



- a game by Stefano Gualeni (2021, v.2) –

On the small island of Malta, terrain is a scarce resource and real-estate development is ruthlessly competitive!

THE GAME AT A GLANCE:

In Construction Boom! two players take the roles of competing real-estate contractors on the island of Malta. It is a turn-based, competitive game in which the winner is the player who makes the most money. Each round is divided in two phases:

PHASE 1 - THE CONTRACT PHASE: Two players compete for a construction contract by outbidding each other. The winner of the CONTRACT PHASE (i.e. the player with the highest bid) starts as ‘the contractor’ for this round, while the other player will take the role of ‘the saboteur’.

PHASE 2 - THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE: Two players take turns in playing tiles. At the end of the CONSTRUCTION PHASE, the round is scored. For the contractor to win, there must be at least the declared number of tiles on the board at the end of the round (that is, the amount of tiles of a certain material that that was decided in the contract phase (regardless of their position on the board)). The saboteur's role is, instead, that of preventing the contractor from fulfilling their contract, so that they incur in penalties for failing in their pledged commitment.

GAME CONTENTS:

48 tiles divided by type (ground [G], tier [T], and roof [R]) and by material (OLD, MODERN, and CHEAP),
12 small tokens (buttons, candies, whatever).

SETUP

Three tiles of the ground type (G) are randomly picked from the tiles deck and placed side-by-side and face up between the two players (the starting tiles cannot be all of the same material).

The rest of the deck is shuffled, and 10 random tiles are dealt to each player. The round can now start. The rest of the deck will not be used for the rest of this round. What you see below is an example of a construction tile:

This icon indicates the type of tile (a 'tier' tile of the OLD material)



CHEAP (GREEN)



MODERN (GREY)



OLD (SEPIA)



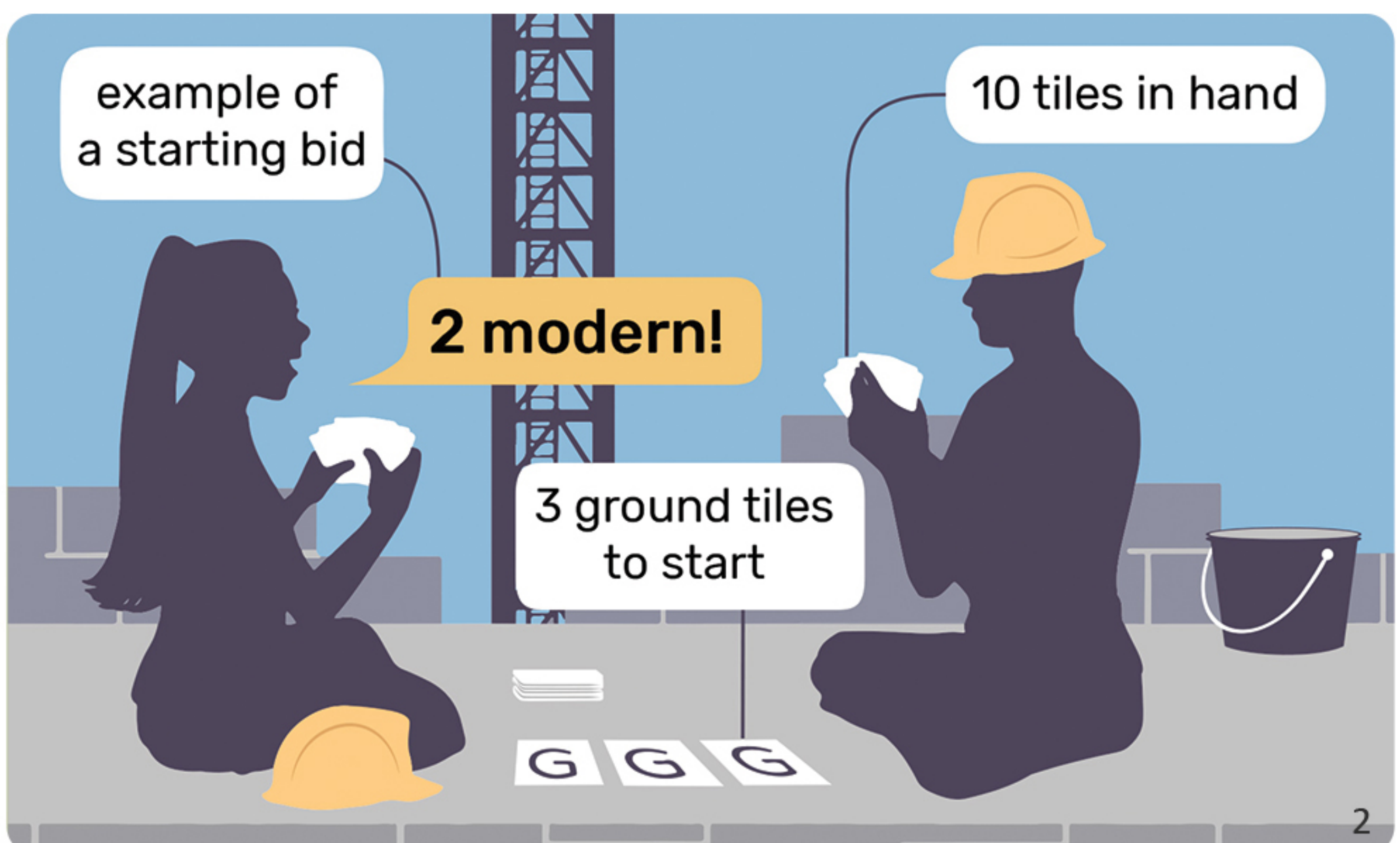
This tile's capacity for carrying weight (only ground tiles have this)



