

How to play

- Set these 3 table cards out. Give the Judge the Key sheet. Shuffle the other 52.
- Deal 8 each (3–4 players). Four leftovers = Gossip, face-up. Rest = Closed.
- Make a Line, left = earliest, right = latest, face-up. Two Probe coins each.
- On your turn: rearrange, then Trade, Probe, or Call.
- Youngest leads. Judge never reads a year aloud.

Probe and Trade

- Trade: swap one Line card with one Gossip. Refill Gossip from Closed at once.
- Probe: spend a coin. Name two cards on the table; at least one is not yours.
- Judge points to which is earlier. Everyone hears. Two Probes per deal.
- You may talk. You may lie. The Judge does not.
- Closed empty: skip refill. Gossip stays.

Call and Ruin

- Call: say LONG BEFORE. Stop. Judge checks left to right on the Key.
- All true: you win. Else your score is consecutive true cards from the left.
- You sit. Judge marks the first error (the Ruin). The true prefix is gospel.
- Continue until a perfect Call, or everyone has Called. Highest prefix wins.
- Tie: whoever Called that prefix first. Showdown if a round passes with no Call after Closed is empty.

HAND



Clay Baked into Pots

People bake clay into pots. Grain can sit in a jar instead of spoiling.

Food gets a room.

04

MOUTH



A Stone Mountain for a King

In Cambodia, a temple as big as a city is built. Later it changes gods and keeps the stones.

A mountain made by people.

05

MOUTH



Women Vote First

New Zealand lets women vote in national elections — the first country that does.

The voter list grows.

06

MOUTH



Pillars Before Farms

Giant stone T-pillars stand on a hill. People gather there before they plant crops.

Temple older than harvest.

07

MOUTH



Two Churches, One Split

The church in Rome and the church in Constantinople split. Latin and Greek stop pretending they are one.

A door closes both ways.

08

HAND



Empty Boxes on a Chart

A table of the elements leaves empty boxes for ones nobody has found yet. Later the boxes fill.

A chart that waits for guests.

09

HAND



Wolves Become Dogs

Wolves stay with people and become dogs. Someone sleeps at the edge of the fire.

A bargain with teeth.

10

HAND



Many Ports, One Wind

On Africa's east coast, city ports trade with sailing ships on the monsoon wind. No one king owns them all.

The ocean is a street.

11

CROWN



Japan Copies the Factory

Japan sees foreign warships and decides to copy factories and a modern navy on purpose.

Catch-up as a plan.

12

CROWN



People Reach Australia

People reach Australia across open water. There is no land bridge left to walk.

A continent waits.

13

CROWN



Tax on Every Ship

A sea empire on the Strait of Malacca taxes every ship that passes. Monks and traders share the water.

Whoever holds the strait, holds the trade.

14

MOUTH



A Book of Kinship

Darwin's book: living things are related and change slowly over a very long time.

Family, rewritten slowly.

15

CROWN



People Leave Africa

A small group of people leaves Africa. Later their children live all over the world.

One exit. Many roads.

16

MOUTH



Leave Mecca for Medina

Muhammad and his followers leave Mecca for Medina. Muslims will count years from that journey.

A calendar starts walking.

17

CROWN



Haiti Finds a Country

Enslaved people in Haiti defeat the French and found their own country. The map has to say so.

Freedom as a border.

18

HAND



Fire All Night

People keep a fire burning all night. They cook food and sit by a camp.

Night gets a door.

19

CROWN



The Chariot Stadium Almost Wins

In Constantinople, chariot-race fans riot and almost topple the emperor.
The city burns for days.

Sports spill into the streets.

20

HAND



The First Vaccine

Jenner scratches cowpox into a child's arm. Smallpox does not take. The first vaccine.

A milder illness as a shield.

21

ROCK



Flowers Feed Insects

Flowers appear. They feed insects. Insects carry pollen from flower to flower.

Color is a deal.

22

MOUTH



A Book of Arguments

Jewish teachers write long arguments into a book you can hold. A school that fits in two hands.

The quarrel is the text.

23

MOUTH



Apple and Planet, One Law

Newton: the same pull that drops an apple also holds a planet in its path.

One rule for sky and ground.

24

ROCK



The Supercontinent Splits

One giant landmass cracks apart. The pieces will become today's continents.

The map starts to move.

25

HAND



Paper, Lighter Than Bamboo

In China, people invent paper. Letters no longer need heavy bamboo strips or clay.

