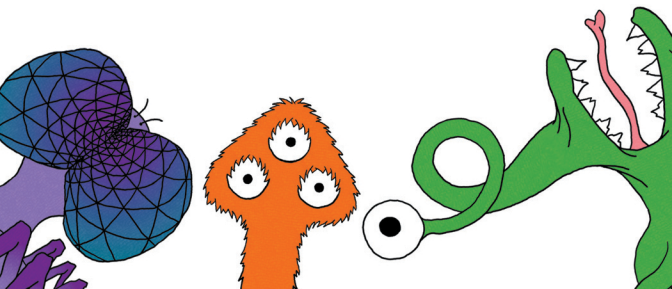




# Instructions



# Teratozoic

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Modern Evil Press  
Phoenix

## Story:

The nations of mankind created horrifying new weapons to wage war with one another—genetically engineered monsters whose traits could be altered and combined to overcome any opponent. Unfortunately, humanity was no match for its own creations and armies of terrifying monsters were soon out of control in their destruction of civilization. In their final global nuclear strike, humanity accomplished only two things: They wiped themselves out, and they created a highly mutagenic environment where the monsters could thrive.

This is the world at the start of a game of Teratozoic. (From greek: *terato-*, of or relating to monsters, *-zoic*, of a (*specified*) era, or having a (*specified*) animal mode of existence.)

## Gameplay Overview:

Each player has their own deck of monster parts called their **Gene Pool**, and will attempt to make the best of the parts they draw from it and the common **Mutations Deck** to come out on top in the battle for survival. At first your monsters will be more random mutation than representative of a stable gene pool (players will draw most of the cards for each hand from the Mutations Deck), but by the time you reach the Teratozoic Era, your monsters will be built entirely from the best traits you retained in each generation. The dominant species in this new era (the final winner of the game) will be the one with the most robust gene pool—the player who can create the biggest, most impressive monsters at the end of the Teratozoic Era.

## Setup:

### **Era Cards:**

Separate out the Era cards, and put them face-up in a single stack visible to all players. Stack the cards in the following order, with the Apocalyptic Era on top:

- Apocalyptic Era (3+ *players*)
- Post-Apocalyptic Era (4+ *players*)
- Temnozoic Era
- Post-Temnozoic Era (4+ *players*)
- Pre-Teratozoic Era
- Early Teratozoic Era (5+ *players*)
- Teratozoic Era

*In 5- and 6-player games, use all the Era cards. With 4 players, remove the Early Teratozoic Era card. With 3 players, also remove the Post-Apocalyptic and Post-Temnozoic Era cards. For 2 players you can then remove either the Apocalyptic Era card or a third of the monster cards (32 cards: one primary and one secondary color, one grey and one three-color card) for a balanced game. (**Note:** Be sure to check out the Era Card Quick Reference on the back cover of this rule book.)*

### **Gene Pool:**

Each player must select a starting deck of six cards; this is their **Gene Pool**. A Gene Pool consists of six cards of a single color with each value (1-6) represented. There are six starting Gene Pools included, two in each color, marked with unique symbols-in-circles (☉, ☒) in their lower left corners. Have each player shuffle their Gene Pool and place it face-down on the table in front of them.



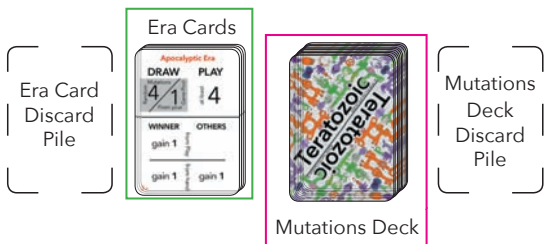
### **Mutations Deck:**

Shuffle all remaining monster cards together to form the **Mutations Deck**. Place this deck where everyone can reach it.