This tile's weight (Ground tiles do not have weight)

PHASE 1 - THE CONTRACT PHASE

The players examine their 10 tiles without revealing them to their opponent. How many tiles of each material do I have? How many roofs? How many ground tiles to extend the playfield? After the players have examined their tiles, THE CONTRACT PHASE begins. In this phase, the players will negotiate a construction contract by taking turns in bidding competitively. To bid for a contract means committing to have a number of tiles of ONE TYPE OF MATERIAL (OLD, MODERN, or CHEAP) in play at the end of the construction phase. It does not matter where these tiles are, or if they are adjacent (this is Malta, after all): only that they are there!



For example, the player randomly chosen to start the bidding opens with a bid of ‘two MODERN’, meaning “I commit to have at least two tiles of the modern material in play at the end of the construction phase.”

How does the bidding phase proceed?
Players bid in turns, and can decide to either

1. Raise the current bid
2. Accept the current bid
3. Double the current bid

1 Raise the previous bid

A player can propose to fulfil a more ambitious contract than the one that was proposed by his or her opponent. The following is a list of possible bids in the following, growing order of value:
OLD (O), MODERN (M), and CHEAP (C):
1O – 1M – 1C – 2O – 2M – 2C – 3O – 3M – 3C – 4O – 4M – 4C – 5O – 5M – 5C – 6O – and so on...
At this point in the game, the players cannot see one another’s hand, and so mind games and bluffing are definite possibilities!

2 Accept the current bid

A player can decide not to outbid or double his or her opponent. In this case, the player who accepts the bid will become ‘the saboteur’, and will try to prevent the contractor from ending the round with the desired number of tiles on the board.

3 Double the current bid

A player can say ‘double’ when they think that their opponent pushed the auction too far and will be unable to fulfil that particular contract. Saying ‘double’ means that the bid is accepted as is, but the final score for that round will be doubled in value (see the **SCORING THE ROUND** section).

BIDDING EXAMPLE: Beatrix decides to open the bidding with ‘two MODERN’. Jasper, the second player, considers ‘two MODERN’ to be a contract that Beatrix can easily fulfil. Determined to defeat her, Jasper takes the bid to ‘two CHEAP’ which is considered higher than ‘TWO MODERN’. Beatrix shakes her head and bids ‘three OLD’.
Assessing his hand and the three, starting ground [G] tiles, Jasper considers her contract to be impossible to fulfil, and doubles her bid.
This means that Beatrix will be the contractor for this round, which will be played based on a contract of ‘THREE OLD TILES’, but for twice the regular score.
At this point the construction phase begins. Beatrix, as the contractor, will play first and try to fulfil the 'three OLD - doubled' contract she has committed to. Jasper, the saboteur, will try to prevent that from happening.

Before moving to the **CONSTRUCTION PHASE**, both players lay their respective 10 tiles face-up on the table in front of them.

PHASE 1 - SUMMARY

- 1 Randomly pick out three ground tiles and place them face up in front of the players
(The starting ground tiles cannot be all of the same material)

Example



- 2 Shuffle the deck, give each player 10 cards face down
- 3 Choose the player who starts the bidding
- 4 Compete for the contract by raising the stakes
(the player with the highest bid wins)
- 5 The contract is set on a certain amount of tiles of a certain material, and might be 'doubled' (meaning that the amount of money won or lost in this round will be twice as much as in a regular round)
- 6 DON'T FORGET: Players now reveal their hands by placing their cards in front of them, face up. The rest of the deck will not be used in this round.
Player will be able to use opponent's cards (see Combo Rules p. 8)
- 7 The contractor can begin the second phase: CONSTRUCTION!

PHASE 2 - THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE

When both players have laid their own 10 tiles open in front of them, the construction phase starts. The contractor is the first to play.

The construction phase takes place by placing tiles in turns, starting with the contractor. Players can also pass their turn. This phase will continue as long as the players can – or are willing to – place tiles on the board. In other words, if neither the contractor nor the saboteur place tiles on the board consecutively (for example, if both of them pass), the round is over and the score is calculated (see the SCORING THE ROUND).

