

girl genius™

The Works

A strategy card game for 2 or more players
Designed by James Ernest and Phil Foglio.

Welcome to the world of **Agatha Heterodyne, Girl Genius**. It's a world of mad scientists, intelligent animals, and racing dirigibles, drawn from the comic book series by Phil and Kaja Foglio.

Girl Genius: the Works is a strategic "puzzle" game. The basic premise is that everything in the world is a cog in a giant machine (called "the Works"), and the players are mad scientists tinkering with the machine.

As you tinker with the Works, the pieces (the cards) interact. When they match up in certain ways, they become active and "pop" out of the Works.

The strategy in this game can be complex, but the object is simple: be the first player to collect 100 points.

What Comes with this Game:

The Girl Genius deck contains 108 game cards, plus four green "Lose a Turn" cards. You need no other equipment to play.

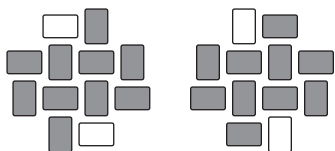
This Rules Sheet:

This sheet contains all the basic rules for Girl Genius. If you have questions after reading this rule book, you can learn more about the characters and the game by visiting the James Ernest Games "double secret" website at www.jamesernest.com, or the Studio Foglio website at www.studiofoglio.com.

Though this game is most often played by two players, the rules below are phrased for any number of players, and up to six people can play. If you have several players, you may wish to divide into two teams rather than playing everyone for himself. For a list of other multiplayer variants, you can check out the James Ernest Games website.

How to Begin:

Find the four green "Lose a Turn" cards and set them aside. Shuffle the rest of the deck and deal a hand of five cards to each player. Then deal 12 more cards into the middle of the table and construct a "board" of cards, face down, in one of the two patterns below.



After building the board, flip up two cards at opposite corners, as shown.

Place the rest of the deck where everyone can reach it.

Determine randomly who will go first. Thereafter, play will pass to the left, unless players skip turns. (Details on using the "Lose a Turn" cards are below.)

On Every Turn:

Each turn consists of several steps. The details of each step are given later, but this short reference list is all you will normally need.

- **Flip One Card:** Flip one facedown card face up, if you can.
- **Spin One Card:** Spin one faceup card 180°. If the board is **open**, you can spin whatever you like. If the board is **closed**, you must make a spin that will pop something. If you can't pop a card on a closed board, the board is **frozen**. In this case, reshuffle the board and rebuild it face down, then restart your turn.
- **Check:** Check around the edges of the card you've spun. If its edges match color with its neighbors, you pop the cards with the longer edges (more symbols). This can lead to popping more cards, losing turns, and all kinds of special effects.
- **Replace:** Replace the cards you've taken with cards from your hand. Other players also replace cards in this step, if they have to.
- **Draw:** If you have fewer than five cards in your hand, draw back up to five from the top of the deck.
- **End:** The turn passes to the left.

Winning:

The object is to **collect 100 points (or more) in your Score Pile**. You can win at any time, not just on your turn. You can also win by collecting Submarines and Dirigibles, as described on those cards.

Details on the Steps in the Turn:

Here are the details on the steps in your turn. Once you are familiar with the details, you can usually go by the simple checklist.

Flip: If there are any facedown cards, flip one face up. If there are no facedown cards on the board, you will skip this step.

The direction in which you flip the card will determine which way it points, so you must flip the card without looking.

Spin: Spin one faceup card 180°. "Spinning" a card means turning it around, not flipping it over. You are spinning one card to see if anything pops, as explained below. The cards you can legally spin will depend on whether the board is **open** or **closed**.

Open Board: The board is **open** if there are any facedown cards. When the board is open, you can spin **any** faceup card, whether it will pop something or not.

Closed Board: If all twelve cards are face up, then the board is **closed**. Now you **must** make a move which will result in something popping. This means you might be forced to pop a card you don't want.

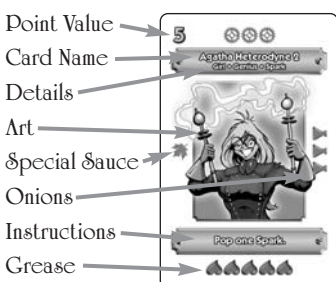
If the board is closed, and there are no more legal moves, then the board is **frozen**. If you have no legal moves in your Spin step, then instead of spinning a card, you must pick up all twelve cards, shuffle them, and deal them back facedown. You will then flip one card, spin it, and (having popped nothing) finish your turn.

