

# Elements

A Game of Alchemical Mastery

*Elements is a resource management, engine-building card game for two to four players that plays in 30-45 minutes. The players take the role of Alchemists working to impress the famous Nicholas Flamel and earn the secret of eternal life. The game ends when any player has completed a certain number of Formulae or the Mastery Tokens for any one element have run out. Once either of these events occurs, all players add up the points on their completed Formulae and their levels of Mastery are scored using a majority scoring method. The player with the most victory points has earned the secret of eternal life and won the game.*

## Components

### 1 Start Player Card

This card denotes the Start Player for the round. This player performs the Draw and Sort step on the current round.

### 4 Rules Reference Cards

These cards contain a quick turn summary and a list of End Game Triggers.

### 52 Element Cards (13 each of Air, Earth, Fire, Water)

These cards represent the elemental forces used in the transmutation of formulae.

### 44 Element Mastery Tokens (11 each of Blue, Red, Yellow, and Green)

These are used to track a player's level of Elemental Mastery. There will be a specific number of Tokens in the game based on the number of players.

### 30 Aether/Void Tokens

On one side, these represent the elusive 5<sup>th</sup> element of Aether which can be used as a wild element when completing Formulae. On the other side they represent the Void which is the space between elements where all transmutation occurs. There is no limit to the number of Aether/Void tokens. Aether can be converted to Void at any time, but you may not convert Void to Aether without a card effect.

### 44 Formula Cards

These cards represent the Alchemical Formulae that the players are trying to create throughout the course of the game. Each Formula has both a point value in its lower left corner and a special ability that can trigger throughout the game when Formulae are completed. These cards may also be used as an Element Resource card that matches their Dominant Element.

## Setup

1. Hand each player a Rules Reference Card.
2. Give each player 3 Aether/Void Tokens. These tokens start Void side up. Place the remaining Aether/Void Tokens into the center of the playing area.
3. Place a number of Element Mastery Tokens into the center of the playing area based on the number of players.

Number of Players	Number of Element Mastery Tokens Used
2	7
3	9
4	11

4. Shuffle the Formula Deck, deal 5 cards facedown to each player, and place the rest of the deck in the center of the playing area.
5. Each player chooses 3 of these initial Formulae to keep and places all unchosen Formulae into the discard pile for the Formula Deck. Players keep their Formulae a secret until completion.
6. Take the 52 Element Cards, shuffle them, and place the deck in the center of the playing area. These cards form the Element Deck.
7. Select a Starting Player at random and give them the Start Player Card. This player will start the first turn of the game and play will then continue clockwise around the table.

# Gameplay

## Phase 1 - Draw and Sort

1. The Start Player will draw a number of Element Cards from the top of the Element Deck based on the number of players in the game

Number of Players	Number of Element Cards Drawn
2	5
3	8
4	11

*Example: Tony and Molly are playing a 2 player game of Elements. Molly is the start player, so she draws 5 Element Cards from the Element Deck at the beginning of this turn.*

2. The Start Player then sorts the Element Cards into a number of piles equal to the number of players. Each pile may have any number of Element Cards in it, but the total number of piles must equal the number of players.

*Example: Molly drew 2 Fire, an Air, an Earth, and a Water in the previous step. She will now sort these 5 cards into 2 piles. She decides to make one pile that is 2 Fire and 1 Water, and a second pile that is 1 Earth and 1 Air.*

## Phase 2 – Claim and Collect

1. Look at each pile and replace any pair of Opposing Elements (Fire/Water or Air/Earth) with an Aether Token and discard the Element Cards to the Element Deck's discard pile. Opposing Elements can NEVER be collected at the same time and ALWAYS produce Aether.

*Example: Molly looks at the 2 piles that she created in the previous step. She removes 1 Fire and the Water from pile 1 and*

*both cards from pile 2. She replaces these with Aether Tokens. Pile 1 now contains 1 Aether and 1 Fire and Pile 2 contains just 1 Aether. If Molly had sorted the piles in a different manner, then no Aether would have been produced.*

2. Each player, starting with the player to the Start Player's left and continuing clockwise to end with the Start player, claims one of the piles as their own and adds it to their hand.

*Example: Tony looks at the two piles and elects to take pile 1. He adds the Fire to his hand, and adds the Aether to his pool. Molly adds the Aether from pile 2 to her pool and play continues to the next phase.*

## Phase 3 – Complete and Create

1. The Start Player may complete any one Formula from their hand if they have the Elements to complete it. Once the Start player has completed a Formula, then going clockwise around the table, each other player is given a chance to complete a Formula. See the **Completing a Formula** section below to see the steps for completing a Formula

*Example: Molly doesn't have enough Element Cards to complete any of her Formulae this turn, so she passes play. Tony has exactly enough Element Cards to complete one of his Formulae and he decides to complete the Formula **Golem's Blood**.*

2. Beginning with the Start Player, all players will draw cards from the Formula deck. If they completed a Formula this turn, then they draw 1 card. If they did not complete a Formula, then they draw 2 cards.

*Example: Molly is not completing any Formula this turn, so Tony will draw 1 Formula card and add it to his hand since he did complete a Formula, and Molly will then draw 2 Formulae and add them to her hand since she did not.*

3. See if any of the End Game Conditions have been triggered. If none of them have, then the game continues with the player to the Start Player's left becoming the new Start Player.

