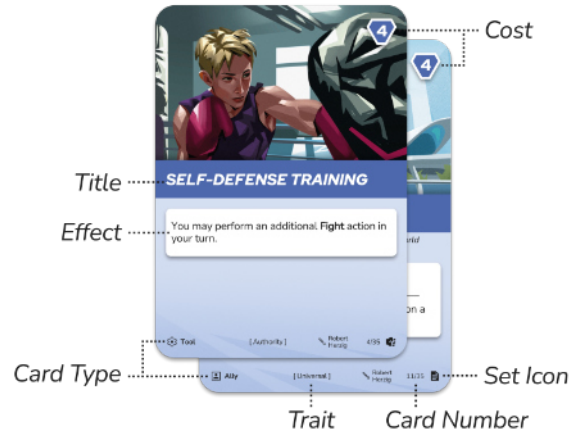
**At the start of the campaign only your level 1 Action cards are available.** However, during the campaign you can gradually replace your level 1 cards with their level 2 or level 3 version. This is explained in detail under *Campaign Progression* (p. 28).

## Tools

Tools give your character new abilities. Unlike Action cards, these abilities are not limited to one task, but remain in effect as long as the Tool is in play.

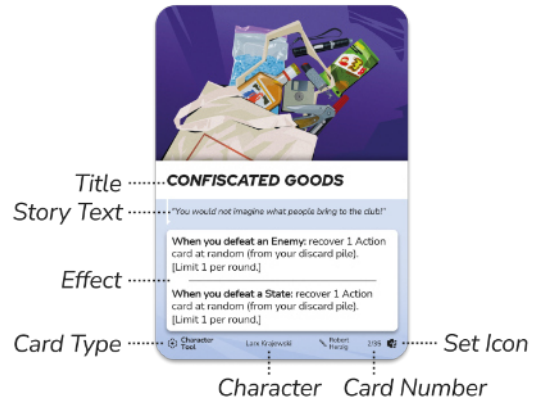
## Allies

Allies are people or non-human friends who help you in your fight against the corporation. They use the same rules as Tools, but are a separate card type.



## Character Tool

Each character has 1 double-sided Character Tool. You begin each episode with it in play on the side you selected during campaign setup.



## Tool Kit

Your tool kit consisting of 8 regular Tools and 1 Ally is placed under your Character Tool. Over the course of the campaign, cards can be permanently added to or removed from your tool kit.

**Tools and Allies in your tool kit must be purchased at the start of an episode or when you Focus.** To purchase a Tool or Ally, spend Resources equal to its cost. Purchased Tools and Allies are placed in your play zone.

# Round Structure

Each round consists of a character phase where the characters act (taking their individual turns) and an encounter phase where the corporation acts.

1. **Character Phase**
2. **Encounter Phase** (explained on page 26)

During the character phase, each character can perform up to 3 actions during their turn. The characters can choose the order in which they take their turns. However, a character must finish their turn before the next character starts theirs.

When you perform an Action, flip 1 of your action trackers to its spent side.

You can end your turn without performing all 3 actions. If you do, you forfeit all remaining actions and must flip all of your action trackers to their spent side.

# Actions

The available actions are:

- Change Location
  - ◆ Investigate
  - ◆ Get Support
  - ◆ Fight
  - ◆ Hack

## Change Location

When you perform the *Change Location* action, you move from your location to another location in play. This is done by placing your character standee there.

Your destination location can be at any setting.

## Connected Settings

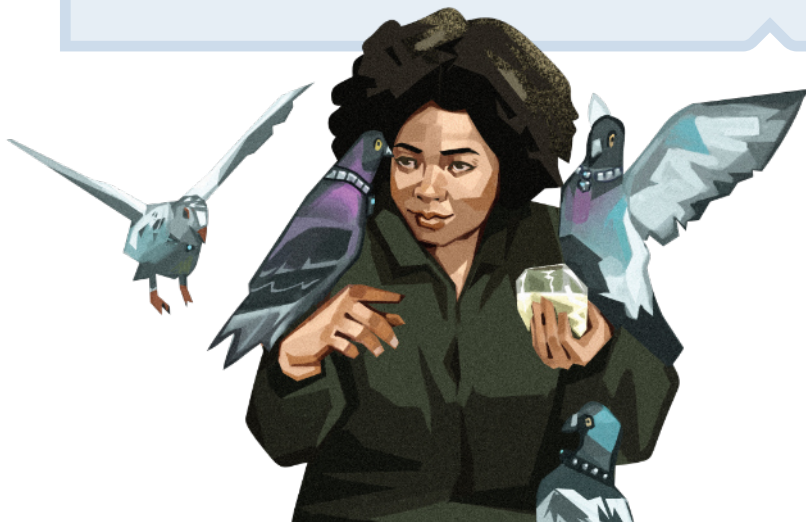
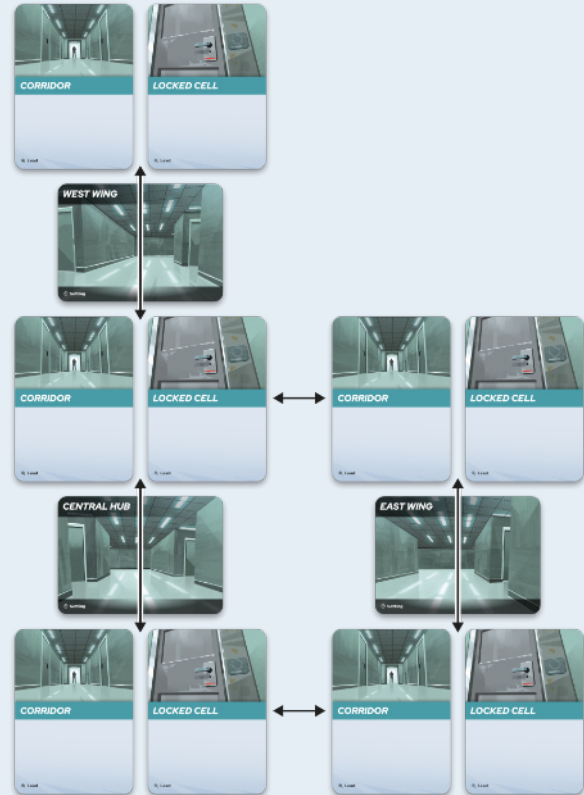
Some episodes use the rules for connected settings, which means that you must follow additional restrictions when moving. These apply both when moving via the *Change Location* action and when moving via an effect.

