

Board Game Tips from FunBoardGames.org

25 Words or Less #1 - Take time during the bidding phase to dream up as many one-word clues as possible. You should be able to get each one down to one or two words.

Agricola (with the Farmers of the Moor expansion) #1 - Due to the Special Action Cards that are available which give you additional actions each round, there's not as much importance in expanding your family as there is in the base game. You'll still want to do so, but probably not quite as soon.

Agricola (with Farmers of the Moor expansion) #2 - In a 2-player game, don't depend on cards that require stone because it's not readily available until about half way through the game.

Agricola (with the Farmers of the Moor expansion) #3 - Playing a solid basic game - without overdoing it on playing cards - often results in a very colorful, winning board. While others are spending food and resources on playing cards, you can collect same instead.

Agricola #4 - If you are fairly certain that several of your opponents are about to do the same action as you (in the next round), grab the Start Player.

Alien Frontiers #1 - Steal 4 resources from your opponents whenever you get a run of three dice.

America's Spirit #1 - As in Nameburst, if you don't know the person you have to get your partner to identify, try splitting the name into syllables and go for alternate explanations of them or sound-alikes.

Apples to Apples #1 - Come up with convincing reasons the picker should pick your card and reasons why he shouldn't pick your opponents' cards.

Aquadukt #1 - If you get rid of your single-building tiles soon enough, you'll have a better shot at placing your higher-scoring tiles on already-watered spaces.

At the Gates of Loyang #1 - Plant veggies you don't currently need as future material for trading in your markets.

At the Gates of Loyang #2 - Since the game is all about how much money you have at the end, use all you can early on to move up the scoring track while it's still cheap to do so.

At the Gates of Loyang #3 - Don't take cards requiring Leeks too soon. They're the hardest to acquire.

At the Gates of Loyang #4 - Don't be too eager to take a loan, unless everyone else is doing the same.

At the Gates of Loyang #5 - Save a few coins to buy fields that appear in the court or in a 2-pack. They will eventually get you virtually free resources.

Attika #1 - If you have to start placing your disks on a new area that's not connected to your original area, that's fine - even though it costs you a penalty card. The added opportunity for playing future disks is most often worth it.

Attika #2 - The extra action you get by placing a whole group of disks so they are adjacent to each other is well worth the effort.

Attika #3 - Don't forget to leave adjacent spaces for tiles of the same group, so you can collect those amphorae.

Blokus #1 - Sneak out into the middle of the board, but then wait for the other players to get close enough for you to cut them off - not the other way around.

Blokus #2 - Even if you get cut off by someone else, go to the middle of the board. Don't stay in your own little corner too long. You'll just get cut off there anyway.

Brass #1 - Obey the directions: Get a Cotton Mill and ship some at a port early to get coins. Failure to do so will likely lead to failure.

Carcassonne #1 (with Traders & Builders and Inns & Cathedrals expansions) - Take a chance on adding the Inns and the Cathedrals multiplier tiles to your own roads and cities respectively early in the game. Conversely, add them to your opponents roads and cities late in the game, hoping they won't be able to finish them and thus score zero points on each construction.

Carcassonne #2 (meta-tip) - Don't play the basic game without these expansions: Traders & Builders and Inns & Cathedrals. They increase the length of the game, but more than make up for that in the possible strategies.

Carcassonne #3 - Use your Builder (Traders & Builders expansion) whenever possible. He gives you an extra, immediate turn more often than not.

Carcassonne #4 - When trying to share/steal a city, road, or field, use your Big Meeple Dude (Inns & Cathedrals expansion) to sneak in. This will almost certainly steal the points from your opponent outright.

Carcassonne: The Castle #1 - Make your meeples score early and often. It's getting them on and off the board frequently that both scores points and gets you the tiles on the scoring track.

Carcassonne: The City #1 - In Round 2, it can be good to cause scoring first so you can place the Gate where it benefits you the most - preferably far away from your own meeples.

Carcassonne: The City #2 - Don't play with 5 people. I know the game really allows only 4, but we tried it with 5 anyway. It throws off the tower allotment, and we never even made it to phase 3.

Carson City #1 - Get some buildings early on so they can bring some income for several rounds.