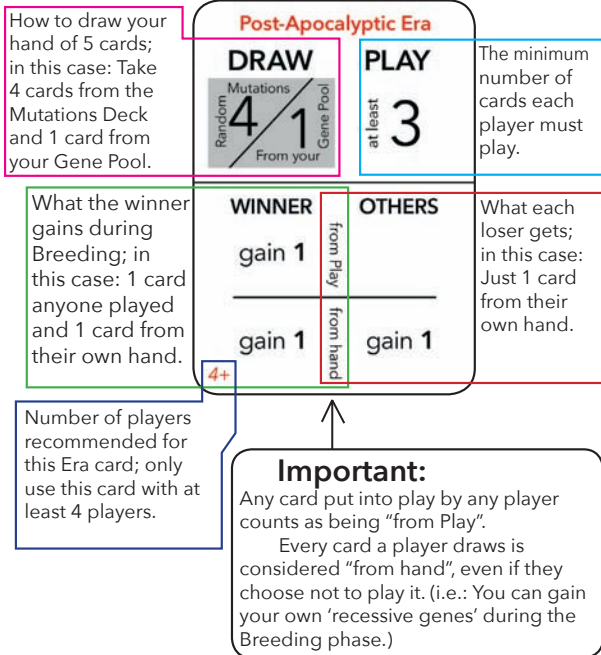
### **Starting the Game:**

Select a starting player by any mutually agreeable means (such as the player who won the last game, or the one who had the ugliest monster of a pet (or relative)), who will draw first; always proceed clockwise. Have each player draw their first **hand of 5 cards**; these cards are a mixture of Gene Pool and Mutations Deck cards as indicated on the current Era card. For most games this will mean drawing 4 cards from the Mutations Deck *and then* 1 card from their Gene Pool.

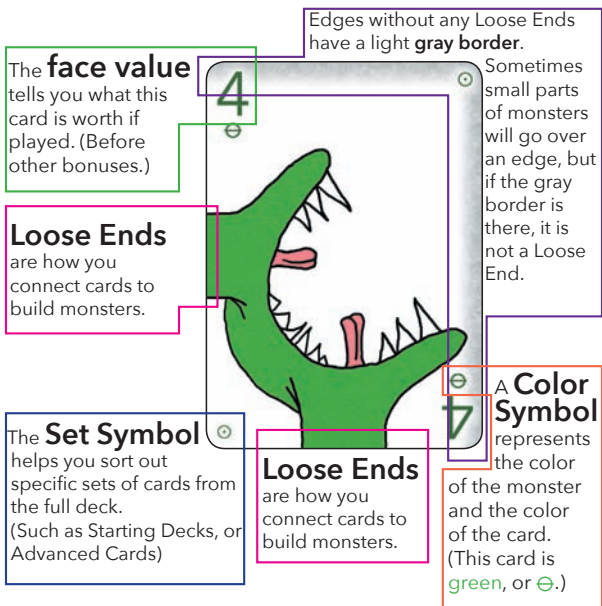
**Place where everyone can see and reach:**



## Era Card Layout:



# Monster Card Layout:



## Key to Color Symbols:

orange: #

red: //

purple: ∅

blue: O

green: Θ

yellow: =

Three-color cards: ✿

## How To Play:

Each generation consists of four distinct phases:

- 1. Expression** – After examining their hand, the winner of the previous generation (the starting player, in the first generation) declares whether they will play all their cards (refer to the Era card for the minimum), or hold some back as “recessive genes”. Continuing clockwise, **each player declares** whether they are expressing all their genes or holding some back.

Recessive genes (unplayed cards from your hand) are placed face down on the table *before* the Growth phase begins—they still count as cards “from hand”, but not “from Play”. **Note:** Recessive genes do not automatically return to the Gene Pool.

- 2. Growth** – All players lay out the cards they have chosen to play at the same time, **building monsters** and scoring them. The player with the most valuable monsters in play is the winner, dominating the generation and getting to add the most genes to their Gene Pool during the Breeding phase.

- 3. Breeding** – First, the winner gains a number of cards from play according to the Era card (“from Play”)—they may select from any player’s played cards, not just their own. Then every player gains a number of cards from their own hand (this includes both expressed and recessive genes, but no cards from other players) according to the Era card (“from hand”). Cards “from Play” are always gained before cards “from hand”.

Each player must gain the number of cards specified on the Era card, if possible, and never more; recessive genes aren't automatically gained. All gained cards go directly to a player's own Gene Pool Discard Pile.

#### **4. Mutation** (clean-up) – All cards which were not added to player Gene Pools during Breeding are put in the Mutations Deck Discard Pile.

Starting with the winner and proceeding clockwise, **each player draws a new hand**, according to the Era card. Each player should end up with a hand of 5 cards, always drawing first from the Mutations Deck (in case a change in Era alters the ratio in the middle of their draw).

When a player's Gene Pool is empty and they need to draw a card from it, they should shuffle their Gene Pool Discard Pile to form a new Gene Pool; if a player ever has fewer than five cards in their entire Gene Pool (including their Gene Pool Discard Pile and hand), they lose the game—they should add their Gene Pool to the Mutations Deck Discard Pile.

