# Dark Money – Rules of Play

*Welcome to the 1%. It's time to use your capital to influence the capital. Do you have what it takes to manipulate the political machine from the shadows and become the true leader of the 'free' world?*

## How to Win

Have the most Influence after the end of the 5th round or be the first player to reach 13 or more Influence.

## Set-up

- Stack 5 random *Battleground* cards face-down. Remove the remaining *Battleground* cards from play.
- Shuffle the *Disruption* cards and *Dark Money* cards separately.
- Each player selects a color and takes their 4 *allegiance tokens* and *Stop* card.
- Put each player's score tracker on the 0 *influence* space on the score tracking board.

## Gameplay

Each round has 5 parts (Reveal, Funding, Campaigning, Scoring, and Cleanup).

**Reveal:** *Players see the Battleground State's scoring.*
- The top card of the *Battleground* deck for that round is turned face up.
- On the 2nd through 5th round, reveal a *Disruption* card from the deck. This card will modify the game for that round in some way.

**Funding:** *Players bid on Dark Money cards to build their hand.*
- Deal a number of 4 card hands face-up from the *Dark Money* deck equal to the number of players.
- One player starts the sand timer and covers it with the hat. 'Funding' begins once the timer has been started. 'Funding' ends once a player has played their *Stop* card. A player can only play their *Stop* card once the sand timer has run out. If a player mistakenly players their *Stop* card before the sand timer has run out, play continues but they cannot play any additional *allegiance tokens* or their *Stop* card.
- During 'Funding', there is no turn order. Players can place 1 *allegiance token* on the hand or hands of cards they wish to bid on. **Players cannot play *allegiance tokens* consecutively.** Once an *allegiance token* is placed, it cannot be picked up or moved. To win a hand of cards, a player must have more of their *allegiance tokens* on the hand of cards than any other player.
- Depending on how much *influence* a player has, they can place a certain number of *allegiance tokens* for free as indicated by the number in the colored field on the *score tracker*. For each *allegiance token* a player places beyond the indicated number, it will cost them 1 *influence* at the end of funding.
- Once a player has played their *Stop* card, each player determines the hand or hands of cards they won.
    - If a player won a single hand of cards, they collect that hand.
    - If a player won multiple hands of cards, they build a hand of 4 cards from the hands they won and discard the remaining cards.
    - If a player won no hand of cards, they and all other players who won no hand are dealt the remaining cards at random.
- All players collect their played *allegiance tokens* and resolve any *influence* costs as necessary.

**Campaigning:** *Players play their Dark Money cards attempting to be part of the final news cycle.*

- One player starts the sand timer and covers it with the hat. 'Campaigning' begins once the timer has been started. 'Campaigning' ends once a player has played their *Stop* card. A player can <u>only</u> play their *Stop* card once the sand timer has run out. If a player mistakenly players their *Stop* card before the sand timer has run out, play continues but they cannot play any additional cards or their *Stop* card.
- During 'Campaigning' there is no turn order. Players play *Dark Money* cards from their hand and place their colored *allegiance token* on that card at any time while the timer is still running. All players play their cards with the following rules:
  - **Player cannot play two cards consecutively.**
  - **Players can only play cards to the current unfinished *news cycle*.**
    - An *Republican news cycle* is when *Republican* cards (with the 🐘 symbol) are being played. Only *Republican* cards can be played at that time.
    - A *Democrat news cycle* is when *Democrat* cards (with the 🐴 symbol) are being played. Only *Democrat* cards can be played at that time.
    - The *value* of the current *news cycle* is the sum of the cards for that attempt.
      - A *news cycle* is unfinished while its *value* is less than or equal to the *value* of the previous *attempt*. **Players can play card to an unfinished *news cycle*.**
      - A *news cycle* is finished when its *value* is greater than the *value* of the previous *news cycle*. **Players cannot play cards to a finished *news cycle*.**
      - Once a *news cycle* is finished, a player can start a fresh *news cycle* by playing a *Republican* or *Democrat* card. Remember: cards can <u>only</u> be played to an unfinished *news cycle* or to start a fresh *news cycle*.
  - **A card is considered played when <u>both</u> the card and the player's *allegiance token* are on the table.**
- It only takes 1 card to finish the first *news cycle*, because if no cards have been played the current *value* is 0.