Starting with a frozen board is annoying, because you don't get to pop anything. However, things are nearly as bad for the next player. Try it and see!

Note on Reshuffling: You **must** get permission from your opponent before you reshuffle a frozen board. She might be willing to show you a move you don't see!

Checking Cards: When cards line up properly, they pop. "Popping" represents something interesting that's happening in the Works. Sometimes it's something good, sometimes it's something bad.

Take a look at the sample card below.



Every card has colored symbols around the edges, which represent different aspects of personality. They are **Loyalty** (Yellow), **Science** (Purple), **Heart** (Red), **Balance** (Blue), and **Nature** (Green). The number of symbols on each edge represents the amount of each trait that a card has.

When two neighboring edges are the same color, it means that those two cards have something in common, and that they will react to each other somehow.

Check the four edges of the card you just spun, comparing them to the edges of the cards around it. If any pair of those edges is the **same color**, the card with the **longer edge** (more symbols) "pops."

"Popping" means you **pick up** a card, **follow its instructions** (if you can), and then **put it into your Score Pile**.

If the edges are the same length as well as the same color, **both cards pop**.

Important: This step is the **only time** you will check the edges of the cards in play. The board might be covered with matching edges, but you will only check the card you spin in the second step of your turn.

You will notice that it's possible to pop several cards at once, if multiple edges line up. You will also pop more cards if you are instructed to do so by the first cards you pop.

You always follow card instructions in the same order that you pop the cards. However, when you pop several cards at **exactly** the same time, you must read them in alphabetical order.

When you are alphabetizing cards, read the names exactly as written. In other words, "Dr." is treated as **d-r**, not as **d-o-c-t-o-r**.

The effects of most cards are pretty simple. If you get confused, read through the **terms and phrases** section, where we've done our best to cover every picky detail.

Cards you have popped go into your Score Pile, where they are worth their point value. If you collect 100 points, you win.

Replace: Unless directed otherwise, you must now replace every card you have taken off the board with a card from your hand. Replacement cards are always played face up, except when you are directed otherwise.

If you have popped more cards than you have in your hand, you must play your hand first, and then draw cards **one at a time** to fill the remaining spaces.

If your opponent is responsible for replacing cards during your turn, because he popped some cards or because of some other card effect, you and your opponent take turns replacing, starting with you.

If you're unclear whose responsibility a certain card is, just ask yourself "who touched it?" It should be obvious in each case who actually touched the card. The player who picked the card up is responsible for replacing it.

When you are replacing cards it's usually a good idea to leave no desirable moves for your opponent. On the other hand, if you're going to take the next turn, this is your chance to set up the perfect move.

Draw: If you finish your turn with fewer than five cards in your hand, you now draw cards from the deck until you have five.

If you hold more than five cards, you don't draw in this step.

Unless you're instructed otherwise, this step is the only time when you draw cards.

If the deck runs out of cards, the game ends and the player with the highest score wins. With more than 550 points in the deck, this is pretty unlikely. However, it could happen in a sufficiently large game.

Ending Your Turn, and Checking Your Score:

Once you're done with the rest of your turn, tell the next player to go ahead with her turn. Then you should probably check to see if you've won.

Your **score** is equal to the total point values of the cards in your **Score Pile**. It helps you to check your score if you stack your cards in piles of ten points, or if you "spell" your score by using two cards. For example, if you have 53 points, you can stack most of your cards under a "5," to mean "50" and then put a "3" next to the stack, to spell "53." Note: your Score Pile is not a secret from your opponents!

You can win at any time, but it's good to get into the habit of checking your score at least once every turn. And it speeds up the game if you check while the other player is thinking!

More Important Stuff:

Card Name and Details: This box contains all the words that describe this card. For example, "Agatha's First Clank" has its name, plus "Giant," "Unwieldy" and "Machine" in this box. If another card says "Pop one Machine" or "Pop one Clank" it can pop Agatha's First Clank.

As long as the word you're looking for appears **anywhere** in this box, this card counts as that type of card. Technically, this means that "Dame Aedith, Vampire Hunter" counts as a Vampire. This is weird, but that's exactly the way we like it.

Facedown Cards are in play, and can be referred to by other cards, but they have no knowledge of what they are. In other words, even if you remember what a facedown card is, it only counts as a "card."

Instructions on a card are directed to the player who popped it, so "you" means the player who popped the card.

If an instruction contains the words "you may," then that instruction is optional. Otherwise, you must follow it if you are able.