Words get lighter.

26

CROWN



Each Ruler Picks a Church

A long war in Europe ends. Treaties say each ruler chooses the church for their own land.

Peace as paperwork.

27

ROCK



Almost None Remain

Almost every kind of animal in the sea dies. Most animals on land die too.

A nearly empty world.

28

CROWN



One Script, One Measure

China becomes one country. Writing, weights, and wagon widths match. A clay army is buried with the first emperor.

Same writing. Same wheels.

29

HAND



A Telescope at the Sky

Galileo points a telescope at the sky. He sees moons around Jupiter. The old sky-story cracks.

Two lenses, a new argument.

30

ROCK



The First Trees

The first real trees stand up. Shade appears. Dirt gets thicker under leaves.

Green learns height.

31

CROWN



One Rule in India

One empire in India runs from the mountains to the ocean. Laws on rocks.
Lions on a stone capital.

A land tries on unity.

32

MOUTH



Earth Goes Around the Sun

Copernicus writes that Earth goes around the sun, not the other way. We
are not the center.

The sky is not a ceiling.

33

ROCK



Armor in the Sea

Sea animals grow shells, eyes, and mouths almost at once. The ocean floor fills up.

Life gets edges.

34

HAND



Cheaper Metal

People learn to smelt iron. It is cheaper than bronze. New ploughs. New wars.

A common ore, new tools.

35

HAND



Treasure Ships, Then Silence

Zheng He's huge Chinese fleets sail the Indian Ocean. Then China stops the voyages. Later maps forget them.

Giant ships, then quiet shipyards.

36

ROCK



Air That Rusts Rock

The air fills with a gas that rusts rock. Old tiny life dies. New life can breathe.

Rust on the stone.

37

MOUTH



Only the Sun-Disk Is God

In Egypt, a pharaoh says only the sun-disk is god. Workers scrape the old gods' names off walls.

It does not last.

38

ROCK



Plague, Then Higher Pay

Plague kills about a third of Europe. Then workers can ask for more pay because so many are gone.

Absence changes the price.

39

ROCK



A Number for How Warm

Countries sign a climate deal. They pick a number for how much the world may warm. The weather does not sign.

A promise with a thermometer.

40

ROCK



The Sky Goes Dark

A volcano blows apart an island in the Mediterranean. Ash. Nearby palaces remember the dark sky.

The sea does not stay put.

41

MOUTH



Manuscripts in the Desert

Timbuktu: libraries and schools in the Sahara. Scholars, paper, a market for books.

The desert keeps a school.

42



Pages That Link

The World Wide Web: pages that link to pages. Anyone can read. Then anyone can publish.

A footnote becomes a door.



Law on a Stone

King Hammurabi of Babylon carves laws on a tall stone: an eye for an eye.

Rules you can point at.



Eagle, Cactus, Lake

The Mexica found a city on a lake: an eagle on a cactus. Causeways. Later it is called Tenochtitlan.

An island becomes a capital.

ROCK



The Poison Cloud

A nuclear power plant explodes. A poison cloud. Nearby towns stay empty for years.

A plant that was not supposed to fail.

46

CROWN



Straight Streets and Drains

In the Indus Valley, cities have straight streets and drains. No giant king-statues in the ruins.

A plan, not a palace shout.

47

CROWN



Gold Cheap as Dust

Mansa Musa of Mali walks toward Mecca with so much gold that prices crash along the road.

A gift that breaks the market.

48

HAND



A Beeping Ball in Orbit

The Soviet Union puts a beeping metal ball into orbit. Schools scramble. Space is no longer empty.

A satellite as a headline.

49

MOUTH



Writing on Wet Clay

In Sumer, people press marks into wet clay. Writing starts as lists of who owes what.

Memory leaves the mouth.

50

CROWN



Limits on a King

English barons force King John to sign limits on a page. Copies travel. The page outlasts the mood.

Ink as a leash.

51

CROWN



New Countries Meet

Leaders of new countries in Asia and Africa meet. They refuse to let the old empires run the meeting.

The map speaks for itself.

52

HAND



Someone Invents the Wheel

Someone invents the wheel. Then come wagons. Heavy loads get easier to move.

A circle goes to work.

53

CROWN



Granite, No Mortar

In southern Africa, Great Zimbabwe: granite walls fitted with no mortar. Cattle and gold.

A city that needs no glue.

54



Mold That Stops a Wound

Fleming finds mold on a dirty dish that kills germs. Later it becomes penicillin.