The following are the construction rules:

1 RULES FOR PLACING TILES

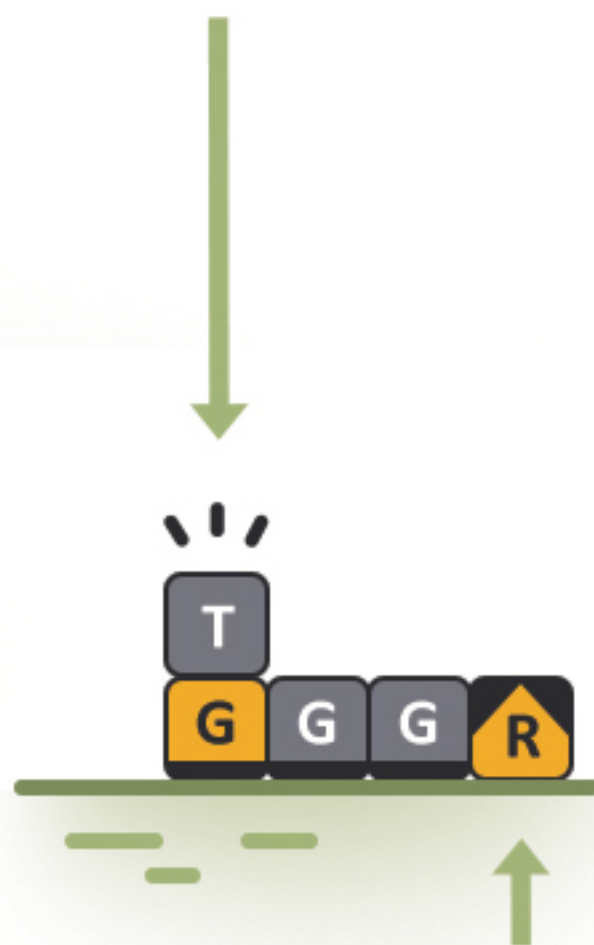
The players take turns placing tiles; the contractor starts.
A player can also decide not to place anything and PASS
(two consecutive PASSES end the round)

Standard starting situation

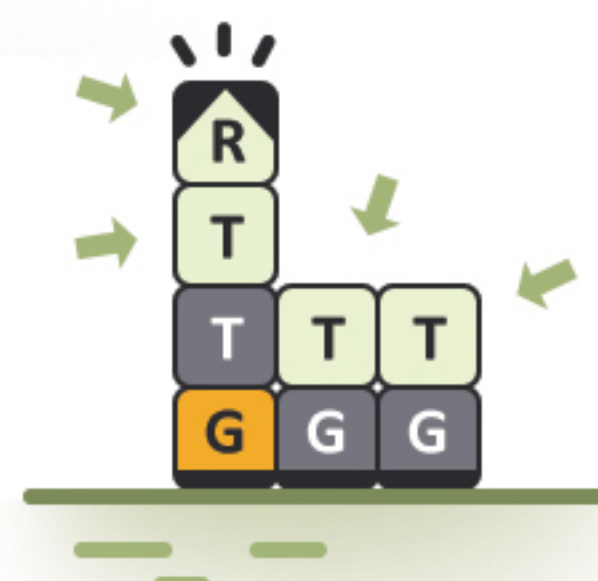
3 adjacent ground [G] tiles in any configuration as long as not all 3 are of the same material



Valid placement of a single Tier [T] tile



A player can also place any two tiles in one turn, but only if they are adjacent and of the same material!



Invalid placement for Tier and Roof tiles:
they cannot occupy the bottom row.
Only ground tiles can.

NEVER MORE THAN SIX GROUND TILES! Malta is a very small island, and space available for real estate development is scarce. In terms of the game rules, that means that there can never be more than six ground [G] tiles in play at the same time!

Also, keep in mind that a ground tile can only be placed on the ground, and can never be on top of other tiles!

Prefer to learn the rules in a friendlier, more visual and more dynamic way?
Cardboard Rhino made a video for you!

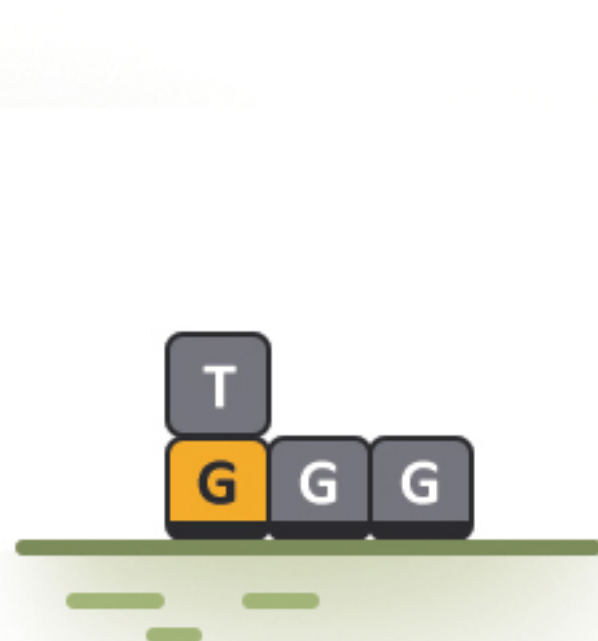
Scan this QR code or visit
boom.gua-le-ni.com/how-to
for video instructions!



