

CONTACT

SIGNALS FROM OUTER SPACE

Players: 2-5
Age: 8 years and up
Duration: ca. 20 minutes



A game by Steffen Benndorf

CONTENT

- 1 24 planet chips (including 5 asteroids and the Earth)
 - 2 1 rocket
 - 3 6 barrels of fuel
 - 4 18 planet cards
 - 5 3 helper cards
 - 6 12 signal cards (point values 2x 1–6)
- For the professional variant: 1 mysterious envelope



GAME IDEA

You are travelling through outer space in your exploration spaceship looking for traces of extra-terrestrial life. So far you have had little success. But now you're on an exciting new lead, because for unknown reasons you suddenly receive some signals.

Experts on board decode hidden clues and coordinates. What is behind all this?

Does something want to contact you? Can you decode the clues?

And most importantly – can you maintain contact?

PREPARATION

Before the first game you have to carefully separate the planet chips from the punched units.

To start with, you only need the **18 planet chips** with the letters **A-R** as well as the **Earth chip**. Put the other chips back in the box.

Shuffle the 18 planet chips **dark side up** and spread them unevenly within an area of about 40x40 cm (twice the width of the box) in the **middle of the table**. The chips must not touch each other.

Put the **Earth** somewhere **in the middle**, with the **rocket** on top.

Shuffle the **18 planet cards**, and place the **stack face down** on the table.

Shuffle the **12 signal cards**, and place the **stack face down** beside the other stack.

Take the **6 barrels** of fuel.

One player is nominated to start the game.

He **starts** the game as the „**Source**“.

The other players begin as the „**Crew**“.

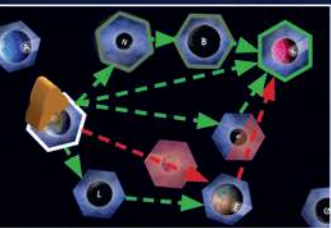


AIM OF THE GAME (or what to do with the material)

During the game, you follow a signal and travel from planet to planet through outer space.

You play as a team. One player is always the source of the signal. He wants his fellow players to reach the planet from where he is sending his signal. The other players (from now on referred to as the Crew) try to decode the signal correctly in order to reach the planet and avoid losing contact with the Source.

As only the Source knows from which planet the signal comes, he must try to convey this information to the Crew. This happens indirectly by **transmitting a clear flight route** to the target planet. The simplest route will consist of a single journey. Normally, you will have to (or choose to) have a stopover on another planet.



The **Source plans** a route **secretly** in his head: this will consist of flying **from the start planet** (where the rocket is) **along straight line segments** from planet to planet until the target planet is reached. The source can choose any segment of the route, as long as it goes directly to another planet, **without the direct way being blocked** by another planet.

When the Source has the route in his head, the **transmission begins**.

During the transmission, the Source may not speak or point at planets. Instead, he simulates take-offs and landings of the spaceship with his hand. The Source first places his hand flat on the table. To simulate take-off, he lifts his fingers. To simulate a landing, he brings his fingers down to tap the table lightly.



To clarify: The Source flies mentally from planet to planet and transmits the distance between the planet chips to the crew with his hand. For every take-off, he lifts the palm of his hand and keeps his fingers raised during the flight. For a landing or stopover, the Source brings his palm down and taps the table audibly. **During transmission, the rocket is not to be moved!**

Within a route, the Source can stop at each planet only once. The Source can interrupt transmission at any time, and start again from the planet with the rocket.

Once transmission is finished, the Crew can try to guess the correct planet. If the Crew is not sure, they can ask the Source **twice** to retransmit the flight route. The Source must always transmit the complete route, but **may choose a different route**.

If the Crew guesses **correctly**, the **rocket** is moved **to the target planet** and the game continues.

For each **incorrect** guess, the team must **hand over one barrel of fuel** before the Crew can guess again.

You have no idea how that is meant to work?

In effect, it is all about the team's understanding of journey segments and time. Try to imagine how the rocket flies from chip to chip. If the next chip is only a few millimetres away, the flight will be very short. If the next chip is quite far away, the rocket will take much longer. It is up to you how you simulate the flight. The important thing is that the Source and the Crew stick to the same „flight rules“ and think in the same „flight speeds“.

PLAYING THE GAME

You first select the level of difficulty (1-6) for your intergalactic mission. *For the first round we advise you to start with level 2. You can't choose a higher level than 6!*

Take as **many planet cards** from the stack as **the level of difficulty** you selected (level 2 means you take 2 cards). Look at the cards and turn over the **corresponding planets**. Those cards form your **deck of target cards**. Keep it **apart from the stack** with the other planet cards!

Now is the start of the actual game. In order to win you have to correctly guess the target planet in all of the **12 rounds**.

Each round follows the same pattern is prepared as follows:

- 1 Turn over the **top card from the stack of signal cards**. This is the card you're trying to win in this round.
- 2 Turn over the **top card from the stack of planet cards** and turn over the corresponding planet chip.
- 3 Mix the planet card well into your **deck of target cards**.
- 4 The Source **secretly pulls out one** of the cards from the **deck of target cards**. This card shows the next target. **The Source has to keep this card secret from the Crew!**

The Source now has to try and come up with a clear route (start planet/rocket → target planet), which he can transmit to the Crew.