An accident that saves lives.

JUDGE KEY 1 · HIDE FROM PLAYERS**True order 1–18**

- 01 Air That Rusts Rock — Great Oxidation Event · ~2.4 bya
- 02 Armor in the Sea — Cambrian Explosion · 541 mya
- 03 The First Trees — First forests · 385 mya
- 04 Almost None Remain — Great Dying · 252 mya
- 05 The Supercontinent Splits — Pangaea breaks up · ~200 mya
- 06 Flowers Feed Insects — Flowering plants · 130 mya
- 07 Fire All Night — Fire controlled · ~1.9 mya
- 08 People Leave Africa — Out of Africa · ~70–50k BCE
- 09 People Reach Australia — Humans reach Australia · ~50,000 BCE
- 10 Wolves Become Dogs — Dogs domesticated · ~12,000 BCE
- 11 Pillars Before Farms — Göbekli Tepe · ~11,000 BCE
- 12 Clay Baked into Pots — Pottery invented · c. 9000 BCE
- 13 Someone Invents the Wheel — Wheel invented · c. 4500 BCE
- 14 Writing on Wet Clay — Writing in Sumer · c. 3400 BCE
- 15 Straight Streets and Drains — Indus Valley cities · c. 2600 BCE
- 16 Law on a Stone — Hammurabi's Code · c. 1800 BCE
- 17 The Sky Goes Dark — Volcanic eruption destroys Thera · c. 1450 BCE
- 18 Only the Sun-Disk Is God — Akhenaten's monotheism · c. 1350 BCE

JUDGE KEY 2 · HIDE FROM PLAYERS**True order 19–35**

- 19 Cheaper Metal — Iron Age spreads · c. 1000 BCE
- 20 One Rule in India — Maurya Empire · 305 BCE
- 21 One Script, One Measure — Qin unifies China · 221 BCE
- 22 Paper, Lighter Than Bamboo — Paper in China · 105 CE
- 23 A Book of Arguments — Talmud compiled · c. 500 CE
- 24 The Chariot Stadium Almost Wins — Nika Riots · 532 CE
- 25 Leave Mecca for Medina — Hijra · 622 CE
- 26 Tax on Every Ship — Srivijaya maritime empire · ~800 CE
- 27 Many Ports, One Wind — Swahili city-states emerge · ~900 CE
- 28 Two Churches, One Split — Great Schism · 1054 CE
- 29 A Stone Mountain for a King — Angkor Wat built · 1113 CE
- 30 Granite, No Mortar — Great Zimbabwe flourishes · ~1200 CE
- 31 Limits on a King — Magna Carta · 1215 CE
- 32 Gold Cheap as Dust — Mansa Musa's pilgrimage · 1324 CE
- 33 Eagle, Cactus, Lake — Tenochtitlan founded · 1325 CE
- 34 Manuscripts in the Desert — Timbuktu flourishes as a learning center · ~1330 CE
- 35 Plague, Then Higher Pay — Black Death reaches Europe · 1347 CE

JUDGE KEY 3 · HIDE FROM PLAYERS**True order 36–52**

- 36 Treasure Ships, Then Silence — Zheng He voyages · 1405–1433 CE
- 37 Earth Goes Around the Sun — Copernicus · 1543 CE
- 38 A Telescope at the Sky — Galileo turns telescope on the sky · 1609 CE
- 39 Each Ruler Picks a Church — Peace of Westphalia · 1648 CE
- 40 Apple and Planet, One Law — Newton's Principia · 1687 CE
- 41 The First Vaccine — Smallpox vaccine · 1796 CE
- 42 Haiti Finds a Country — Haitian Independence · 1804 CE
- 43 A Book of Kinship — Origin of Species · 1859 CE
- 44 Japan Copies the Factory — Meiji Restoration · 1867 CE
- 45 Empty Boxes on a Chart — Periodic table · 1869 CE
- 46 Women Vote First — New Zealand suffrage · 1893 CE
- 47 Mold That Stops a Wound — Penicillin discovered · 1928 CE
- 48 New Countries Meet — Bandung Conference · 1955 CE
- 49 A Beeping Ball in Orbit — Sputnik · 1957 CE
- 50 The Poison Cloud — Chernobyl · 1986 CE
- 51 Pages That Link — World Wide Web · 1991 CE
- 52 A Number for How Warm — Paris Climate Agreement · 2015 CE