

## Blackstone Castle: A game of politics and intrigue

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### Background

*The realm of Westarland is in turmoil. In the wake collapse of the Permon empire, the power vacuum has left nations scrambling to exert local control. Some previously minor kings now aspire to the dragon-skull throne of Westarland.*

*The Kingdom of Avondell is embroiled in all this political confusion. The King and his council of advisors, based in Blackstone Castle, are struggling to establish secure borders with the neighboring kingdoms of Hanshore, Magdar, and Grambling. To that end, the king employs emissaries, scouts, captains, and even spies to carry out his political machinations.*

### Overview and Objective of the King's Quest Game

You play as a courtier in the King's court manipulating vassals to carry out the King's political goals. Take actions to increase your influence with various knights and wizards in the court who can help you carry out the King's political goals. Even gain influence with the King.

Ultimately, you must complete three of the King's political machination goals to gain favor with the King and win the game.

Blackstone castle is a game for 2-4 players and plays in 30-60 minutes.

### Components

These instructions	20 Game board cards	4 Play aid cards
32 Machination Cards	30 King Influence Cards	16 Wizard Influence Cards
16 Knight Influence Cards	20 Knight Chips	20 Wizard Chips
20 Castle chips	72 Vassal cards	16 Starter Cards (Knight, Wizard, 2 Kings)
4 Named Vassal cards	1 First Player Marker	

## Setup

1. Lay out row and column markers (B L A C K S T O N E cards) as shown in the picture on page 3.
2. Add the named vassal cards to the regular vassal cards.
3. Shuffle vassal cards and fill the 5x5 grid with random vassal cards in the spaces indicated in the picture. The finished grid will contain 13 vassal cards.  
**Note:** the board must always contain 13 vassals. If the count drops below 13, you might have forgotten to replace a vassal who was retained and removed from the board. Replace the vassal if you discover a shortage.
4. Divide the remaining vassal cards into four roughly equal piles and place them at the four corners of the board as shown in the picture.
5. Choose one of the corner decks to function as your replenishment deck during the game.  
**Note:** Each player should choose a separate replenishment deck.
6. Give players starter cards: 2 Kings, 1 Wizard and 1 Knight and place them in play as shown in the picture.
7. Give each player one knight and one wizard chip.
8. Set extra knight, wizard, and castle chips within easy reach.
9. Shuffle Knight Influence, Wizard Influence, King Influence and Machination cards as separate decks and place them in easy reach of the players.
10. Each player draws 2 cards to form their starting hand. You may choose any 2 cards from the Knight Influence, Wizard Influence, King Influence, and Machination decks.
11. Select a first player by any means you desire. Give the first player the first-player marker.

# Setup



## Sequence of Play

On your turn, you:

1. Collect Knight and Wizard chips (one chip for each starter and completed Knight or Wizard card on your tableau).
2. Use Knight and Wizard chips.
3. [Optional] Complete up to one Influence or Machination card. Use castle chips to mark the two vassals that you will use to meet the two component requirements on the card.
4. [Optional] Continue to use Knight and Wizard chips until you run out or wish to pass.
5. Discard Knight chips, Wizard chips, cards in hand, and/or captured cards if you exceed your limits on any of them.
6. Replace any marked vassals from your replenishment deck. Start with the card closest to the top-left corner, then replace the other card. Return castle chips to the supply.  
**Note:** The cards from the replenishment deck must be placed on the board with the same face up as they had when sitting in the replenishment deck (do not flip cards when replenishing).

Turn passes to the left.

## Victory Conditions and End Game

The first player to complete three Machination cards triggers the end of the game. When this happens, finish the round so that everyone has the same number of turns. Whoever has the most completed Machination cards wins. If there is a tie, use the following tiebreakers (not including cards in hand):

1. Most completed Machination cards
2. Most completed King Influence cards
3. Most completed Wizard and Knight Influence cards (added together)
4. Most remaining Wizard and Knight chips
5. Most retained vassal cards
6. Result is a tie

## Additional Instructions

### Vassal Cards –



Vassal Tasks – The Knight Influence, Wizard Influence, King Influence and Machination cards all have vassal task requirements on them. Each vassal task requirement has two components. Each component specifies a board location (described with one or two letters) and a vassal description, which includes a faction association and a role affiliation. The described vassal must appear in the specified location to meet the component requirement. You must satisfy the requirements of both components to complete the card task and put the card into play.



**Machination Card.** This vassal task contains two components.  
**Component 1:** A dragon-scout vassal must be in the space at the intersection of the B column and O row. **Component 2:** A lion-emissary vassal must be in the O row, in any column. When you have manipulated the vassals on the board to meet these requirements, you may put this card into your tableau. After this card is in your tableau, you must turn in a retained maple leaf-emissary vassal before you can complete your next Machination card.