All 19 planet chips, including the ones that haven't been turned over, can be used as stopovers during the flight! As soon as the Source is ready, he gives a sign and starts the transmission.

As soon as the transmission is finished the Crew can guess the target. The **first guess** always comes from the **player to the left** of the Source. **The guessing player doesn't speak but points to the planet. The Source answers with „correct“ or „wrong“.**

→ If the **guess is incorrect**, firstly the **current signal card** is put **back in the box**. In addition the team has to hand over **1 barrel of fuel**, as is the case for every subsequent **incorrect guess**.

Afterwards, the next Crew member has a guess (continuing clockwise). Once the **fuel is used up** you can't continue your flight. The mission has failed and the **game is lost**.

Remember! *The Source is not allowed to hint at the target planet in any way, nor can the members of the Crew confer. Once the Source has transmitted the flight route 3 times, the Crew has to have a guess. After each incorrect guess, the route can be retransmitted another 3 times.*

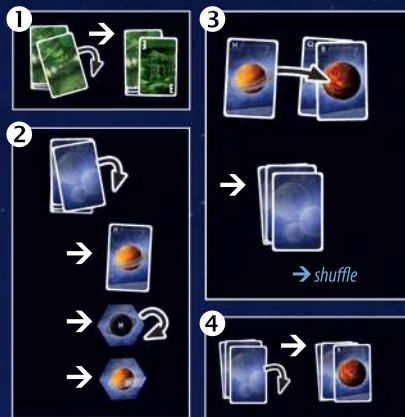
→ Once the target is **guessed correctly**, the rocket is moved **to the target planet**. The corresponding planet card is put back in the box and the planet won't be a target again for the rest of the game.

If the **signal card** is still out (the target planet was guessed correctly on the first trial), you put it to the side **as a win**. The **person sitting to the left** of the Source becomes the **new Source**, and the next round starts as explained above.

If you **concluded all 12 rounds** – you will also notice that because you have run out of signal cards – you **win** the game immediately. Congratulations!

Count the points on the signal cards you won. The closer you get to 42, the better your result! If you have at least 3 barrels of fuel left over, you're ready to increase the level of difficulty.


Important: *If you closely observe the Source's eye movements, it can decrease the attraction of the game. Try and avoid this. The Source can shield his eyes with his hand or the Crew can choose to avert or close their eyes during the planning of the route.*

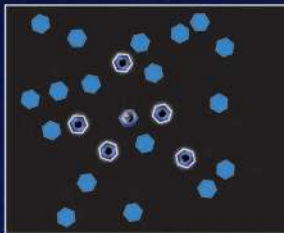


THE GAME FOR PROFESSIONALS

Should the game be too easy even on difficulty level 6, it is time to end your training and swap to the professional version of the game. In the professional version, there is a much greater challenge waiting for you. The game play remains much the same in the professional version.

All 24 planet chips (18 planets, 5 asteroids, Earth) are put out, colored side up. Place the **Earth in the centre** of your universe, with the **5 asteroids close by** (–not at the edges of the universe!). **All 24 planet chips can be used as stopovers during the flight!**

5x  You will only receive **5 barrels of fuel** for the mission, as well as the **3 helper cards**. Place the cards with the **active side visible**.



The individual rounds proceed as described above. However, the **deck of target cards** always consists of **all available planet cards!** To start a round, the Source always simply picks up the **top card** from the stack of planet cards.

Important difference: The **signal card** that the team is trying to win in a round is **not** picked up **randomly**. Instead, the **Source carefully chooses** a card from the **available signal cards**, and puts it down for the Crew to see. *As long as there is a choice, the value of the signal card should be used to convey to the Crew the expected difficulty of the route. A card worth many points should therefore be used for a simpler route.*

Should you succeed in guessing all **12 target planets**, you have achieved an amazing feat. The mission was successful and you receive a certificate as reward for your wonderful team spirit. On your certificate, you can record the date and your score.

Open the sealed envelope and take out the **certificate** that represents your score. If the appropriate certificate is no longer there, simply take the certificate with the next lowest score. Do not forget to **attach the sticker** of the target planet, and turn over the certificate ☺.

A little help along the way? – The helper cards

You can use each helper card **once**. Afterwards, turn the card over to show the inactive side. In **exchange for a barrel of fuel**, **all inactive** helper cards can be **reactivated** and **used immediately**. Thus it is possible to reuse the same card repeatedly for the same route.

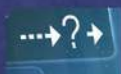
Important: The last fuel may not be used to reactivate the helper cards!



50:50 chance (can only be used by the guessing member of the Crew)

The guessing member of the Crew can guess twice. Only if **both guesses** are **incorrect**,

the team has to **give up 1 barrel of fuel**. The card has to be used **before** the Crew member guesses for the first time.



Reveal the first stopover (can only be used by the guessing member of the Crew)

At the request of the guessing Crew member, the Source will put the **rocket on the first stopover** on the route. This helper card can only be used if there is **at least one** stopover on the flight route.



Exchange the target (can only be used by the Source) The Source may **exchange the current planet card** for the top card on the stack of planet cards. This new card becomes the new target planet. The old card is mixed into the stack

unseen. The exchange has to take place **before** the Source has chosen a signal card!



Team meeting (can only be requested by Crew members)

You can use **any** of the 3 helper cards to request a team meeting. The guessing member of the Crew can confer with the other Crew members before he makes his guess. The Source may listen but not take part in the conversation!