Only the following types of moves are allowed:

- **Vertical**  
You can move to the opposite location of your setting. (Meaning you can move from the top to the bottom of the same setting, or vice versa.)
- **Horizontal**  
You can move to a location of another setting that is to the left or right of your location.

Enemies are also affected by these restrictions. When an Enemy would move to your location, it moves instead one location along the shortest path towards your location.

**Note:** Determining which Enemy moves, if there are multiple Enemies, is unaffected by distance.



# Perform a Task

You can perform a task on a card at your location, in your play zone, or in the Network.



To perform a task, follow these steps in order:

1. **Determine the type, attribute, and difficulty of the task.**
2. **Play an Action card:** You may play 1 Action card matching the type of the task. Place it in your play zone.
3. **Use Attribute Markers for the task:** Characters at your setting may spend charges from Attribute Markers matching the attribute of the task. Each charge adds +2.
4. **Reveal a modifier:** Reveal 1 modifier from the Grid and modify your attribute by the revealed number. Resolve *modifier effects*.
5. **Determine your final attribute:** Your final attribute is your base attribute with all modifications applied.
6. **Threat:** If the task has a threat value and your final attribute is lower, you must resolve the threat.
7. **Succeed or fail effects:** If your final attribute is equal to or higher than the difficulty, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail, and there is no effect. Resolve *succeed* and *fail effects*.
8. **Base effect:** If you succeed, resolve the basic effect of the task. This depends on the type of the task.
9. **Completed effects:** If you complete the task, resolve *completed effects*. (Remember to gain 1 Resource.)
10. **Retreat:** If the task has a retreat value and your final attribute is equal or higher, you must retreat the card.
11. **Discard your Action card:** If you played an Action card, move it to your discard pile.

After these steps, the task ends.

Then, you must follow these steps in order:

- A1) **Focus:** If you have no cards in hand, you must Focus.
- A2) **Skulls:** If you revealed at least one Skull, you must activate Enemies for each Skull.
- A3) **Grid:** If all modifiers in the Grid are revealed, you must reset the Grid.
- A4) **Surveillance threshold:** If a new Surveillance threshold was met or exceeded, you must resolve the threshold effect.
- A5) **Objective:** If you fulfill your current objective, you must advance to the next chapter.
- A6) **After this action effects:** Resolve *after this action effects*. (For example performing additional actions and/or drawing encounter cards.)

## Task Type and Impact

The type of the task determines which basic effect is resolved, if you succeed (step 8).

The number of Impact determines how powerful that basic effect is. By default, tasks have 1 Impact.

There are 4 types which have these basic effects:

- **Investigate:** Remove 1 Secret for each Impact from the card you interact with.
- **Get Support:** Obtain 1 support marker of your choice for each Impact from the card you interact with.
- **Fight:** Deal 1 Damage for each Impact to the card you interact with.
- **Hack:** Place 1 Hacking Cube for each Impact on the card you interact with.

## Playing an Action Card

When you perform a task, you may play 1 Action card from your hand. At least 1 action type of the Action card must match the type of the task. The action type “Any Task” is considered to be always matching.

Playing an Action card is optional, but it is not allowed to play more than 1 Action card during a task. If you play an Action card, it enters your play zone. Place it in your discard pile at the end of the task.

An Action card can provide an attribute bonus, additional Impact, and/or special effects:

- The **attribute bonus** of the Action card is added to your attribute.
- **Additional Impact** increases the power of the basic effect of the task if you succeed.
- **Special effects** can provide all kinds of bonuses. There are two different timings:



### When Played

Directly when the card is played (step 2).

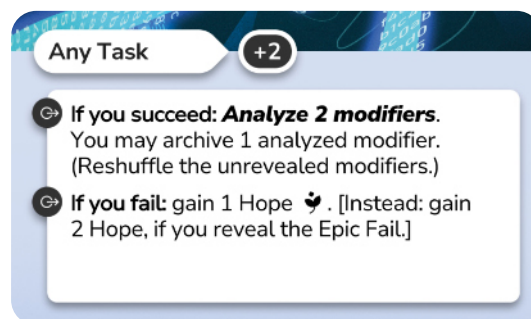


### Resolution

After the modifier was revealed (step 4 or later).

Text written in **round brackets** denotes a reminder text. It only reminds you of basic rules of the game that would apply even without this text.

Text written in **square brackets** modifies or replaces the previous text under a certain condition or specifies a limit.



## The Grid

The Grid is a zone at the side of the table that consists of 16 modifiers. **When you perform a task you need to reveal a modifier from the Grid (step 4) to modify your attribute.**

Next to the Grid is a zone called the Archive, represented by the Archive card. Modifiers in the Archive cannot be revealed.