If you are unable to follow an instruction, you ignore it. If you are given an instruction you are only **partially** able to follow, you do the best you can. For example, if you are directed to "Pop two Pests" and there is only one Pest in play, you pop one Pest.

Losing Turns: Getting extra turns and losing turns is one of the most important parts of this game, but if lots of extra turns pile up at once it can be a little confusing. That's why we've included four "Lose a Turn" tracking cards.

Each time you are instructed to lose one turn, you take one lost turn card. When the normal turn order comes to you, you must give back the card and skip your turn.

If you are instructed to "take another turn," **every other player** takes a lost turn card, and the same rules apply. When the turn comes to them, they must turn over their cards and skip their turns.

If everyone has at least one lost turn card, they can all hand one back. That's why you'll rarely need more than four. However, feel free to improvise some extras if the game gets particularly complicated.

When is the Board Frozen? It is possible that there will be a legal move on a board, and you just won't see it. That's the nature of this game. It's also possible that you'll **ignore** a legal move because you don't want to take it. That's also allowed. However, before you reshuffle the board, you must get permission from everyone else. They are allowed to show you the move you're pretending to miss.

It's remotely possible for a board to reach **absolute zero**, meaning that no matter how many times the board is shuffled, nothing can ever pop. If everyone agrees that this is the case, shuffle the board back into the deck and deal a new board face down. (This hasn't ever happened in real life, but it's theoretically possible, so there's a rule for it.)

Terms and Phrases:

"Any Player," "Another Player": There is a difference between these phrases: "any player" can include you, while "another player" can't.

Check: "Check" means to look at the edges of a card you have just spun to see if any colors lined up. You only check the edges of the one card you spin as a basic step of your turn. When you are instructed to spin other cards, you never check their edges.

Draw: "Draw" means to put a card into your **hand**. This usually means from the top of the deck, unless the instructions specifically say otherwise, as in "Draw one card from your Score Pile." **Note:** When drawing cards from a known source, like your Score Pile, you can decide which cards to draw.

Flip: "Flip" means to flip over a card. It doesn't necessarily imply that you're flipping the card face up or face down, just that you're flipping it over. When you flip cards up, you don't get to look at them in the process, so unless you already knew which way the card was pointing, it's a 50/50 chance that the card will come up the way you want it to.

In Play: Only the 12 cards which make up the board are considered "in play". Your Score Pile, your hand, the cards you have just popped, and the cards in the deck aren't in play, no matter what's going on. Unless they state otherwise, cards only refer to other cards that are in play.

Move (something) into your Score Pile: This isn't the same as popping. If you are instructed to put a card into your Score Pile, you just do it. You don't follow its instructions, because you didn't pop it.

Plurals: Singular and plural nouns are treated as the same word. For example, Dr. Monahan's Rats says "Pests" (plural). If another card says "Pop one Pest" (singular), it can pop the Rats.

Pointing: Some cards will pop the cards they are "pointing to" (as indicated by their instructions.) This only makes sense if the cards are on the board, so if they come from somewhere else you ignore this instruction.

If the card is pointing to an empty space, it points **through that space** to the first card it can hit. If it's pointing away from the board, it's obviously not pointing at anything.

It's important to remember where a card like this was pointing, in case you need to execute this instruction after a series of other cards. Sometimes it's impossible to tell which card the card is now supposed to be pointing to; in this case, you must ignore the pointing instruction.

Pop: "Pop" means to pick up a card, follow its instructions, and put it into your Score Pile. If the card tells you to pop another card, you pick up and follow the directions on the next card **before you put the first one down**. In a sense, those instructions become an extension of the instructions on the first card. This is important when you are counting the cards in your Score Pile: you don't actually set a card down until you are finished with it **and** with every card it pops!

Spin: "Spinning" a card means keeping it flat and spinning it, not flipping the card over. On every turn, you must spin one card 180°. You may also be instructed to spin other cards at other times.

This Card: If a card says "this card" it is always referring to itself, not a different card, and not another copy of the same card.

Strategy:

The most important decision in this game is exactly how to replace the cards you pop. It's probably obvious that the first few cards you capture will be the result of lucky moves. However, as soon as you start playing replacements onto the board, you are choosing how the game will proceed.

Remember that once the board is closed, your opponent will be forced to take a move if there is one. While it may be tempting to freeze the board when you get the chance, it's actually much more effective to give your opponent a single bad move that sets you up for a better one.

We hope you will visit us at the James Ernest Games "double secret" website for hints on strategy and answers to your most frequently asked questions. Point your web browser to www.jamesernest.com.

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