*Example: Neither Molly nor Tony has completed enough Formulae to trigger the Endgame and none of the stacks of Element Mastery Tokens have been depleted, so Molly passes the Start Player Card to Tony and play continues.*

## Completing a Formula

1. Reveal the Element Cards needed to complete the Formula. Remember, Formulae may be used as an Element Card of their dominant type and Aether Stones may be used as any other Element type when completing Formulae.
2. Discard any Aether Tokens, Formulae Cards, and/or Element Cards used to complete the Formula.
3. Gain 1 Element Mastery Token in the Dominant Element of the Completed Formula.
4. Place your newly created Formula at either the beginning or the end of you completed Formulae. You may not place a newly completed Formula between two already completed Formulae.
5. Trigger the special abilities on your Completed Formulae in order from left to right.

*Example: A few rounds have passed, and Tony is now completing his second Formula, this time it is **Alchemist's Fire**. First, Tony discards the Elements needed to complete this Formula.*

***Alchemist's Fire** requires 5 Fire to complete. Tony reveals 4 Fire and 1 Aether from his pool to satisfy the requirements. The Fire Element Cards are discarded and the Aether Token is returned to the Pool.*

*Tony gains 1 Fire Mastery Token from the center of the Table.*

*Tony chooses to place his **Alchemist's Fire** Formula at the end of his line of completed Formulae.*

*He then triggers the special abilities of his completed Formulae starting with the **Golem's Blood** that he completed earlier in the game. **Golem's Blood** allows Tony to choose a player to lose 1 Void and that player gains 1 Water Mastery. He chooses himself and so he exchanges one of his Void Tokens for a Water Mastery Token. He then moves to his next completed Formula which is the **Alchemist's Fire**. **Alchemist's Fire** lets Tony Gain 1 Fire Mastery Token.*

## The End of the Game and Winning

Play proceeds as described above until one of the End Game Conditions has been triggered.

1. If any of the Element Mastery Token Stacks have been depleted
2. If any player has completed the number of Formulae specified in the chart below:

Number of Players	Number of Completed Formulae
2	7
3	6
4	5

Once any of these conditions have been met follow the below steps:

1. Complete the remainder of Phase 3 for the current round.
2. Players play one more complete round following all the normal steps.

3. Once Phase 3 of the final round is complete, all Void are converted to Aether.
4. Add up scores according to the **Adding Up Scores** section below.

## Adding Up Scores

1. Add up the total number of points from all completed Formulae.
2. Score points for the Element Mastery Tokens as follows:
  - a. The player with the most Element Mastery Tokens for each Element gains 10 points.
  - b. The player with the second most Element Mastery Tokens of each Element gains 5 points. There is no second place scoring in a 2 player game.
  - c. The player with the third most Element Mastery Tokens of each Element gains 3 points. There is no third place scoring in a 3 player game.
  - d. If there is a tie for the most, second most, or third most, then all tied players score the bonus as if they had placed one place lower and all players below them are also moved one step down. This could prevent a player from scoring points. (i.e. If two players tie for most, then they each earn 5 points. If two players tie for third most, then they each score 0 points for that section.)
  - e. Any player that has at least 1 Element Mastery Token for each of the 4 Elements gains 5 points.
3. Every Aether Token is worth 1 point at the end of the game.
4. The player with the highest score wins!
  - a. In the case of a tie, the player who completed the most Formulae wins.
  - b. If players are still tied, then the player who has the most total Elemental Mastery across all 4 Elements wins.

## Additional Clarifications

### Start Player Tips

When sorting the Element Cards into piles as the Start Player, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. You are the last person to claim Element Cards, so it is often not a good idea to make the piles too imbalanced.
2. Any pair of opposing Elements in a pile (Fire/Water or Air/Earth) produces an Aether Token rather than either of the original Elements.
3. As a contradiction to point 1 above, sometimes you will need to make the piles imbalanced in order to guarantee that you obtain the particular Element that you need to complete a Formula.
4. Try to determine which Elements the other players need throughout the game as this will help you better determine how to divide up the resources so that you benefit the most.

### Using Aether

Aether is not like the other Elements in the game. It has several special rules that apply to it.

1. Aether can only be obtained by claiming a pile with two Opposing Elements (Fire/Water or Earth/Air) during the Claim and Collect Phase or through the effects of Formulae Cards.
2. When completing Formulae, Aether may be used in place of any other Element.
3. At any time, Aether may be converted into Void. Void may not be converted into Aether except through Formulae effects.
4. Aether remaining at the end of the game counts as 1 point each.

## Credits

The following people made this game possible.

**Game Concept:** Molly and Tony Miller  
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**Graphic Design:** Lena Clark and Tony Miller  
**Play Testers:** Molly Miller, Thomas Halpin, Paul Schmeltzer, Desiree Toca, Dave Earls, Justin Brown, John Prather, Jonathan Clark, Patrick Walter, Carl Ralston, Linda Beste, Owen Beste, Pamela Eggerton, Virginia Eggerton, Arielle Nakai Cohen, Yugo Cohen Nakai, D Brad Talton Jr., J.W. Wolterman, Michael Lohr, Patrick Lohr, Micah Hornung, Brad Plogsted, Scott Heenan, Christopher Scott Moore, and Two-Headed Games.