If the Mutations Deck runs out and a player needs to draw from it, immediately advance to the next Era by flipping the top Era card face-down into the Era Card Discard Pile, shuffle the Mutations Deck Discard Pile to create a new Mutations Deck, and continue drawing according to the new Era card (so if a player was trying to draw 4 cards, only got 3 before the shuffle, and the new Era calls for 3, they are done drawing from the Mutations Deck), *except*:

- When the final Era (the Teratozoic Era) begins in the middle of a draw, for that draw only, shuffle the Mutations Deck so that remaining players may continue to draw (but not play or gain) cards according to the previous Era, then:

## Teratozoic Era (the final Era)

At the beginning of the Teratozoic Era, all players should **immediately shuffle** their Gene Pool Discard Pile and their remaining Gene Pool (not their hand, if any) together **for the last time**. During this Era, once a player's Gene Pool is exhausted they cannot shuffle it and thus cannot compete in any more generations (but they should play their last hand, even if it is fewer than 5 cards—and they could still have won!)—when one or fewer players are able to compete, the game is over.

## Winning the Game:

At the end of the Teratozoic Era, each player assembles their **entire Gene Pool** into up to three of the largest single-color monsters **with no loose ends** they can, one monster of each color, and add up **the number of cards** used to create those monsters. The player with the highest total is the winner. (Face values are not a factor in determining the winner.)

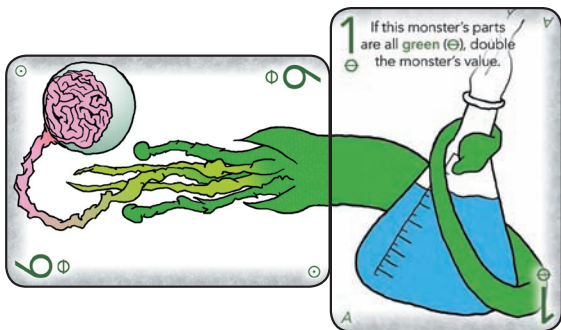
If two or more players have the same highest total, those players should count the number of single-color creatures with no loose ends they're able to assemble from their remaining cards; the player with the most creatures is the winner. (If you still have a tie, play the Teratozoic Era again!)

## Building Monsters:

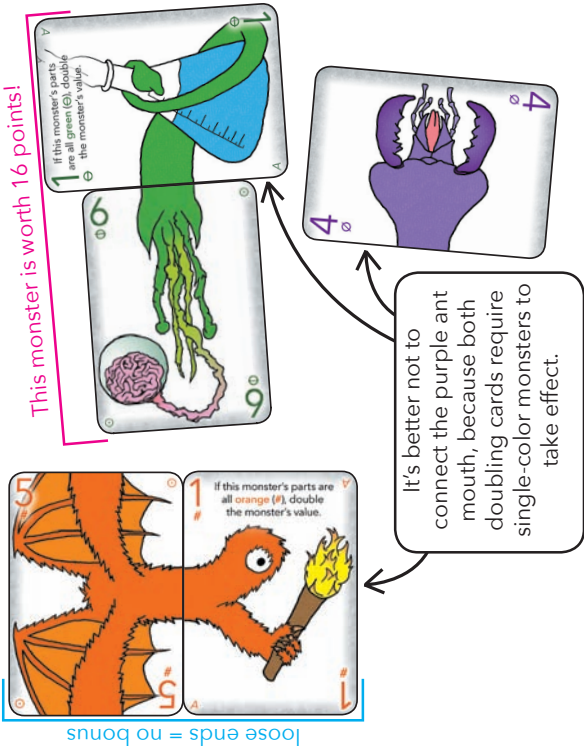
Every generation, each player begins with a hand of five cards with which to build their monsters. You don't have to build monsters, but you probably should.



For example: If this hand was played without making any connections, it would only be worth 19 points. By making a single connection, that could be increased to 27 points:



The score goes up by 8 points because the tentacle-with-science, in addition to doubling itself and the tentacle-brain, doubles the bonus point earned by creating an all-green monster with no loose ends. The score can go a little higher, though. Look at the next page:



So by building monsters, this hand's score goes from an very nice 19 points to an excellent 32 points!