The Grid is set up at the beginning of each episode and reset after the last modifier from the Grid was revealed.

## Modifier Effects

There are number and symbol modifiers. Number modifiers modify your attribute by its value until the task ends, while symbol modifiers have the following effects:

### Number Modifiers



### Symbol Modifiers



### EPIC WIN

1. Additional modifiers cannot be revealed – stop revealing.
2. Add +99 to your attribute until the task ends.
3. Get 1 additional Impact

For effects, the Epic Win is considered to be a positive modifier with a value of +99.

### EPIC FAIL

1. Additional modifiers cannot be revealed – stop revealing.
2. Apply -99 to your attribute until the task ends.
3. Activate Enemies (after the task).

The Epic Fail is a Skull. For effects, it is considered to be a negative modifier with a value of -99.

### REGULAR SKULL

1. Modify your attribute by the value of this Skull until the task ends.
2. Reveal 1 additional modifier.
3. Activate Enemies (after the task).

For effects, regular Skulls are considered to be negative modifiers with their respective printed value. The exception is the [0] Skull modifier which is neither negative nor positive.

### SPECIAL

The Special modifier has no inherent effect, but is given its effect by a card.

## Reveal a Modifier

To reveal a modifier choose one of the unrevealed modifiers in the Grid and flip it face up. It stays revealed until the Grid is reset.

If you reveal a modifier for a task (step 4), the revealed modifier modifies your matching attribute by its value (if it is a number modifier) or applies its effects (if it is a symbol modifier).

If you reveal a modifier at any other point due to an effect, do not modify your value and ignore all modifier effects **except** for Enemy activations from Skulls (regular Skulls and the Epic Fail).

If you are instructed to reveal additional or multiple modifiers, reveal them one at a time as part of the same step (step 4). Apply each of their modifications and/or effects.

**Example:** For a task, you reveal a Skull as your first modifier. You need to reveal an additional modifier which is also a Skull. Again, you need to reveal an additional modifier which is a [-1] number modifier. Now you determine the success of your task. The revealed modifiers will modify your attribute by a total of -3. After the task, you must activate Enemies twice (once for each Skull revealed).

## Reset the Grid

If all modifiers in the Grid are revealed, the Grid is reset after the task (step A3). If all modifiers in the Grid are revealed outside of a task, reset the Grid immediately.

To reset the Grid, flip all modifiers – including those in the Archive – face down and shuffle them. Then, place 16 modifiers face down at random on the table and place the remaining modifiers face down on the Archive card.

**If you reveal (or analyze) more modifiers than available, you must immediately reset the Grid with the following special rule:**

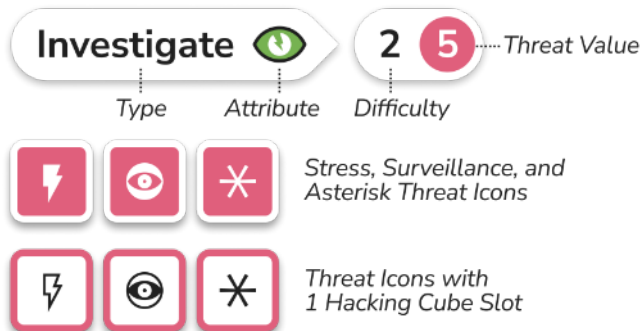
1. Set aside the modifiers you just revealed (or analyzed). Then, flip all other modifiers – including those in the Archive – face down and shuffle them.
2. Put the set-aside modifiers back into the Grid and fill it with random modifiers until there are 16 modifiers in the Grid.
3. Place the remaining modifiers on the Archive card. Finally, continue revealing (or analyzing) modifiers from the Grid. (Apply all revealed modifiers if you perform a task.)

## Threat Value

In addition to the difficulty, some tasks have a threat value. **During the resolution of a task (step 6), if your modified attribute is lower than the threat value of the task, you must resolve the threat:** Suffer as much Stress as the number of Stress icons and trigger as much Surveillance as the number of Surveillance icons.

A few cards have the asterisk threat icon ✖: When you resolve the threat, resolve the unique effect in their text box.

Ignore threat icons that are covered by Hacking Cubes. If all threat icons of a card are covered, it is considered to have no threat.



## Completing a Task

A task is completed if you:

- remove the last Secret from a Lead,
- obtain or discard the last support marker from a Lead,
- deal the last point of damage to defeat an Enemy,
- or place enough Hacking Cubes to fill the final hacking cube slot on a card.

(This includes the main task and secondary tasks.)

**Whenever you complete a task, gain 1 Resource from the supply.**

You do not necessarily have to perform tasks to complete a task. If you resolve an effect that removes Secrets, obtains or discards support markers, deals Damage, or places Hacking Cubes you can also complete tasks.

When the corporation completes a task no character gains a Resource.

Discarding, Flipping, or **Trashing** a card, or otherwise causing it to leave play, is **not** completing it.

## Retreat Value

In addition to that difficulty, some Fight or Hack tasks have a retreat value. **During the resolution of a task (step 10), when your modified attribute is equal to or higher than the retreat value, you must retreat the card:** Flip it face down. This is **not** optional. This is explained in detail under *Retreated Cards* (p. 25).



## Focus

**Whenever you have no cards in your hand, you must automatically Focus.** If your last card is played or discarded during a task, you Focus after the task (see *Perform a Task*, p. 21). Outside of a task, you Focus after the effect that discarded your last card. When you Focus, perform these steps in order:

1. **Recover cards.**
  - ♦ Lower your Endurance by 1.
  - ♦ Select a number of Action cards from your discard pile equal to your new Endurance. Take these back into your hand.
2. **Purchase Tools and/or Allies from your tool kit.** You can purchase any number of cards as long as you have enough Resources.