**Scoring:** *How to score the round.*

- Determine if there was an unfinished *news cycle*. Any player with an *allegiance token* on that *news cycle* scores 0 points, even if they would score points in some other way.
- Determine the finished *news cycle* with the highest *value*. Any player with an *allegiance token* on that *news cycle* earns *influence* according to the chart on the *Battleground* card.
  The 🚶 row is the number of players with an *allegiance token* on that *news cycle*.
  The 🐘 row is the amount of *influence* players earn on a *Republican news cycle*.
  The 🐴 row is the amount of *influence* players earn on a *Democrat news cycle*.
  - **Players earn 1 less *influence* for every card left in their hand.** A player's 'Stop' card does not penalize their score.
- *Note: A 'Scoring Example' has been provided on the final page for reference.*

**Cleanup:** *Players reset the board for the next round.*

- Each player discards their remaining *Dark Money* cards and collect their *allegiance tokens*.
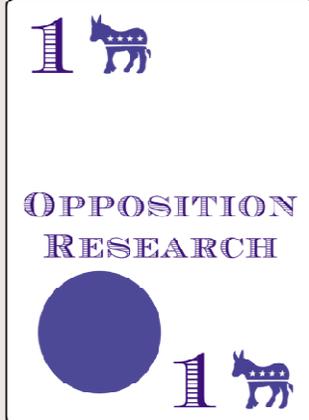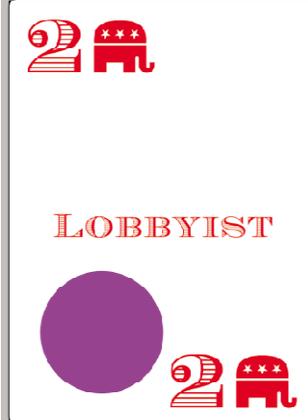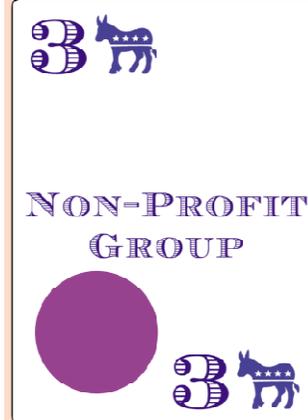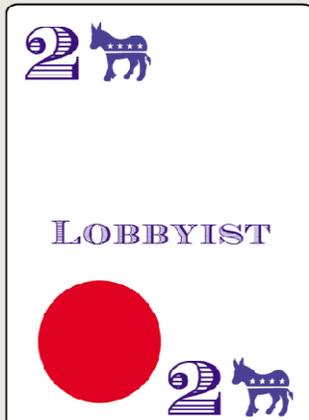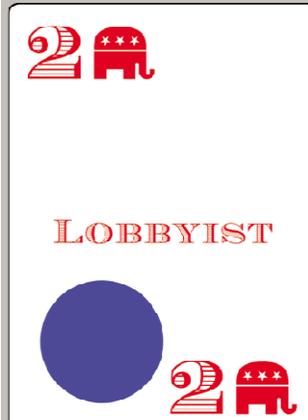- Gather all the discarded *Dark Money* cards, shuffle, and proceed to the next round.

# End of Game

- If a player has 13 or more *influence*, they win the game.
  - If more than one player has 13 or more *influence*, the player with more influence wins. If the players are tied, continue play as normal.
- If no player has 13 or more *influence* after the 5th round, the player with the most *influence* wins.
  - In the case of a tie, the player with fewer cards left in hand wins.
  - If tied players have the same amount of *influence* and cards left in hand, they share the victory.

# Scoring Example
Three players are playing and the round ends like this:

| ♟ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 🫏 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 🐘 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**TEXAS**

| Finished News Cycle | Finished News Cycle | Highest Value Finished News Cycle | Unfinished News Cycle |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1🫏 OPPOSITION RESEARCH (red) 1🫏 | 1🫏 OPPOSITION RESEARCH (blue) 1🫏 | 2🐘 LOBBYIST (purple) 2🐘 | 3🫏 NON-PROFIT GROUP (purple) 3🫏 |
| | 2🫏 LOBBYIST (red) 2🫏 | 2🐘 LOBBYIST (blue) 2🐘 | |

- The red player is does not have an *allegiance token* on the *news cycle* with the highest *value*. The red player earns 0 *influence*.
- The purple player has an *allegiance token* on an unfinished *news cycle*. The purple player earns 0 *influence*, even though they also have an *allegiance token* on the *new cycle* with the highest *value*.
- The blue player has an *allegiance token* on the *news cycle* with the highest *value*. That *news cycle* is *Republican* and 2 players have an *allegiance token* on that *news cycle*. The blue player subtracts his 2 remaining *Dark Money* cards in their hand from the listed 5 on the *Battleground* card to earn 3 *influence*. The blue player's 'Stop' card does not reduce the amount of *influence* they earn.