Castle #1 (the card game by Bruno Faidutti and Serge Laget) - Save the cards that are easy and safe to play for last. That way, if someone sends them back to you, it'll be easy to replay them.

Castle #2 (the card game) - Don't get stuck with unplayable cards near the end of the game. Attempt to pass them off on your opponent(s).

Caylus #1 - Don't spend too many coins on one turn and end up too poor on your next turn to play many of your worker dudes.

Caylus #2 - Gaining royal favors is a good thing. Gather cloth whenever you can so you have that as an option.

Crokinole #1 - Simple. Aim straight. Okay, not so simple.

Crokinole #2 - Adjust your hand and shooting fingers so that the disk will fly straight and true. Don't line up your fingers off-center or tilt them to the left or right - unless you have a good reason to do so intentionally.

Crokinole #3 - Take your time before shooting. You don't need a lot of time to line up your shot, but don't be in such a hurry that you mess it up just because of speed.

Dice Town #1 - Go for the best poker hand when rolling your dice - especially when the Claims cards have high point values.

Dice Town #2 - When the gold is going fast, go for the gold - especially if the Claims cards have been low values.

Dice Town #3 - If you can't get the Claims cards or the gold, go the rule breaker cards. Remember there's points in them too.

Dice Town #4 - Pay attention to which dice (values) your opponents are keeping. Try to keep those that they aren't so you can clean up on those board spaces.

Dice Town #5 - If you get a big stash of cash, hold onto it by refraining from spending any to keep extra dice.

Dungeon Lords #1 - Keep an eye on the Minion action cards that can't be played by your opponents. That can make your decisions easier.

Dungeon Lords #2 - Get gold. You'll need it sooner or later to do just about everything.

Dungeon Lords #3 - It seems that one of the best tactics is to prevent your dungeon from being overrun. That may seem obvious, but don't let it get lost while striving to gain points in other areas.

El Grande #1 - Spread yourself around the regions so you can score in as many of them as possible.

Empire Builder #1 - If your cards don't work well together, trash them hoping for a better combination - one that has the same goods or the same cities on more than one card.

For Sale #1 - Avoid taking the Voids in the second half of the game at all costs.

Guest Host #1 - Sadly there's not much you can do while playing this game to improve your chances of winning. It's trivia. You either know it, or you don't.

Hacienda #1 - Get to as many markets as you can quickly.

If Wishes Were Fishes #1 - Keep an eye on the fishes in your opponents boats. That will help you decide which card to take and which fish to throw into the garbage heap.

If Wishes Were Fishes #2 - In a 2-player game, always be sure to have at least one fish in a market that is close to being filled. You don't want to miss out on the bonus points completely.

Igel Argern (Hedgehogs in a Hurry) #1 - Keep your hedgehogs spread out among the numbered rows, especially rows 2 through 5.

Know It or Blow It #1 - It's situational, but most of the time, it doesn't pay to guess.

Know It or Blow It #2 - You can take more risks in the first section because there's less to lose.

Know It or Blow It #3 - Playing with 6 (3 per team) is probably best.

Le Havre #1 - Don't end a round with exactly enough food/money. You'll likely need some to spend in the next round. Ending a round with a little less food is okay because then you get to take out a loan and will have some cash left over heading into the next round.

Le Havre #2 - If any Special cards (We call them "blue cards" because we have them in blue sleeves.) turn up that allow you to cash in resources without using the Shipping Line, go for

them if your tiles lean that direction at all. You'll end up with lots of cash for spending on unbuilt buildings.

Le Havre #3 - Don't buy the Building Firm that only costs 4 francs early in the game. You do get a card good for an extra resource at the Market Place and a hammer for extra clay and coal, but it sets you back too much money-wise.

Le Havre #4 (Advanced) - It can make sense to "overpay" power by using a coke resource to buy a ship, if you have more coal (which is normally used in that situation) that you can turn into coke later - and get more Francs in the process.

Le Havre #5 - Don't "get ahead of the game" by buying buildings too soon. The design of Le Havre is such that you shouldn't necessarily build or buy everything that you can just because it's still there.

Le Havre #6 (silly) - If you don't have any loans, don't pay interest. Yes, silly, but if you're in the habit of paying and you had taken out some loans and you paid them back and interest time came around again, you might absent-mindedly contribute a franc to the bank. It's happened to us.

