

ULYSSES

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Players: 3 to 5
Age: from 8 years old +
Duration: 30-45 Min.

Homer's magnificent poem The Odyssey is a classic that everyone knows. Did the deceit of Ulysses actually take place this way, years ago? At a time when the Gods once again started feeling bored, Zeus proposed a game: each of the Gods should try to bring a person to secretly determined places. The one whose goals were to be first visited by the traveller should win the game.

Ulysses, on his way to Ithaca, was in the vicinity and so became unexpectedly caught up in the game of the Gods. In this game, the players play the role of the Gods. Each of them would like to bring Ulysses' ship on its fastest way to four different places, that only he knows. The person in turn would like to bring the ship on a course favourable for himself. The others, however, rarely agree and use their objection cards in order to change the route. The one who can bluff best and retains at the same time the control of the ship determines the route and reaches his goals most closely.

Game materials:

1 game board that shows the Mediterranean Sea with the mythical islands and harbours that Ulysses visited... or could have visited. Each place has a colour (violet, green, red or blue) and shows the little symbol of the matching goal cards.

36 goal cards with these places (the backs show the 4 colour groups of the places).

132 Action cards, divided into:

- **50 objection cards** (brown - used to raise objections against goals)
- **23 temple-cards** (yellow - used to construct temples)
- **23 wind-cards** (orange - used to remain the active player)
- **16 plague-cards** (purple - used to place the purple wooden disks)
- **11 Zeus-cards** (red - may be used as a Joker for all cards)
- **9 Pandora cards** (green - allows a player to draw two new cards from the pile)

The ship of Ulysses

23 temples

9 wooden disks (1 blue, 1 red, 1 black and 6 purple)

A set of game rules

Preparation

- The goal cards are sorted by colour into 4 piles. Each pile is individually shuffled and put face-down next to the game board. The players take a card from each face-down pile without showing them to the others, so that each player has a goal card of each colour.
- Ulysses' ship is set up in Troy.
- Each player receives a temple and places it in front of him.
- The starting player is determined in any way the players want. The game will then be played in clockwise order.
- The action cards are mixed well. The starting player receives 5 cards, the second person in clockwise order 6, the third 7 and, if existing, the fourth 8 and the fifth 9. The rest of the cards are put face down near the board as drawing pile.

Goal of the game

Each player tries to take Ulysses' ship to the 4 places matching his 4 goal cards. As soon as a player reaches his 4th goal, he has won and the game ends.

Game flow

The starting player begins its first turn, being the first active player. A player's game turn consists of a draw of action cards by all players, of his own action phase and of the "discussion of the Gods" around the new destination of Ulysses' ship. After this, if the active player cannot (or does not want to) keep the turn by playing a wind card, the player at his left becomes the active player and a new turn begins.

Drawing action cards: at the beginning of each game turn, all players (beginning with the active player) take cards from the action pile. They take one card for each temple they have in front of them (therefore only one at the beginning of the first turn). When the action cards finish, shuffle the discarded cards pile to make a new deck.

Action phase: the current active player may carry out as many of the following actions he desires, in any order he prefers. Played cards are put onto an open discarded cards pile.

- **Drawing extra cards:** you can play one Pandora-card, or a Zeus card played as a Pandora: for that you may take 2 new action cards from the pile. This can be done only once in the whole turn.
- **Place one or more plagues:** for every plague-card played, a plague (purple wooden disk) may be put on any place on the game board. If all 6 purple wooden disks are already on the board, one must be removed (see below) before playing a plague-card.
- **Remove one or more plagues:** for each, you must discard from your hand as many action cards as you have temples in front of you.
- **Exchange a goal card** (no more than one each turn): you discard as many action cards from your hand as you have temples. Then you put a goal card of your choice under the goal cards pile of the same colour and take a new card of any colour you want, except the one on which Ulysses is at the moment. Notice that in consequence of this you could have more than one goal of the same colour.
- **Construct one or more temples:** in order to construct a temple, you must play one temple card from your hand and discard another card of your choice for each temple that you already have in front of you. So in order to build the second temple besides the one you get at the start of the game, you must play 1 temple card and any other card; to build a third temple, you must play 2 temple cards and any other 2 cards; to build a fourth temple, 3 temple cards and any other 3... and so on. Each temple is taken from the supply and placed in front of you. If there are no more temples in the supply you are not able to build a new one.

Zeus cards: Zeus-cards are Jokers, that can be used instead of any other card. If they are used as Pandora-cards, remember that no more than a single Pandora or Zeus card can be used each turn to draw the two extra cards.

Proposing a new destination: the current active player decides where he wants to move Ulysses and marks the proposed destination of the ship with the blue wooden disk. The new destination must be connected with the old one by a line. You are not allowed to select a place with a plague (purple wooden disk); if the active player wants to move there, he must remove the plague before, in the action phase.

The discussion of the Gods: the players decide in clockwise order whether they agree with the new destination. If no one objects, the blue wooden disk is removed and Ulysses' ship is placed on the new destination. If a player does not agree with the choice of the new destination, the discussion of the Gods begins.

The first player who decides to raise an objection has to play at least an objection-card and put the red wooden disk on another destination connected to the place where the ship is. If the player wants to select a destination with a

plague, he has to remove the plague before, discarding as many cards from his hand as he has temples.

Then the other players, always in clockwise order, decide whether they want to pass or to play objection cards for the benefit of the active player (blue wooden disk) or the challenger (red wooden disk). If they pass now, they can no longer participate in the ongoing discussion. All cards of a faction are added up together. At the end, Ulysses will go to the destination for which more objection cards have been played – if the number of cards is the same the blue one will prevail over the red one. A player who wants to support the destination with the red disk must play at least enough objection-cards so that there is at least one card more than the ones played for the destination with the blue disk. A player who wants to support the blue one must play at least enough objection-cards so that there are at least as many cards as the ones played by the challengers.