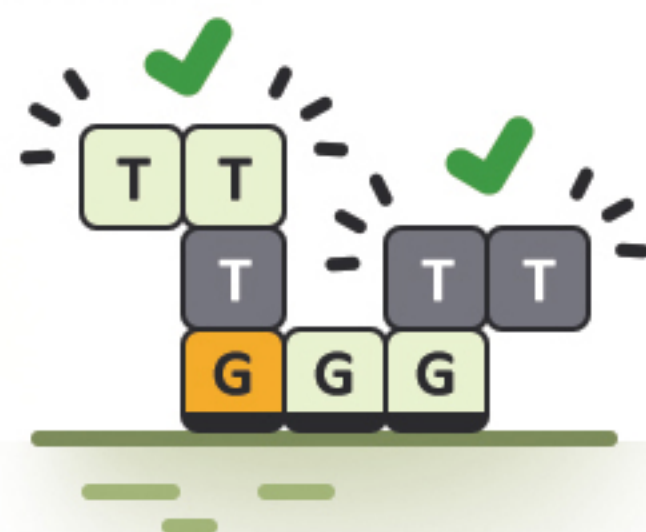
2 SPECIAL PROPERTIES OF CHEAP AND MODERN TILES

The tier tiles of the MODERN and CHEAP material can also extend from the sides of constructions, but only when placed on the side of A TIER TILE OF THE SAME KIND!

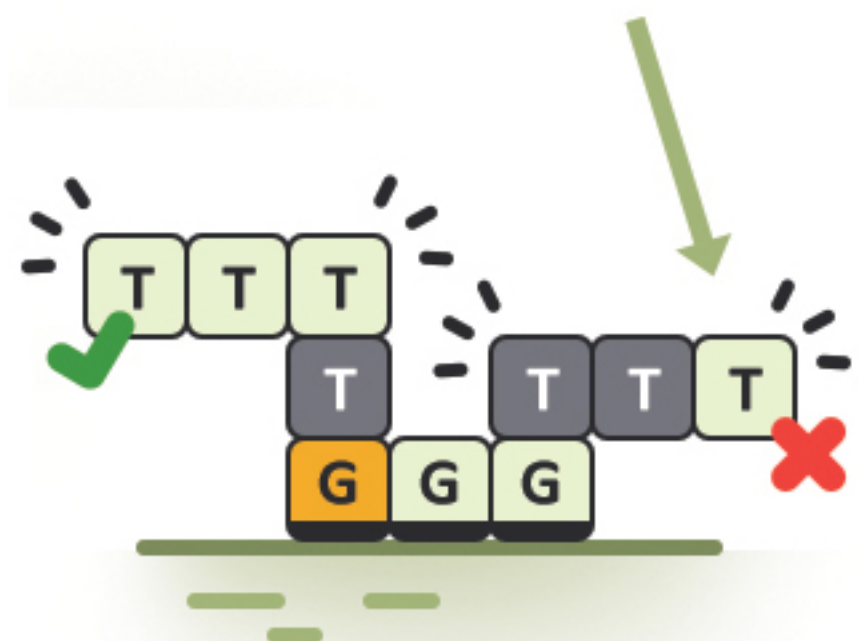
Let's suppose this is the current situation...



Either of these placements are valid!



Invalid placement, as tiers [T] of a material CANNOT extend from tiers [T] of another material!



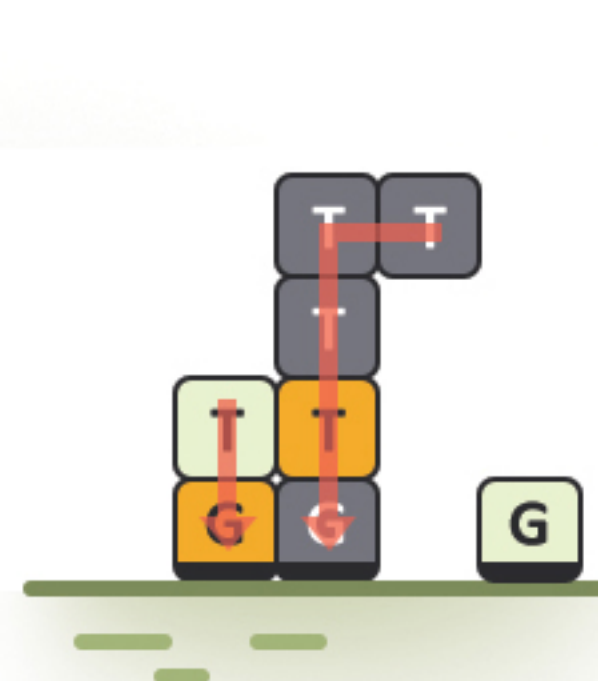
IMPORTANT

RULE: The OLD material and roof tiles [R] of any material CANNOT EXTEND SIDEWAYS!