Le Havre #7 (yet again...yeah, we play this a lot) - Don't bother paying off only some of your loans. You still have to pay the 1 Franc interest penalty every round anyway.

Le Havre #8 - Once you get steel, do a little math to see how you can use it to get the best return on your investment. Steel tiles are worth 8 francs each. Should you ship them using the Shipping Line? Should you build a steel ship or a luxury liner? Should you build one of the bonus buildings?

Bonus Tip: Le Havre #9 (silly, or maybe not) - You'll win if you set your cable TV channel to Singers and Swing. It's relaxing and allows your head to concentrate on the game. Not sure what happens if your opponent selects that channel before you do. This might only work in a 2p game.

Le Havre #10 - You may be forced to do this without even knowing it, but implement a strategy that the other players aren't using. It's too hard to use the same one as someone else. Possible general strategies include 1) shipping lots of goods like steel, 2) building/buying the most buildings, and 3) building the most expensive ships (including luxury liners) but maybe only shipping a little.

Lords of Vegas #1 - Be the boss of as many casinos as possible.

Lost Cities #1 - Keep an eye on the draw pile. If it's getting low and you still have a lot of cards you want to play, start taking useless cards off the discard piles to extend the game.

Lost Cities #2 - Concentrate on 3 colors at most, unless more just fall into your lap.

Masons #1 - It depends a lot on how your cards match the current setup of the board, but generally speaking it's wise to play your "grassy" cards early in the game before too many spaces become encircled (or entriangled) within city walls.

Masons #2 - Discard cards that don't fit the phase of the game you seem to be in. There are some cards that definitely score better early on and others that score better near the end.

Masons #3 - If someone seems to be planting a lot of solitary walls without making an effort to complete a city, complete one yourself as soon as you can. They're probably trying to score for houses out in the open.

Metro #1 - Build one long track of your own, then concentrate on cutting of your opponents.

Nameburst #1 - Either play with people you know or people you don't. Don't play with a mix of the two groups. You can key off of things you have in common with people you know. You can build off of common knowledge with those you don't know as well. With a mix, it's too hard to remember what's going to work and what won't.

Nameburst #2 - For difficult names, don't waste time trying to explain who it is (especially if you're unsure yourself). Instead, go for sound-alikes for either the whole first name, whole last name, or a portion of either.

Nameburst #3 (meta tip) - Ignore the rule that subtracts points when you bypass more than one name. There are too many tough names on some cards. It's more fun just to keep going down the card without worrying about losing points.

Notre Dame #1 - As in many Euro games, get some coins and cubes early on, then use them wisely on other things later.

Notre Dame #2 - Attend the cathedral early each phase. It will force others to at least consider joining you there later. If they don't you'll get all the points.

Pillars of the Earth #1 - Upgrade your worker cards whenever possible. Every new card you get is more efficient than the cards you start with, so it's hard to go wrong.

Pillars of the Earth #2 - If the Philip card come up early in the game, make every effort to grab it. If you get him, make every effort to grab the 2-point and 1-point spots. Even if you don't get them, it will likely force your opponents to go for them and leave other desirable spots open for you.

Puerto Rico #1 - [Really? My first P.R. tip?] Select a role that will benefit you and not your opponents. Sometimes you can even select one that only you will benefit from - like when

there's only one spot left for Trading goods.

Puerto Rico #2 - Don't get too far behind your opponent(s) on building buildings. Each one helps your later play in some way.

Qwirkle #1 - In close game, save a set of 3 or even 4 playable tiles for one big play near the end. That may enable you to be the first to go out and score the 6-point bonus for doing so.

Ra #1 - Declare "Ra" to prevent others with higher suns that yourself from getting too many tiles.

Saint Petersburg #1 - Money cards are important, but if you can get some big point cards into play in the middle of the game, you can really rack up a high total because you get to score them every round.

Saint Petersburg #2 - Stock up on cash cards at the beginning of the game even more than the directions suggest and even at the cost of losing a few points early on. You'll make up for it later by being able to buy more cards with your collected cash.

St. Petersburg #3 - You need a wide variety of aristocrats for big scoring at the end of the game. Don't neglect them when you have the cash.