#### Vassal Task Notes

- A. A rainbow-colored circle indicates that any role affinity on a vassal will meet the requirement, if the vassal is associated with the specified faction.
- B. A rainbow-colored snowflake indicates that any faction association on a vassal will meet the requirement, if the vassal has an affinity for the specified role.
- C. A single letter means the vassal must be in the row or column identified by the letter.
- D. Two letters mean that the vassal must be in the space at the intersection of the row and column identified by the two letters.
- E. You may not use a single vassal to meet both requirements on any Influence or Machination card. Two separate vassals must be used.

When you can show there are vassals on the board matching the requirements for a card in your hand, you can complete the card and put it in play. Use the castle chips to mark the vassal cards that will be used. After the other players are satisfied that the requirements have been met, put the Influence or Machination card into your tableau.

Each completed Influence or Machination card adds a retained vassal requirement to subsequent Influence/Machination cards of the same type.

For example, if you have already completed one Knight Influence card (not counting the starting knight card) and it has a Dragon-Spy shown in the upper left corner (as shown in the picture below), then you

must also have a retained vassal card with a Dragon faction and a Spy role on it to turn in when completing your next Knight Influence card. This card must be a RETAINED vassal card (see [Knight Influence cards](#) below). It cannot come from the board. The required vassal card must be face up when the card is retained.



[Knights and Wizards](#) – these court members are represented by Knight or Wizard chips, respectively. When a Knight or Wizard is used to do something, such as slide a vassal card, a chip representing the Knight or Wizard is returned to the supply. You collect Knight and Wizard chips equal to the number of those card types you have in play in your tableaux at the beginning of each turn.

[Knight Influence cards](#) – Knight cards give you an income of knights every turn. Knights, represented by knight chips, can be used to:

- A. **Slide** a vassal orthogonally one space. Move one vassal either horizontally or vertically (not diagonally) one space. Two vassal cards may never occupy the same space. If another vassal is in the location you wish to move a vassal into, you must move it out of the way first.
- B. **Retain** one vassal. You may retain a single vassal card from the board using one knight. To complete this action, mark the location of the vassal you are retaining with the knight chip. Remove the vassal from the board and place in your tableau. Refill the location with a new vassal card from any of the corner vassal decks. **Note:** The orientation of a vassal cannot change once it has been retained. The face that is up when you retain the vassal is the face that must be presented for any retained vassal requirements.
- C. **Guard** one vassal. To guard a vassal, place your knight chip on the vassal card. A guarded card must be unguarded before it can be moved or transformed by anyone. **Note:** this action may be repeated to place more guards on a single vassal.
- D. **Unguard** one vassal. Return one guard to the supply and remove one guard from a vassal card. This action may be repeated if more than one guard is present.

[Wizard Influence cards](#) – Wizard cards give you an income of wizards every turn. Wizards, represented by wizard chips, can be used to:

- A. **Swap** a vassal with another. Trade places for two orthogonally adjacent (not diagonal) vassal cards.
- B. **Transform** a vassal. Any vassal card on the Blackstone castle board may be flipped over by using one wizard chip.
- C. **Draw** one card. A player can draw any one card from the Knight Influence, Wizard Influence, King Influence, or Machination card draw piles by using one Wizard chip.

King Influence cards – The number of King cards you have determines how many items you may have at the end of your turn. The following is a list of the items that are affected by the number of King cards you have in your tableau.

- A. Cards (sum of Influence and Machination cards) in your hand
- B. Knight Influence cards in your tableau
- C. Knights in your service (chips in your possession)
- D. Wizard Influence cards in your tableau
- E. Wizards in your service (chips in your possession)
- F. Machination cards completed
- G. Retained vassal cards in your tableau

If, at the end of any turn, you have too many of an item based on the above limitations, you must immediately drop down to the limit by removing the excess items (of your choice, in the case of cards).

Machination cards – Machination cards are used to determine the winner of the game.

*Completion reward:* When you complete a Machination card, draw two cards from any of the Influence card stacks or the Machination card stack (can be from the same or different stacks). Keep one and discard the other.

See the section on “Victory Conditions and End Game”.

### **Special cards:**

**Wildcards** – There are four named vassal cards that you may include in the game. If you do, treat them like any other vassal cards except that on one side they have a fixed faction with a role of your choice and on the other side they have a fixed role with a faction of your choice. You may choose your faction or role when you use the card. If you retain a named vassal, you do not have to choose its faction or role until you are ready to turn it in to satisfy a requirement.