3 STRUCTURAL COLLAPSES

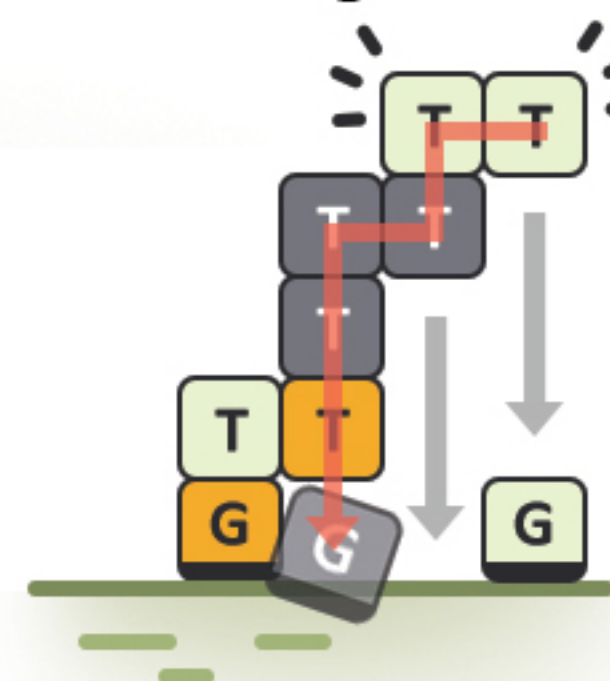
A structure will stand as long as its foundation [G] holds. When its total weight is higher than what its ground tile can carry, the whole construction will collapse.

The tiles' weight works like in the image below.

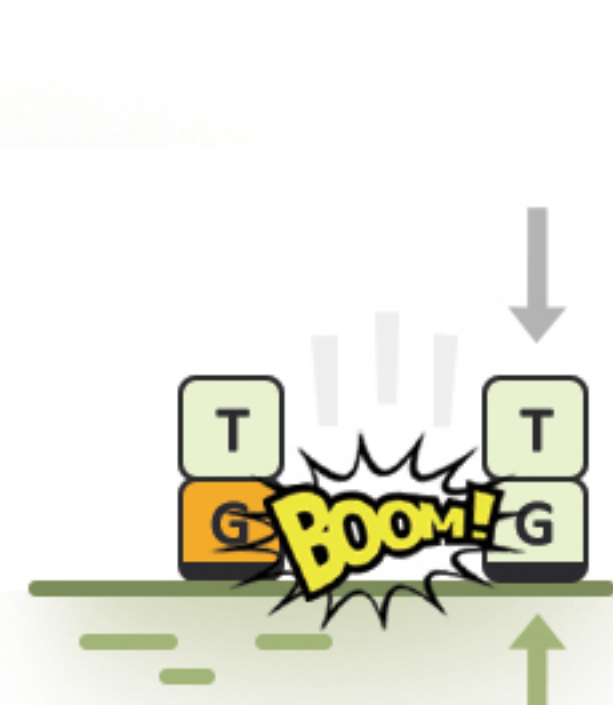


Let's suppose that all the ground tiles of these structures are holding.

Then, a player adds two CHEAP tiers, overloading the MODERN ground tile, which gives in.



The collapsed MODERN ground tile is removed from the game, and all the tiles it was carrying fall downwards..



..and are removed from the game, unless they have something to fall onto!

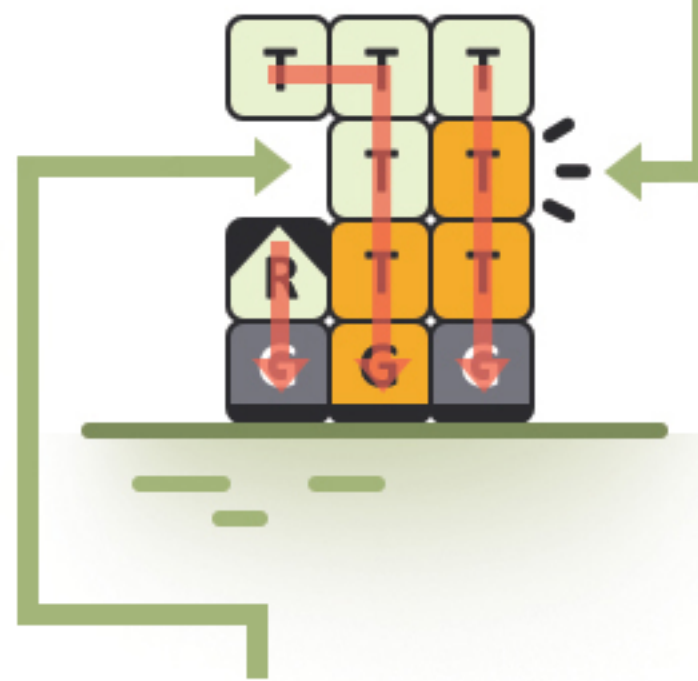
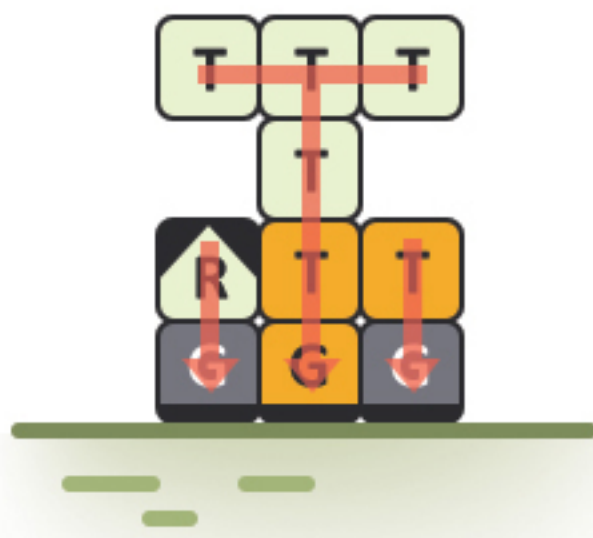
4 MORE COLLAPSE RULES