The playing of the cards goes on always in clockwise order. Each player must play at least enough cards for its faction to be in advantage, or he must pass. No one is forced to play objection cards: one can always pass if he does not like to play more of them. Players who pass can't intervene later on. The discussion ends when everybody passes. All played cards are put away on the discarded cards pile and the ship is moved to the destination of the winning faction. The wooden disks (blue and red) are removed from the board.

Example 1: *Ulysses' ship is in Lybien and Axel places the blue wooden disk on Dido; Carsten challenges Axel by playing an objection card and places the red wooden disk on Zakynthos. Michael and Claudia pass. Therefore the discussion goes on only between Axel and Carsten. The active player is Axel and he must immediately play as many cards as Carsten in order to win the discussion. Therefore Axel also plays an objection-card. Carsten plays a further one, and Axel does the same. Carsten plays his third objection card and Axel counters with a Zeus-card (used as a Joker for an objection card); Carsten plays his fourth objection card and Axel has no more objection cards in his hand, so he must pass. Ulysses' ship moves to Zakynthos. Michael and Claudia are delighted over the fact that Axel and Carsten consumed so many objection cards.*

There can also be situations - like the one in the next example - in which players are forced to play more than one objection card to remain in the discussion: either in order to exceed the amount of the objection cards of the defenders or to match the number of the objection cards of the challengers.

Example 2: *Ulysses' ship is in Atlantis and Axel places the blue wooden disk in Kalypso; Carsten challenges Axel with an objection card and places the red wooden disk on Lopadusa. Claudia supports Carsten with one card. Michael passes. To participate in a further round in the discussion, Axel now has to play 2 objection cards because the challengers have already played 2 more cards than him.*

In the next example, a yet more complex discussion takes place in which four players are involved:

Example 3: *Ulysses' ship is in Minotaurus and Axel puts the blue wooden disk on Melita. Carsten gives his OK, but Michael challenges Axel, plays an objection card and places the red wooden disk on Olymp. Claudia wants to support Michael and plays an objection card for the challenger's faction. It is now Axel's turn again and he wants to continue the discussion. He must play 2 objection cards, to balance the 2 objection cards of Michael and Claudia together. He does so. In addition, now Carsten decides to support Axel, so he plays an objection card. He may do this because, although he had passed, it was before the discussion began: if he passes now, he gets out of the discussion.*

Now it's Michael's turn again. In order to continue he has to play 2 cards (to make the challengers' side have one more card than the defenders once again). However, he has only one of them and no Zeus. He must pass and is therefore out of the rest of the current discussion: he may not play any more cards. But the discussion is not yet concluded. Claudia can continue and plays 2 objection cards. Axel counters with a further card, Carsten passes and Claudia plays a further card.

Now the discussion takes place only between Axel and Claudia. Axel decides to not waste too many objection cards and passes, so Ulysses' ship goes to Olymp.

The black wooden disk: after a discussion between two sides begins, a player has a third possibility instead of passing or supporting a faction. He can place the black wooden disk on a third destination (following the same rules for the red disk). Now the discussion takes place between three parties. In order to succeed, there must be more objection cards played for the black wooden disk than for the blue and the red. In other words: if the black side has the same number of cards as the blue side, and more than the red, the blue wins. If the black side has the same number of cards as the red side and more than the blue, the red wins. This means also that to put the black disk on the board you need at least two objection cards (to beat the card played to put the red one).

If a player passed the possibility to put a red or black disk during a single movement, he cannot put a disk later on but he can join a discussion opened by other players. That means that if you declined to put a red disk you are not allowed to place a black one later on. If a player passed the possibility to join a discussion, he can't put a disk nor join a discussion later on.

Example 4: *Ulysses' ship stands in Sybille and Axel places the blue wooden disk on Pytusae. Carsten challenges Axel, plays an objection card and places the red wooden disk on Zyklopen. Michael passes and Claudia raises objections against the goals of Axel and Carsten, placing the black wooden disk on Elysion and playing 2 objection cards (so she played more cards than Carsten, which she must do in order to become the current leader).*

Axel passes (in order to remain in the discussion, he should have played at least 2 objection cards, to match the two on the black disk) and Carsten plays

his second objection card. Claudia plays a further one and Carsten does the same with his third objection card. Claudia plays another objection card, as does Carsten. After that Claudia plays another one and Carsten too. Claudia plays her 6th objection card and Carsten has neither an objection card nor a Zeus card in his hand in order to continue. He passes, so Claudia wins and places Ulysses' ship in Elysion.

Remaining active player: if the active player was not involved in a discussion or if he won it, Ulysses' ship is moved to the place of the blue wooden disk and he can remain active player if he plays a wind card. If he does this, the active player does not change: he is still the active player and he may carry out now again his action phase (i.e. remove plague disks, play plagues, construct temples, trade goal cards, play Pandora-cards) and determines the new destination for Ulysses' ship. However, this is not a full new turn since no action cards are drawn for the players, you cannot change another goal and a second Pandora card cannot be played. A player can remain active player as long as he is not beaten in a discussion and he can play wind cards. Otherwise the active player moves clockwise and a new game turn begins.

End of game

Each time Ulysses' ship reaches a place, if a player has a corresponding goal card he must show it to all players. He does so even if it was not him to move the ship there. The first player who uncovers all his 4 goal cards wins the game.