If you discarded your last card due to Stress and there is still excess Stress, you must spend Hope to ignore that Stress. If you have no Hope left and there is still excess Stress, you must trigger 1 Surveillance, regardless of how much excess Stress remains. After that, the excess Stress is ignored.

## Becoming Exhausted

If you reach 0 Endurance, you become exhausted.

If you exhaust during the encounter phase, the current episode immediately ends for all players.

If you exhaust during the character phase:

- Finish your current action.
- Lose all of your remaining actions. (Other characters can still take their turns.)
- The episode ends at the end of the character phase.

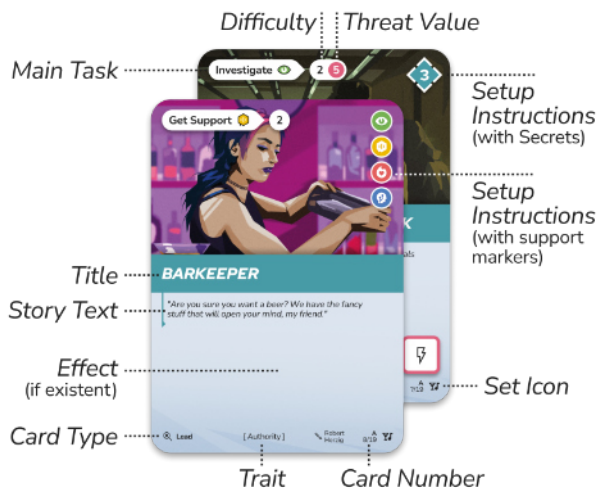
When the episode ends due to a character becoming exhausted, read the conclusion specified in the last surveillance threshold.

## Focus Voluntarily

You can also Focus voluntarily during your turn by discarding all cards in your hand. This is not an action and can be done at any time while you are not performing an action.



# Leads

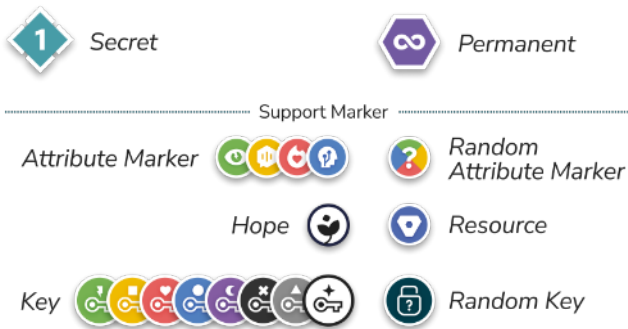


Leads are double-sided cards that are placed at the top or bottom location of a setting as part of the settings setup instructions or by other effects.

**When a Lead enters play or is flipped, place Secrets or support markers onto it according to its setup instructions (top right-hand corner).** Attribute Markers come into play with 2 charges each.

**When the last Secret or support marker is removed, flip the Lead if it is on the front (card number starts with A) or place it on the trash pile if it is on the back, unless the Lead has the permanent icon.** Before flipping a Lead, discard all Hacking Cubes from it, but leave all other tokens and dice on it.

Effects can place Damage on Leads. Each Damage increases all difficulties and threat values of that Lead by 1.



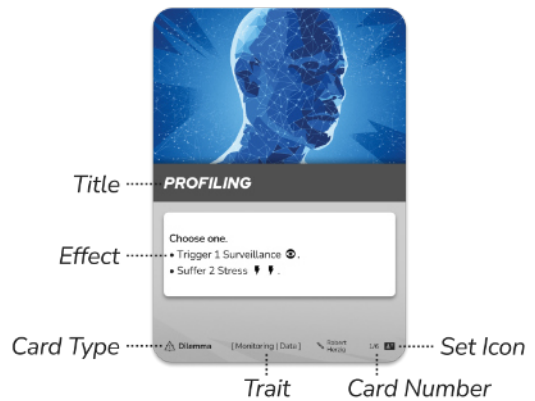
# Encounter Cards

When you set up an episode, encounter cards are used to build the encounter deck. **During the encounter phase, each character must draw 1 encounter card.**

Whenever you draw an encounter card, you must resolve it without consulting the other characters. You must make all decisions alone.

When you discard an encounter card, place it in the encounter discard pile. When you must draw (or analyze) an encounter card, but the encounter deck is empty, shuffle the encounter discard pile back into the encounter deck.

# Dilemmas

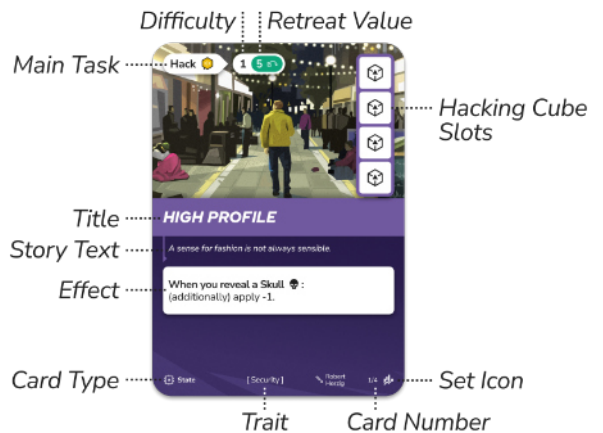


**When you draw a Dilemma, place it in your play area and resolve its effect.** Then, discard it.

Most Dilemmas ask you to **choose** one or more options. You are only allowed to choose options that can be fully fulfilled.