When possible, **the weight of a structure will transfer vertically**. Placing supporting tiles below existing structures might mitigate potential risks of collapse.

Let us imagine that, in this initial situation, the OLD ground is close to it's maximum carry capacity..

..then, adding a tile **here** might solve a potential structural problem!

Many of the construction rules in this game are rather shady, but here is one that makes common sense!



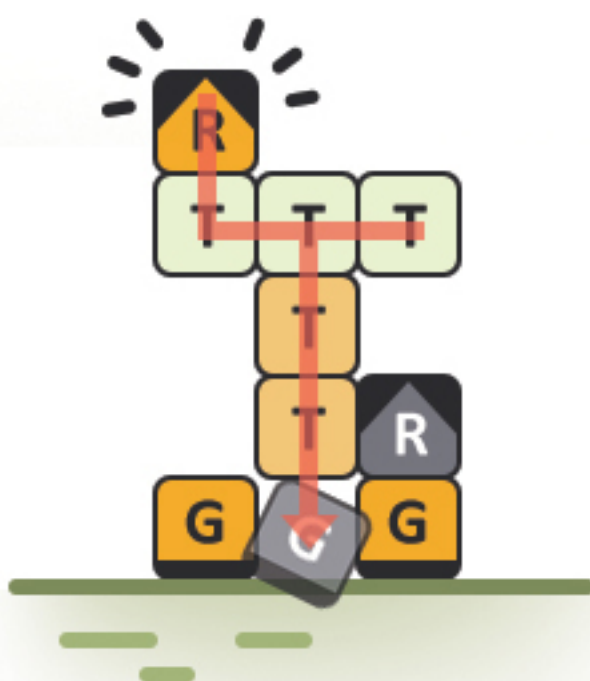
IMPORTANT

RULE: under no circumstance can a tile be placed directly above a roof tile!