## Scoring Monsters:

1. Add up the face values of your played cards.
2. +1 bonus point for each single-color monster with no loose ends. (Three-color cards are *not* single-color!)
3. If you need to double a monster's value, double both face values and bonus points. (Doubled twice = quadrupled.)
4. +1 more bonus point if, considering all the cards you played as a group, there are no loose ends on any cards.

## Resolving Ties:

If any two or more players tie for first place in a generation, **every player draws** the next card from their Gene Pool, puts it into play, and recalculates their score. They may rearrange their monsters to incorporate the new card. This action should be repeated until there is a clear winner.

**Note:** Cards cannot overlap. Pay attention to how you orient and combine various cards, and keep an eye out for the blue card, whose loose ends aren't centered along the card edges like the other cards:

**Also:** The game cannot advance beyond the Teratozoic Era, or reverse from the earliest Era played.



## Overview of Basic Strategies:

You win the overall game by using the greatest number of cards when building monsters (with no loose ends) from your entire Gene Pool after the final Era. You can only **increase the size of your Gene Pool by winning individual hands**, so you have the best opportunity to win the game by winning as many hands as possible.

In the first couple Eras winning is largely a matter of luck, but the further the game progresses the more your Gene Pool determines your ability to win. **Every player can improve** (or at least maintain) the average value of their Gene Pool **whether or not they win** any given hand. In every Era, the number of cards gained “from hand” is the same as the number of cards which a player draws from their Gene Pool, and the number of cards a player is allowed to hold back is at least as many as that, so:

If you only have a couple of good cards, hold them back and then **keep the best for your Gene Pool**. The winner can never take more than 1 or 2 cards, so if you have more than a couple good cards, you’re safe to risk them and will still have good cards to keep if you don’t come out in the lead—and if you have fewer than 2 good cards, it’s usually a safe bet that holding them back isn’t keeping you from winning. **Keeping them back helps you win future hands**, instead.

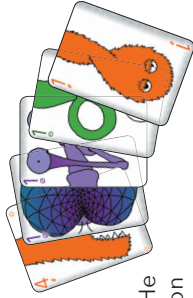
When the penultimate Era is reached, most players should have enough draws (and a good enough Gene Pool for several valuable wins) to entirely change out their Gene Pool with new cards—it’s a good time to start focusing on collecting cards based on number of ends.

## A Sample Turn (one generation):

*(See the full Instructions for more in-depth explanations)*

First, all players declare whether they are playing all or only some of their cards. The Era card tells them the minimum. (e.g.: "Play at least 4") Unplayed cards go face-down on the table.

Tim drew four 1's and a 4, so to keep Sally from taking his 4, he says, "I'm not playing all my cards." He puts the 4 face-down on the table in front of him.

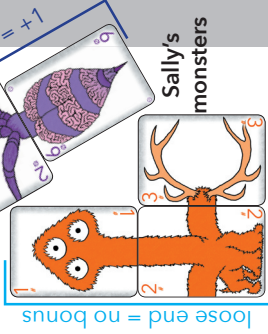


Sally drew an average hand, but since Tim is holding back a card, she believes she has a good chance of winning. Trying to keep with the theme of the game, she says, "I am expressing all my genes."



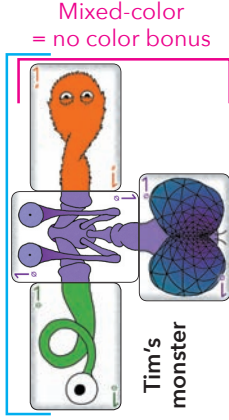
## Expression

Then, all players build their monsters at the same time. They may adjust their monsters' configurations until they are satisfied, but may not use the cards they placed face-down during the Expression phase.



## Growth

No Loose Ends = +1

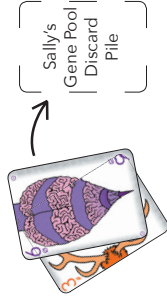


Tim connects his four cards, earning five points. Four from face value and one more because his entire play left no loose ends on any card.

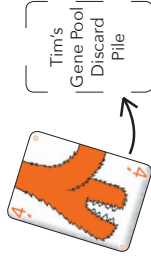
Sally puts together two monsters, earning fifteen points. (At left.) She gets one bonus point for the all-purple monster she made without loose ends, and doesn't worry about the other monster having a loose end because she has more than enough points to dominate the generation.