If you are asked to choose multiple options, each option can only be chosen once. If you choose multiple options, resolve them in the order they are listed on the card.

# States



**When you draw a State, it appears in the Network.**

States in the Network can affect characters at any location.

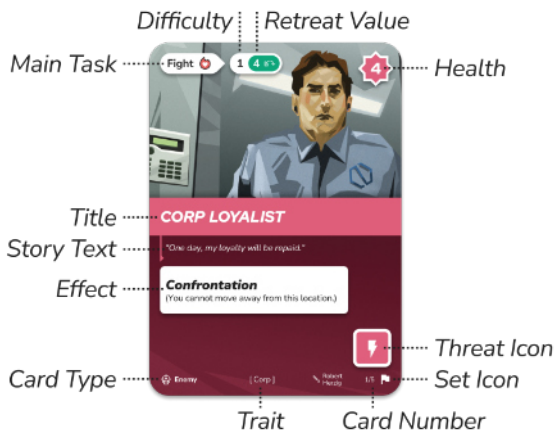
States can appear at a location if this is specified in their revealed effect. States at a location affect all characters at that location.

When all hacking cube slots of a State are covered, it is defeated and discarded. (This counts as completing.)

Effects can place Secrets on a State. Each Secret increases all difficulties, threat values, and retreat values of that State by 1.

Characters can perform tasks on cards in the Network from any location.

## Enemies



When you draw an Enemy, it appears at your location.

Enemies at your location attack you, when you reveal a Skull from the Grid (see Enemy Activation to the right) and trigger Surveillance in the encounter phase (see Encounter Phase, p. 26).

If an Enemy has Damage equal to or higher than its health, the Enemy is defeated and discarded. (This counts as completing.)

Effects can place Secrets on Enemies. Each Secret increases all difficulties, threat values, and retreat values of that Enemy by 1.

**Note:** Enemies do not automatically attack in the encounter phase. They do not prevent you from performing tasks. They also do not prevent you from leaving a location (unless an Enemy has the Confrontation keyword).

## Retreat Box

Some Enemies or States have a retreat box with hacking cube slots. When a retreat box is fully covered by Hacking Cubes, discard all Hacking Cubes and retreat that card.



## Retreated Cards

When you retreat an Enemy or State, flip it face down. Leave all tokens, cubes, and dice on the card.

A retreated card is considered out of play and cannot be interacted with, unless an effect specifically calls out retreated cards. This means:

- Retreated Enemies do not move or attack.
- Retreated Enemies do not trigger Surveillance in the encounter phase.
- During the encounter phase the corporation does not place a Hacking Cube on retreated States in the Network.

Enemies and States without a retreat value can be retreated through effects.

## Enemy Activation

When you reveal a Skull from the Grid, you must activate Enemies after the task (step A2). This is regardless of whether you succeeded or failed the task.

When a Skull is revealed through an effect, Enemies are also activated after the effect. (For example from the Shape modifiers keyword.)

For each Skull you revealed, perform the following steps in order:

1. All Enemies at your location attack you (ignore retreated Enemies). Sum up their threat icons and suffer as much Stress and/or trigger as much Surveillance.
2. One Enemy at a location without a character moves to your location (ignore retreated Enemies). Prioritize the Enemy with the most remaining health.

**Example:** You play as Deniz and perform a task for which you reveal 2 Skulls 1. After the task, you must activate Enemies twice. For the first Skull, the »Corp Loyalist« at your location attacks you: You suffer 1 Stress 2 and thereby discard 1 card. Afterwards, the »Freelance Security Officer« moves to your location from another setting 3. For the second Skull 4 the »Corp Loyalist« and the »Freelance Security Officer« attack you: You suffer 3 Stress and thereby discard 3 cards 5. Finally, another Enemy should move to your location. But the only other Enemy in play is at the same location as Larx 6. Therefore, no Enemy moves for the second activation.



## Encounter Phase

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After all characters have taken their turn, the encounter phase begins. Perform these steps in order:

1. Resolve all effects that happen "When the encounter phase begins" in any order of your choice.
2. The corporation places 1 Hacking Cube on each State in the Network. (Ignore retreated States and States with the permanent icon.)
3. Trigger 1 Surveillance per character.
4. Enemies surveil: Trigger 1 additional Surveillance for each Enemy that is at a location with one or more characters. (Ignore retreated Enemies.)
5. All retreated cards are flipped face up.
6. All action trackers are flipped to their unspent side.
7. Each character draws 1 encounter card in any order.
8. Resolve 1 encounter card. The responsible character starts. When they have resolved all their encounter cards, the next character in clockwise order continues. Repeat this step until all characters have resolved their encounter cards.

After the encounter phase, the current round ends. The next round will start with the character phase.

If a surveillance threshold is met or exceeded during the encounter phase, resolve the corresponding threshold effect before going to the next step or resolving the next encounter card.

When "the corporation" does something the effect should not be attributed to any character. This means that no character gains a Resource when the corporation completes tasks (including placing the last Hacking Cube on a State). Followers completed this way are trashed.

**Remember:** You are not allowed to consult with each other, when an encounter card was drawn, until all drawn encounter cards have been fully resolved.

## Regular, Elite, and Story Cards

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Some encounter cards are **Elite**.  
Some player cards are **Story**.

Neither has an inherent effect, but they can be referenced by other effects. A card that is neither Elite nor Story is **regular**.