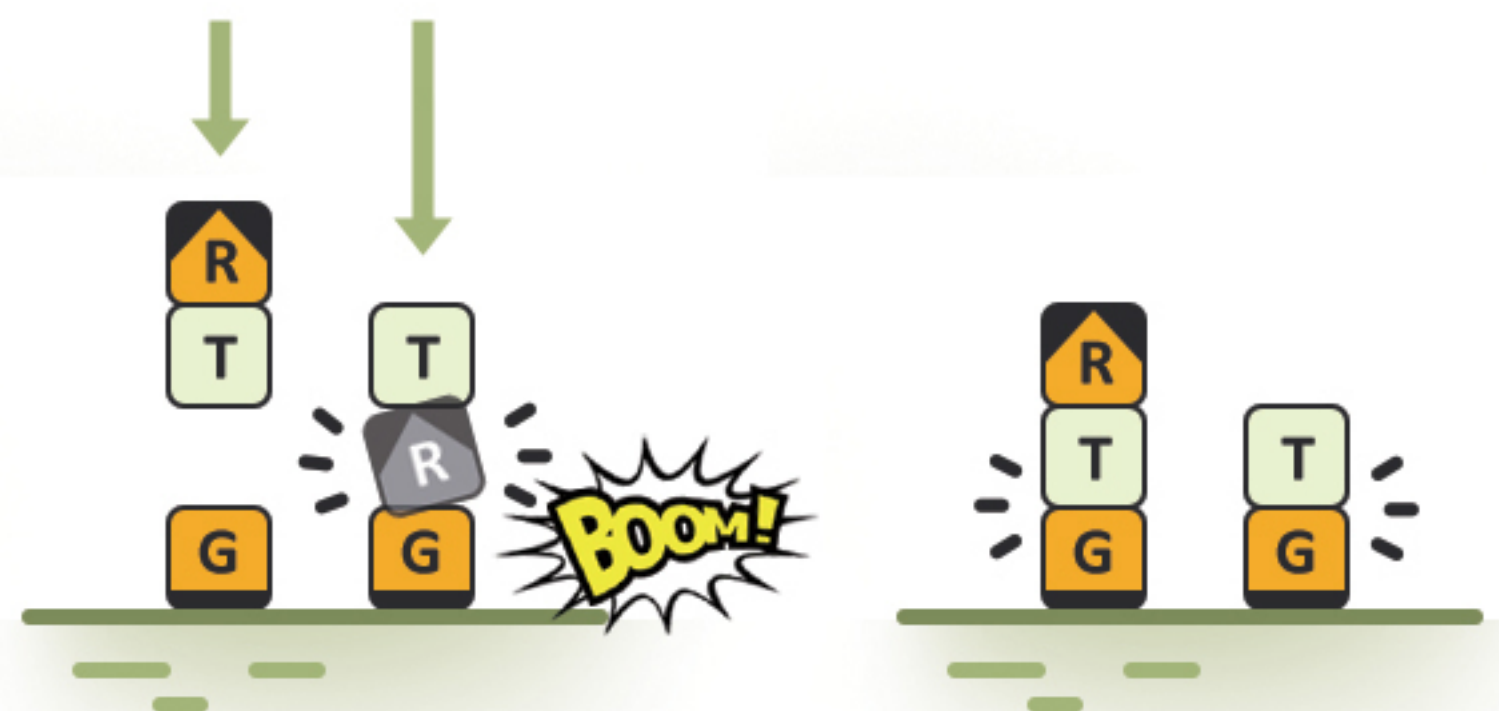
5 THE CRUSHING OF ROOFS

During a collapse, a tile might fall on top of a roof. At that point, the roof tile is immediately crushed and removed from the game. Does that give you ideas? :)

Adding a roof to this structure proved fatal to it, and its MODERN ground gave in.



While falling down, a CHEAP tier hits the MODERN roof and crushes it!



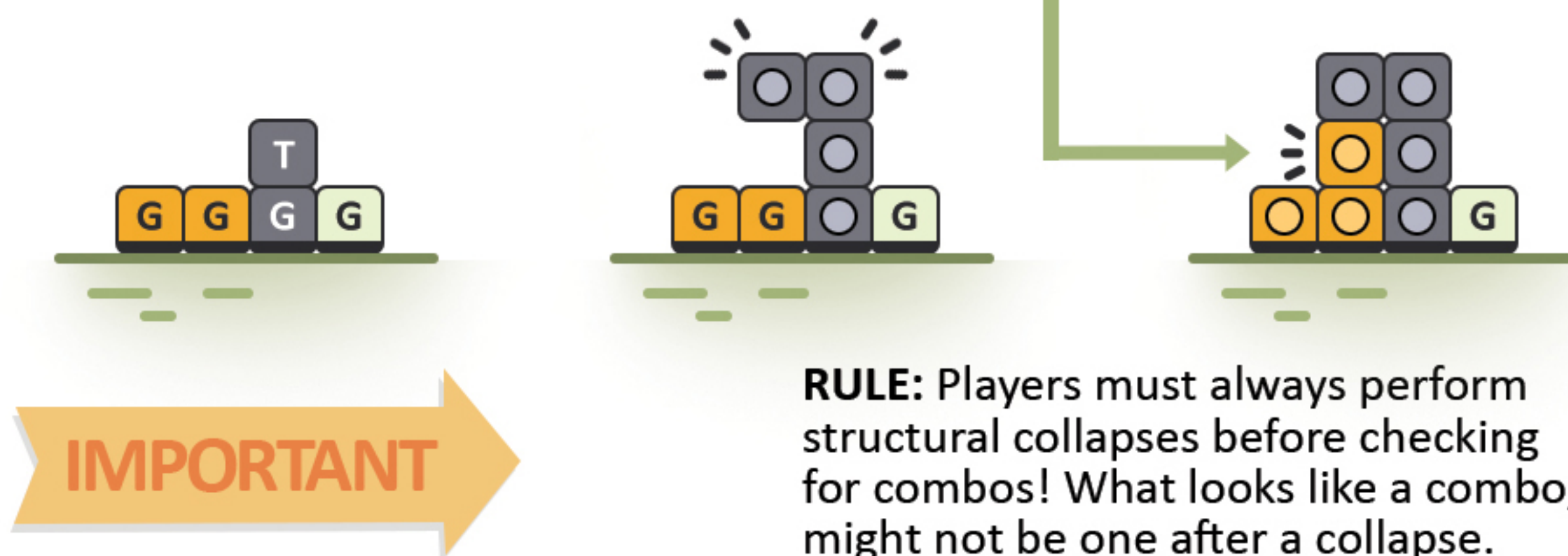
Crushing roof tiles can be used strategically: it can open opportunities for new construction, or simply remove a tile that can make the difference between a contractor's win or loss.

6 COMBOS

Forming a group of **3 or more adjacent tiles of the same material** allows a player to immediately place a tile taken from the opponent (maximum 1 tile per turn)!

Starting from the situation on the left, a player builds two MODERN tiers, forming a combo! Now she can decide to place one of the opponent's face-up tiles in the same turn. For example, adding an OLD tier here. (this second combo will not grant more tiles).

