

What is Diplomacy?

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Diplomacy is a seven-player game based on the political situation in Europe at the beginning of the 1900's. Each player plays one of the seven great powers of Europe (Austria, England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Turkey).

The Mechanics

There are land and sea spaces on the board. The fundamental rule is that there can only be one piece in each 'space' at one time. Each piece has equal strength and can move to one adjacent space each turn. Armies can move on land, Fleets on the sea or coastal land spaces.

A piece can be ordered to **move** or to **hold** (defend without moving); or to **support** another piece to move or hold, and thus increasing the strength of the moving or the holding. A Fleet can also be ordered to **convoy** an Army across a sea space.

A piece moves or holds with the strength of 1. If it is supported, then it moves or holds with increased strength.

Between each turn you have a specified number of minutes (usually 10 to 15) to negotiate with the other six players. During your negotiations nothing said is binding. At the end of the time you have to have your moves written down on a piece of paper and put them in the orders box. When the 15 minutes is up the orders are read and the moves as written are what counts, not what you agreed to. So it's okay to lie, mislead, double cross, blackmail, spread rumours etc.

How You Grow or Diminish in Size

34 of the land spaces have "supply centres" in them (black dots). At the end of every second turn (each turn represents 6 months, and they are called alternately Spring, Fall, Spring, Fall...etc.) you count up how many dots you control (control = either currently occupying, or if it is vacant, the person who was last to occupy it on a Fall turn).

For every dot (supply centre) you control at the end of each game-year (2 turns) you get to have one piece on the board. So it's zero sum - there can only ever be 34 pieces on the board at once... if you have more dots than pieces you can build new pieces in your home country. If you have more pieces than dots you have to take some pieces off...

The Goal – 'how to win'

To win the game you need to control 18 dots (one more than half the board). To do this you need to be tactically adept, but also need to be a skilled negotiator. It's all about nimble mindedness, being able to influence and convince people, being able to read people, being able to lie believably at times, and controlling your emotions when things don't go right.

The rules are relatively straight forward, but once they are mastered then you begin gaming's longest apprenticeship as you try to master the game of all games. Games take between 3 - 4 hours to play.

It's a very social game - it's based on communication and social interaction.... it is also the game that has the highest potential to alienate people. You need to understand that it is a game, because it can appear quite personal. It never is though. Afterwards the bitterest of enemies tend to sit down and smile and share a beer and say "wow, you really had me under pressure there..."