

地

Earth

水

Water

火

Fire

風

Wind

空

Emptiness

The Elemental  
Cooperative  
Trick-Making  
Game

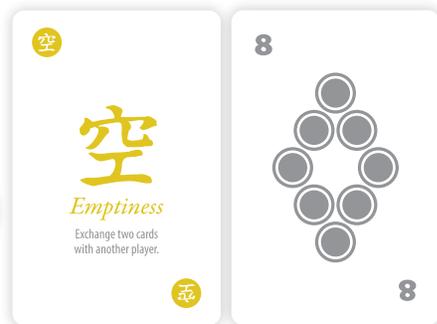
Players: 2-7

Ages: 10+

20 minutes

## Game Contents

- A deck of 62 element cards with 5 suits from 0-11 and 2 wild cards
- 25 element tokens with 5 tokens per suit



Suit face  
(with special ability)

Value face

## Setup

Remove the wild cards with X value. Shuffle the deck. Place the element tokens in the play area that is in reach of all the players.

## About Earth Water Fire Wind Emptiness

**Objective:** players must cooperatively predict the elemental suits that can be made with the dealt hands. A round is completed when the tricks taken match the tricks predicted by the players.

**Rounds:** each round is played in order, starting from the Earth round. Players may not advance to the next round until a round has been completed successfully. The challenge ends with successfully completing the Emptiness round. The number of cards and orientation for each elemental round are as follows:

Round Name	Number of Cards	Face up cards dealt
1 地 Earth	4	2 Suit, 2 Value
2 水 Water	5	3 Suit, 2 Value
3 火 Fire	6	3 Suit, 3 Value
4 風 Wind	7	4 Suit, 3 Value
5 空 Emptiness	8	4 Suit, 4 Value

**Communication:** player may communicate about strategies, tactics, or game play between rounds. Players must not communicate verbally from when the hands are dealt to after the hands have been played. Players can use the element tokens during the round to indicate what tricks may be made, but they may not use a token to reveal information about a single card by placing it on or near the card.

## How to Play

### 1. Deal the Element Cards for the Round

Deal the cards for the particular round that is being played, see table in the rounds section for how many cards are dealt suit or value up. Players may look at their hand, but not rearrange it. Keep the hand on the table so all player can see it.

**How to Deal:** Begin by dealing the suit cards from the top of the deck. Then flip over the deck to show the value face of the cards. Deal the remaining value cards from the top of the flipped deck. When finished, place the deck value side down.

### 2. Bid on the Element Tricks

Players place element tokens in front of their hand to indicate the tricks that could be made. The final number of tokens selected by the group should equal the number of cards dealt. If any player has cards with special abilities on them, they can play the ability on the face-up side of the card.

**Element tokens:** Player may offer tokens to other players to suggest suits: any player may except or reject the token if they do not agree. As long as tokens are not used to reveal specific information about a specific card, players may use tokens creatively during the bid or play phases.

**Exchange and Discard Special Abilities:** an exchanged or discarded card must be replaced by a card with the same orientation as the original card. For example, a card with a suit face up should be exchanged for another card with a suit face up. On a discard, replace your card by taking a card randomly from the center of the deck.

### 3. Play the Hand

The player to the left of the dealer leads the first trick. Going clockwise, players must play a card of that lead suit. If they do not have a card in the suit, they should play card in another suit. The highest value card of the lead suit wins the trick. The completed trick should be placed value-side down with the corresponding element token on the trick. The winner of the trick leads the next trick.

After playing all the cards in the hand, if the tricks correspond to the selected element tokens, then the round is completed successfully. If not, replay the round. The winner of the last trick becomes the dealer.

# Advanced Play Options

Earth Water Fire Wind Emptiness can be made a little **easier** or more **challenging** with the following play options. These can be used individually or in combination.

- **Wild Cards:** include the two wild cards in the deck. These cards can be any suit or value. When playing, name the suit and value you want the card to be.
- **No Card Powers:** ignore the powers on the cards in a seven player game or remove the zero cards for other player counts.
- **Trump Suits:** the round name indicates the trump suit for the round. Trump suits can lead a trick. If a player plays a trump card because they do not have a card in the lead suit, then the highest value trump card will win the trick regardless of the lead suit.
- **Hidden Element Tokens:** turn over the element tokens and shuffle them face down in the center. Players select a token as above, but they keep the suit hidden from other players.



*Wild Card*

## Notes for First-Time Players

The first time playing Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Emptiness can present a very different challenge from normal trick-taking games. When playing cards, you are not only trying to win tricks for yourself, you are also trying to help the members of your group win tricks: it is very natural to focus on your own hand and not pay attention to those hands around you. Key to this game is how to pass the hand to strategically move the play to the person who needs to win or play a particular trick.

In your first round or two, feel free to loosen the communication rules so your group can discuss game play. After a couple of rounds, the group will understand the game much better where you can return to the communication limits.

Above all, enjoy this game: sometimes the chaos wins.

**Game Designer:** William Ash

**Graphic Design and Artwork:** William Ash

**Playtesting:** Break My Game, College Park, MD, and Washington, DC