**Example:** An effect that retreats a regular Enemy cannot retreat an Elite Enemy.

## Effects

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### Effect Boxes

Some cards have colored boxes that indicate standardized effects. They are highlighted by the words: Revealed, Completed, and Follower.

**Revealed** effects are resolved when the card enters play or is flipped to the side showing the effect.

**Completed** effects are resolved when the main task of the card is completed.

**Follower** effects are also resolved when the main task of the card is completed. If you do, move the card to the play area of any character at your setting, instead of trashing it. Also discard all tokens, cubes, and dice from the card. The effect in its Follower box is active for the character in whose play zone it is. This card is returned to its respective set at the end of the episode. They do not carry over into the next episode. Cards with a Follower effect are addressed as "Followers".

### Activated Effects

Effects without a specified timing can be activated during your turn at any time when you are not performing an action.

You can activate effects on cards in your play zone, the Network, at your location, or on the Chapter card.

### Arrow Symbol

Effects that use the arrow symbol → are only resolved if the condition before it is completely fulfilled.

### Recycle & Trash

Some effects instruct you to **Recycle** or to **Trash** the card. When no timing is specified, such effects are activated effects (and can only be activated during your turn).



Recycle



Trash

When you **Recycle** a card, return it to your tool kit. It is not in play anymore, but can be purchased again when you Focus.

When you **Trash** a card, place it on the trash pile. It is permanently out of play. Only effects that explicitly name trashed cards can interact with them.

### Trash Pile

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The trash pile contains cards that will no longer be used during an episode. When you trash a card, move it to the trash pile. At the end of the episode, all cards in the trash pile are returned to their respective sets or character decks.

## Support Markers

Support markers are helpful tokens that you can obtain during the game. Usually, you obtain support markers from a Lead with the *Get Support* task.

**When you obtain a support marker, place it in your personal play zone.** There is no limit for how many support markers you can have.

**Support markers cannot be given to or traded with other characters.** Spent support markers are returned to the supply.

There are the following types of support markers:

- Attribute Marker
- Resource
- Hope
- Key

## Attribute Marker

There are Attribute Markers for each of the four Attributes. They are called Perception (green), Charisma (yellow), Courage (red), and Technology Marker (blue) respectively.




**An Attribute Marker can have 1 or 2 charges. They come into play with 2 charges when placed on a Lead.**

Using an attribute marker means spending 1 charge from it: a marker with 2 charges is flipped over, a marker with 1 charge left is returned to the supply.

**You can use a matching Attribute Marker for a character at your setting. This adds +2 to their attribute for this task.** This is done in step 3 of performing a task.

The characters may spend charges from any number of Attribute Markers, but only 1 charge from each individual marker in this step. (This also applies when spending them for effects like Teamwork.)

Sometimes a random Attribute Marker  is needed. Roll an attribute die to determine the attribute of the marker.

## Resource

**Resources can be spent to purchase Tools and/or Allies.** You can only spend Resources for yourself. This can be done during the setup of an episode or when you Focus.



**Remember:** Whenever you complete a task, you gain 1 Resource from the supply.

## Hope

**Hope can be spent to ignore Stress. Each Hope spent ignores 1 Stress.** You can only spend Hope for yourself.



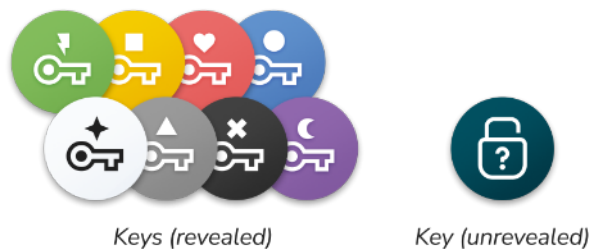
Spending Hope is optional, unless you suffer more Stress than you have cards in hand. Then, you must spend Hope until all excess Stress is ignored or you have no Hope left.

**Hope placed on the Surveillance card ignores Surveillance.** When Surveillance is triggered, instead discard 1 Hope from the Surveillance card for each point of Surveillance. This is mandatory.

**Hope placed on a retreated card prevents it from flipping face up.** When this card would flip back, instead discard 1 Hope from it. This is mandatory.

## Key

**Keys have no inherent effect,** but can be given different effects depending on the episode.



On its revealed side each Key shows a color and the corresponding icon. The unrevealed side shows the lock symbol. When a Lead enters play or is flipped and shows a specific Key, find that Key in the supply and place it on the Lead. If it shows an unrevealed Key, draw 1 random Key from the supply, flip it face up and place it on the Lead.

Some episodes only use a subset of Keys. In this case, the episode setup instructs you to form the key repository using only specific Keys. Use only these Keys during the episode, unless it is specifically stated that the Key is taken from the supply. Return spent Keys to the supply, not the key repository.

## Attribute Die

Some effects instruct you to roll the attribute die to determine a random attribute. **If the die shows 2 attributes, you must choose one of them.** To indicate this, turn the die to the chosen side.



# Campaign Progression

Throughout the campaign, you will level up your character in two ways:

- When you gain **Starting Resources**, you check that many boxes in the campaign log. During the setup of each subsequent episode, each character gains 1 Resource for each checked box.
- When you **upgrade Action cards**, choose that many different Action cards in your deck and replace each one with its higher-level version. These cards are unlocked for the rest of the campaign. The lower-level version is no longer available. If you receive 2 or more upgrades at the same time, you **cannot** level up the same card multiple times.