The winner of the Growth phase gets first pick of played cards, gaining according to the Era card. (e.g.: "Winner: gain 1 from Play, gain 1 from hand") Then each other player gains cards from among those they initially drew, gaining according to the Era card. (e.g.: "Others: gain 1 from hand")

Sally dominated this generation, so she can select 1 card from among any of the cards which were played and one from her hand, but she cannot take the face-down card Tim held back during the Expression phase. Sally decides to take her own 6 card, and then the 3 from her hand. She puts both cards face-up in her personal discard pile.



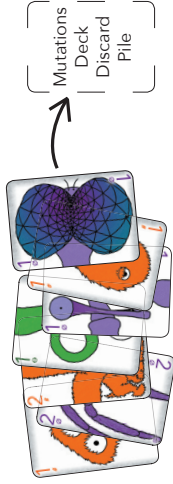
Tim can only gain from his own hand, so he selects the 4 he had face-down, putting it face-up in his own discard pile. Tim is glad he kept it back, because if he'd played it he would still have lost the turn, and would likely be adding a 1 to his Gene Pool instead of a 4.



## Breeding

Cards which were not gained go to the Mutations Deck Discard Pile.

Starting with the winner, each player draws a new hand, according to the Era card.



Tim puts his four 1's in the Mutations Deck Discard Pile, and Sally follows with the 1 and two 2's she had left. Tim and Sally are experienced players who decided to play with an extra Era card and it's still the Apocalyptic Era, so Sally draws the first 4 cards of the Mutations Deck and then draws the top card of her own Gene Pool to form a new hand of 5 cards. (For the next generation.)

Then Tim does the same, drawing four cards from the Mutations Deck and then the top card of his Gene Pool. Looking over his cards, he thinks he has a good chance of winning this time!



## Mutation

## A Basic Version of Teratozoic:

For your first game, to learn the basics of Teratozoic, you can play a faster, easier game by removing all the Advanced cards from the deck. (For a shorter-length first game, you can remove the 3+, 4+, and 5+ player Eras, and start with the Temnozoic Era.)

There is no multiplication or any of the potentially-confusing card effects when the Advanced cards are removed, so it is also **recommended for younger players**. The fundamentals of the game remain the same, and the basic strategies (building single-color monsters and avoiding loose ends, holding back your best cards if you think you'll lose, and carefully selecting which cards you'll keep from each generation) remain intact, though run-away winners become more of a problem.

## Teratozoic for Experienced Players:

Once you're familiar with Teratozoic, you may like to adjust the game to suit your preferences. House rules are encouraged. Playing with extra Era cards in 2-player games can extend the length of the game and deepen strategy. Removing Era cards (such as 6 players using only 3 Eras) or an entire secondary color (plus one primary-colored, one grey, and one three-color card, for 32 total) can shorten the game to <30 minutes. Taking out the nuclear waste speeds things up, too. Adopting a temporary rule allowing the doubling cards to ignore color can make each generation much more interesting.

## Game contents:

- 7 Era cards
  - 96 Monster cards:
    - Starting monsters - 36 cards
    - Basic cards - 36 cards
    - Advanced cards - 24 cards
  - 6 Reference cards
  - These instructions
- 

## Credits:

Thanks goes to my wife, Mandy, as well as to Owen, Nicolas, Cassandra, Samuel, Marcus, Kristin, Crystal, Trevor, Angela, Heath, Rachel, Marchand, Shirley, Arland, Shawn, Aymi, Amber, Shawn, Gracie, and everyone else who helped play-test the game.

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Teel McClanahan III is an author and artist as well as a game designer; you can find his books, art, and more by visiting:

<http://modernevil.com/>



First Edition (v1.0)

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**Get the latest game updates:**  
<http://modernevil.com/teratozoic/>

**Watch the How-To-Play video:**



<http://youtu.be/weA7P56lHYc>

# Era Card Setup - Quick Reference:

## 2-3 players:

Apocalyptic Era  
Temnozoic Era  
Pre-Teratozoic Era  
Teratozoic Era

## 4 players:

Apocalyptic Era  
Post-Apocalyptic Era  
Temnozoic Era  
Post-Temnozoic Era  
Pre-Teratozoic Era  
Teratozoic Era

## 5-6 Players:

Apocalyptic Era  
Post-Apocalyptic Era  
Temnozoic Era  
Post-Temnozoic Era  
Pre-Teratozoic Era  
Early Teratozoic Era  
Teratozoic Era

## 2 players (shorter game):

Temnozoic Era  
Pre-Teratozoic Era  
Teratozoic Era



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