Samurai #1 - Don't play the second-to-last tile surrounding a city unless you're sure no one can capture it before your next turn.

Samurai #2 - Obviously go for a lot of black items, but don't forget to specialize in one of them and diversify among all of them.

Samurai #3 - You hide the pieces you won behind your shield, but try to "card count" the pieces your opponent has won anyway, so you know which type of piece you should go after the most.

San Juan #1 - Don't get behind in building your buildings.

San Juan #2 - Don't mistake quantity for quality. Having 12 low-point cards at the end versus your opponent's 9 high-value cards is not necessarily enough to win.

San Juan #3 - If and when you get a "six card" (one that gives end game bonuses), try hard to hold onto it so you have something to shoot for in the end game scoring.

Set #1 - Try to see the forest, not the trees. Don't concentrate too much on individual cards. Look for the overall patterns. (I'm not very good at that.)

Small World #1 - Leave the Humans alone. They're not worth it. Seriously.

Small World #2 - Timing can be everything. It will take some experience, but learn as quickly as

you can when to decline your active race. Playing it too long can be disastrous.

Small World #3 - Don't just conquer any old territory; remember to conquer lands that your opponents hold.

Stadium Checkers #1 - This game is a logic puzzle. In a 2-player game, the first move doesn't matter; it affects both players marbles the same way. Be sure to make all subsequent moves of greater benefit to you only.

Stone Age #1 - As long as you can feed them, get as many new dudes as you can.

Take It Easy #1 - Nines down the middle for 45 points. Go for it.

The Settlers of Catan #1 - Trading 4:1 feels expensive, but if you're not built on any grain tiles and you get 3 sheep every time a 6 is rolled, do it anyway.

Through the Ages: A Story of Civilization #1 - Science ("light bulbs") is very important. You simply have to have it to build most anything else in your civ.

Thurn & Taxis #1 - Always have a playable card in hand. Always.

Thurn & Taxis #2 - Score a short route if it will get you more tiles, even if it doesn't get you to the next carriage card.

Thurn & Taxis #3 - Depending on how intent you are on winning, it may make sense to take the time and do the math to figure out if ending the game by using up all your houses before your opponents finish the game is the prudent thing to do. The last time I tried this tactic, I got beat by 1 point.

Tichu #1 - Count the aces as they're played. You won't want to think they've all been played only to have one hit you broadside later.

Tichu #2 - Pass, even when you don't have to once in a while, and let your partner play his cards too. He **is** on your side, after all.

Ticket to Ride #1 - Keep Tickets that overlap. If you don't get two good ones at the beginning of the game, it's probably worth it to look at three more on your first turn.

To Court the King #1 - Shoot for the cards that get you more dice early on. More dice is just plain good.

Trivial Pursuit #1 - Always use the roll again spaces, if you can't land directly on a "glitch" space. (We call the pie pieces "glitches".)

Trivial Pursuit #2 (RPM Edition) - Categories in this edition can make quite a difference in the color you try to land on, so choose carefully based on your musical knowledge.

Trivial Pursuit #3 - Given the choice, try to land on one of the two spaces midway between “glitch” spaces. The reason is that from there almost all die rolls are beneficial. 1, 2, and 5 get you to Roll Again. 3 and 4 get you to the “glitch” spaces. Only a 6 is a “bad” roll.

Uptown #1 - Try to connect your groups of tiles through the center of the board. You’ll likely be invincible after that.

Wits & Wagers #1 - If you don’t know the answer (which is likely), split your bets over the two most probable numbers - possibly including the most popular one.

Wordsearch (meta tip) #1 - Have something else to do (or be a very patient person) while playing the game because you generally can’t plan ahead, even in a 2-player game.

Wordspot #1 - Pore over the board looking for words that span 3 tiles early in the game. Those extra tiles you’ll get to play can really help you get the lead on your way to victory.

Yspahan #1 - Build buildings early so they can benefit you in later days and weeks.

Yspahan #2 - The extra camels building is cheapest for a reason. Build it first, in case camels are not readily available later in the game.

O Zoo le Mio #1 - Spend your money early to get additions to your zoo. It will pay off in the latter rounds.