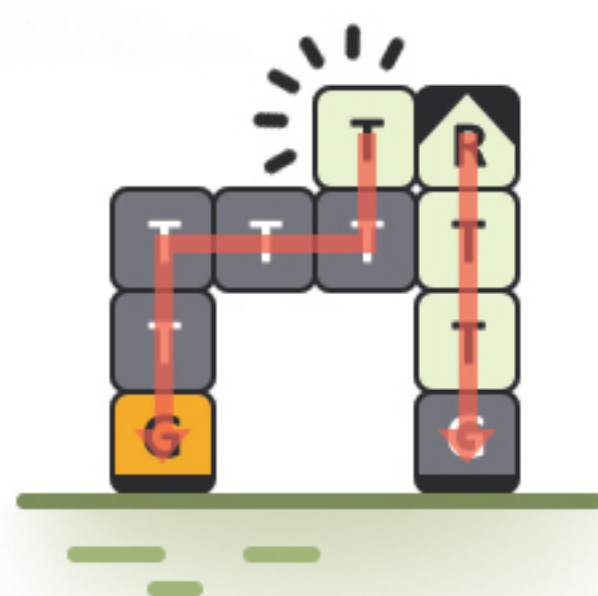
The players use tokens to mark the tiles used in a combo. These 'consumed' tiles will no longer be usable for combos!



7 AMBIGUOUS STRUCTURES

The rules for jutting tiles [2] might, in rare cases, lead to ambiguous constructions! Here is how to deal with them in terms of weight distribution.

Arched structures might be complicated. Let us add a tile here, for example.



SIMPLE: The newly-added CHEAP TIER cannot connect to the CHEAP ROOF next to it. It is quite obvious how the structure works in this case.

But if the CHEAP ROOF were a CHEAP TIER, where would the weight of the newly-placed tile go?



AMBIGUOUS: In these cases, the saboteur will decide which ground tile among will carry the weight of the contested tile.

END OF ROUND

When neither player can or wants to place new tiles, or in the case of both players PASSING, the building is considered finished. At that point, the round can be scored.

SCORING EXAMPLE

One player (Beatrix) bid for a contract of '**THREE OLD TILES**', and the second player (Jasper) doubled that contract. At the end of the construction phase, this is their resulting building:



Remember? There can only be six ground tiles in play at the same time!

As you can see, the finished building contains **five OLD TILES**. This means that Beatrix not only fulfilled her desired objective of three **OLD TILES**, but also exceeded her goal. As explained in the scoring section (SCORING THE ROUND), she will receive money for having completed her contract, and extra money for each additional **OLD TILE** present in the finished building. After the calculation on the basis of the additional tiles, that figures it doubled since Jasper doubled on this round."

In terms of scoring the round quantitatively (as will be explained in the next section), this '**THREE OLD TILES**' game resulting in a '**FIVE OLD TILES**' configuration would be scored as follows:

- The contractor fulfilled her contract: **+30k Euros**
- Extra tiles in the material of the contract: **2**
- Value of each extra tile in the material of the contract: **+10k Euros**
- Score for the contractor: $30k + 2(10k) = \mathbf{50k\ Euros}$
- But the saboteur decided to double the bid in the contract phase!
The final score is, then, **100k Euros** for the contractor!

SCORING THE ROUND

The construction phase ends when both players are out of tiles to put on the board, or when both of them decide to pass their turn. At that point, the round is scored. The score is calculated based on whether the contractor fulfilled his or her contract, and depends on the material that the contract featured.

Keep in mind that if the particular contract that is being scored was doubled in the contract phase, the scores presented below (both positive and negative) will need to be multiplied by two.

SCENARIO 1: THE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT WAS FULFILLED

The contractor (i.e. the player who won the CONTRACT PHASE) gets 30k Euro.

SCENARIO 2: THE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT WAS EXCEEDED

As per the previous scenario, in this second one the contractor gets 30k Euro for fulfilling his or her contract, and also get additional money for every tile in the material the contract was played that exceeded the number set by the contract.

Money per extra tile	OLD	MODERN	CHEAP
	+10K €	+10K €	+10K €

For example, if the contract for the current round was 'THREE MODERN' and the final configuration featured SIX MODERN tiles, the contractor will receive 30k Euros for fulfilling the contract and an additional 10k for each additional modern tile used in the building (which amounts to 30k, for a grand total of 60k).

SCENARIO 3: THE CONTRACTOR FAILED TO COMPLETE HIS CONTRACT

In this case, the contractor is penalized for each tile missing to fulfil their contract. The penalty depends on the material of the contract itself:

Penalty value per tile	OLD	MODERN	CHEAP
	-20K €	-15K €	-10K €

For example, if the contract was ‘four OLD’, but the contractor only managed to end the round with only 2 old tiles placed (that is, 2 tiles short), he or she will have to pay 40k Euros (two times -20k Euros).

THE END OF THE GAME

After a number of rounds (4 rounds is the suggested standard), each player’s total score is summed up. The winner is the player with the most money.

EXPERT MODE

Play Construction BOOM! with turns that are limited to 90 seconds!