In addition, you write down important information in the campaign log:

- If you need to **note** something in the campaign log, write it down under campaign notes.
- If you need to **record** something that has a section with checkboxes in the campaign log, check the appropriate number of boxes. (For example, when you record Followers.)
- If you need to **record** someone as **your Ally**, the group chooses a character to add the Ally card permanently to their tool kit. Also write down the Ally's name in the *Story Allies* section of the campaign log under the character to whose tool kit they were added.
- If you need to **remove** someone as **your Ally**, return their Ally card to the collection and cross out their name in the *Story Allies* section of the campaign log.

If an effect instructs you to **remember** something, do not write it in the campaign log. It is only relevant during the current episode.

# Solo Rules

When selecting or customizing your character:

- Add 2 additional Action cards (level 1-3 each) with the [Universal] trait to your Action card deck.
- Add 1 additional Ally with the [Universal] trait to your tool kit.

Resolve effects with the following changes:

- All effects that affect “another character” affect you instead.
- All effects that choose “another character” allow you to choose yourself.
- However, effects that affect “all other characters” or “each other character” do **not** affect you.

**Reminder:** You start each episode with 10 Endurance.

# Character Customization

Instead of playing with a preconstructed deck, you can customize your character when you start a campaign. All characters together may only use one copy of NEON HOPE and all its expansions. There are two different ways to customize your character:

## Light Customization

Light customization is right for you if you want to keep the core concept of the character but make some targeted adjustments.

Take a character deck and make any number of the following adjustments:

- You can exchange any number of your Action cards with the [Universal] trait against other Action cards with the [Universal] trait.
- You can exchange any number of your Tools against Tools with the same trait.
- You can exchange your Ally against another Ally with the [Universal] trait.

## Full Customization

Full customization is right for you if you want to experience the character in a whole new way and come up with your own deck ideas.

- Pick a character. Take their Character card and their corresponding Character Tool card.
- Select 8 Action cards.
  - ◆ You must include 3 Action card sets (of 2 cards each) and 2 Action cards with the [Universal] trait.
  - ◆ 1 of your Action card sets must share both traits with your character. The other 2 sets must share at least 1 trait with your character.
- Select 9 cards for your tool kit.
  - ◆ Select 8 Tools. Each Tool must share a trait with your character. You must include at least 2 Tools for each trait of your character.
  - ◆ Select 1 Ally card with the [Universal] trait.

**Note:** When you select an Action card, you automatically select the card in all 3 levels. Start the campaign with the level 1 cards. Set the level 2 and level 3 cards aside.



## Credits

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# Character Traits

## [Insider]

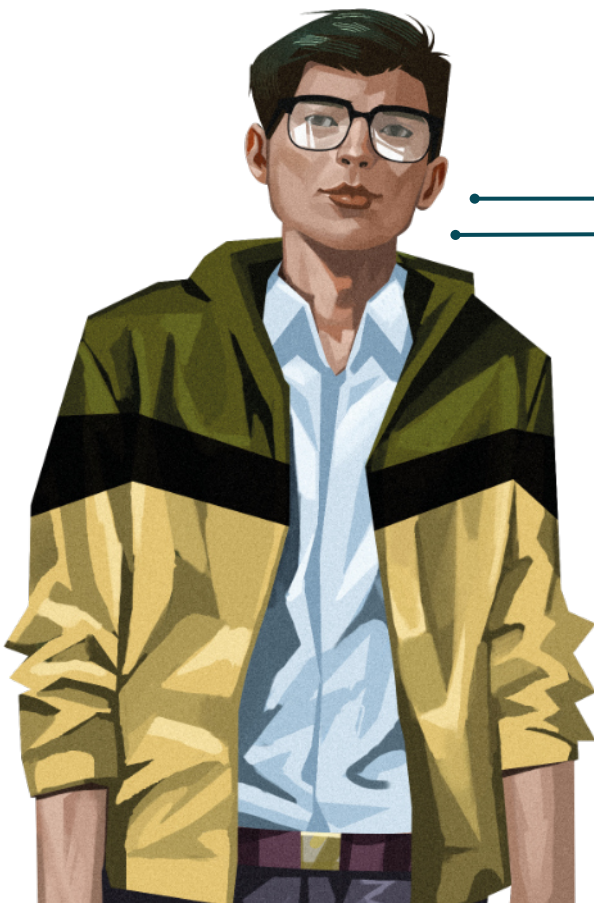
***Know your enemy and beat them at their own game.***

[Insider] characters are deeply integrated into society's systems. They believe that – even if flawed – the current system is the best. They understand how to work the system in their favor. [Insider] characters often have access to knowledge and resources available to only a few. They believe that an individual or a group with the right skills can work the system to foster change from within.

## [Influencer]

***Find supporters and speak truth to power.***

[Influencer] characters are supported by a network. They have the ability to either contact important individuals or have a community of followers they can speak to in public. [Influencer] characters believe that speaking truth to power is vital for change. They speak out for those without a voice and are convinced that if enough people listen, change will happen.



## [Activist]

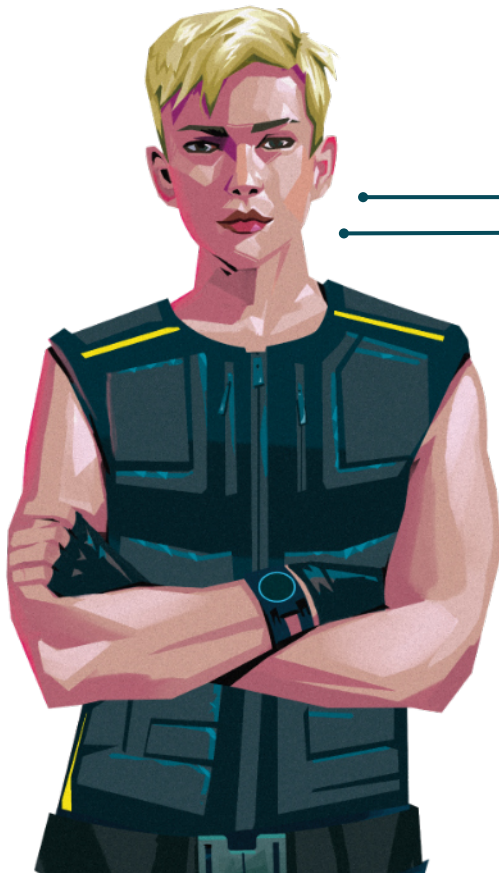
***Support others and be there first.***

[Activist] characters believe that the system is rigged to benefit the few. Their motivation is to create more fairness and equality. [Activist] characters believe that change can be achieved when people work together to find a solution. Their goal is to build communities that collectively resist the status quo, forcing powerful individuals to relinquish control over society.

## [Maker]

***Be adaptable and fix the world.***

[Maker] characters build and repair. They favor experiments over plans and quickly adapt to the situation at hand. They believe that the world can be changed by rebuilding it. To them, everything can be fixed, including relationships and even society, too. [Maker] characters believe that they have to be the change that they want to see in the world, that a better future needs to be built with their own hands and minds.



## [Authority]

***Put the corporation in its place and be resilient.***

[Authority] characters are often in a position of privilege or power – this can be soft or hard power. They are motivated to protect those who need help or are unable to defend themselves. [Authority] characters believe that setting an example will foster change, and that strong-minded leadership can be a force for positive change in the world.

## [Underground]

***Take risks and defy society.***

[Underground] characters live at the fringes or outside of mainstream society. This can be because they are economically left behind, are actively breaking laws or societal boundaries, or have chosen an alternative lifestyle outside the system. [Underground] characters believe that change within the current system is impossible and that improvements can only be made if the system is broken or abandoned. To achieve their goals, they are willing to take big risks – or apply questionable methods.

## [Analyst]

***Make a plan and calculate your chances.***

[Analyst] characters are motivated by curiosity. They believe in the scientific method and that logic is the best tool for the job. [Analyst] characters believe there is a solution to every problem. And that change will come when it is found. They want to use their knowledge to face the unknown. They are convinced that even humanity's biggest mysteries can ultimately be solved.

## [Believer]

***Believe in the future and learn from your mistakes.***

[Believer] characters are convinced that the future will be better than today. They imagine a utopia that many deem impossible. [Believer] characters often have a spiritual streak – rooted in the belief that things exist beyond what humans know or have scientifically understood (yet). They accept failure or imperfection as part of the process. They have high resilience and will try again and again until they succeed.



# Keywords

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## Analyze encounter cards

Look at the specified number of cards from the top of the encounter deck. If instructed to discard cards, place those in the encounter discard pile. After you have looked at cards from the encounter deck, shuffle the encounter deck.

## Analyze modifiers

Look at the specified number of unrevealed modifiers from the Grid. If instructed to archive modifiers, place those on the Archive card. After you have looked at unrevealed modifiers from the Grid, shuffle them back into the other unrevealed modifiers in the Grid.

## Confrontation

You cannot move away from a location with a card with the **Confrontation** keyword.

## Follow-Up

After you are done with fully resolving this encounter card, draw 1 additional encounter card from the encounter deck.

## Grit

Grit effects are active while your Endurance is 5 or lower. If there are 3 or more characters, your Endurance needs to be at 4 or lower instead.

## Protected

Your final number of Impact for this task is halved, rounded up. This applies to secondary tasks as well.

## Stationary

This Enemy cannot move.  
Ignore it when you determine which Enemy moves.

## Shape modifiers

Reveal the specified number of modifiers from the Grid. Then, choose the same number of revealed modifiers, flip them to the unrevealed side, and shuffle them back into the Grid. These can be different modifiers than those just revealed. (Then, activate Enemies for each Skull you have just revealed, but do not reveal additional modifiers).

## Unpredictable

When you reveal a printed regular Skull to modify your attribute, you treat it as the Epic Fail instead. This applies to secondary tasks as well.

## Stackable Keywords

For the following keywords, a number is used to determine how powerful their effect is. Keywords with the number 1 are abbreviated by mentioning the respective keyword without the number.

These keywords stack, meaning that multiple instances of the same keyword are summed up.

**Example:** If you give *Flexible 2* to a task that is already *Flexible*, it becomes *Flexible 3*.

### Flexible X

Characters at your setting may spend X Attribute Marker(s) of any attribute as if they were matching. This is done during the “use Attribute Markers for the task” step of performing a task (step 3).

### Hopeful X

Characters at your setting may spend Hope to add +X for each Hope spent. This is done during the “use Attribute Markers for the task” step of performing a task (step 3).

### Reckless X

Reveal X additional modifier(s) from the Grid for this task. (Apply all modifiers that are revealed for a task.)

### Teamwork X

Characters at your setting may spend up to X matching Attribute Marker(s) to get 1 additional Impact instead of +2 for each marker. This is done during the “use Attribute Markers for the task” step of performing a task (step 3). (You can only spend 1 charge from each individual marker.)

## Online Rules Reference

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Scan the QR code to read the *Online Rules Reference*. It explains each game mechanic in great detail and provides clarification for special cases. ([rules.neonhopegame.com](http://rules.neonhopegame.com))

