

Whistlewood Express



Rulebook

Introduction

Beyond the edges of familiar maps, nestled among dense forests and rolling valleys, lies Whistlewood - a land where trains are not just transport, but a way of life. Here, the rails don't merely connect villages - they carry hopes, trade, and opportunity. Each morning, the whistle of the Whistlewood Express echoes across the hills, and the villagers know: a new delivery has arrived.

You are a Freightmaster, attaching your own train cars to a shared train. Your cargo might be coal, grain, or livestock - but your goal is the same: serve as many stations as possible and secure the most valuable contracts.

Whistlewood is divided by ever-changing terrain, so every journey brings new landscapes and new challenges. The arrangement of stations and routes changes with each game, and adapting to the current path is key. To succeed, you'll need precise timing and clever planning - ensuring your cargo reaches the right station at just the right moment.

The train is shared - but the glory is yours alone. Who will become Whistlewood's most renowned Freightmaster?

Objective of the Game

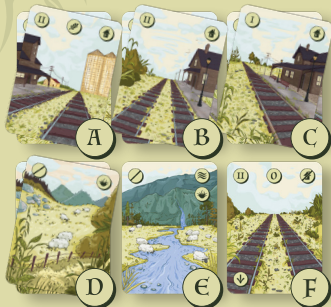
During the game, you will earn points by delivering different types of train cars to their destinations. Your goal is to become Whistlewood's most successful Freightmaster by scoring more points than your opponent.

In case of a tie, the victory is shared.



Box Contents

Base Game Components



10 Location Cards:

- 2 Station cards with Silo (A)
- 2 Two-Track Station cards (B)
- 2 Single-Track Station cards (C)
- 2 Field cards (D)
- 1 River card (E)
- 1 Siding card (F)



9 Train Car Tiles per player (red and blue):

- 2 Grain Cars (a)
- 2 Stone Cars (b)
- 1 Coal Car (c)
- 1 Log Car (d)
- 1 Mail Car (e)
- 1 Livestock Car (f)
- 1 Tank Car (g)



1 locomotive



1 starting player marker

Expansion Modules



1 Freightmasters' Logbook



1 locomotive



8 Location Cards:

- 2 Single-Track Stations with Silo (G)
- 2 +1 Point Stations (H)
- 2 Sidings (I, J)
- 1 Three-Track Station (K)
- 1 Mountain (L)



Per player color 3 Train Car Tiles:

- 1 Money Car (h)
- 1 Passenger Car (i)
- 1 Flatcar (j)



1 Draw Bag



6 Nature Tokens

Game Setup

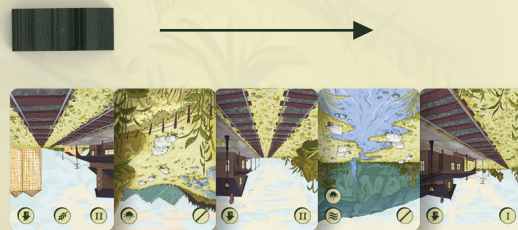
Shuffle the 10 Location Cards, then place them face up to form two rows of five cards each, leaving enough space between the two rows to comfortably place the train cars. This creates the region of Whistlewood where you will need to deliver your cargo during this game.

Choose a color, then shuffle your 9 train car tiles of that color to form your own face-down draw pile. Each player then draws 3 train cars from their draw pile, keeping them hidden from the other player.



Whoever saw a train most recently becomes the starting player, or choose one at random.

The starting player takes the starting player marker and places it in front of them. Then they decide which direction the train will travel this game. Take the locomotive and place it between one of the two end Location Cards, making sure that the front of the locomotive is facing toward the rest of the cards. This will be the train's direction of travel (→) for the entire game — the direction the locomotive is facing cannot be changed later.



Gameplay

The game is played over an unspecified number of rounds, with players taking turns one after another. A player's turn consists of **two phases**: Hand Management Phase and Action Phase.

1. Hand Management Phase

Skip this phase during the first round.

At the start of your turn, you may **keep any number** of train car tiles from your hand and **discard any number of them**. Then, if needed, draw from your draw pile **until you have 3 tiles in hand**.

Place your discarded tiles face-down into a separate discard pile so your opponent cannot see what you discarded. If your draw pile runs out, **shuffle your discard pile to form a new draw pile**.

2. Action Phase

During the Action Phase, you must choose **two** of the three available actions and carry them out. You may perform **the same action twice**, or you may perform **two different actions**, but you **cannot pass**.

*Since the starting player determined the train's direction at the beginning of the game, they perform **only one action** on the very first round. This first action must be **placing a train car** from their hand directly behind the locomotive. After this, the other player takes their turn.*

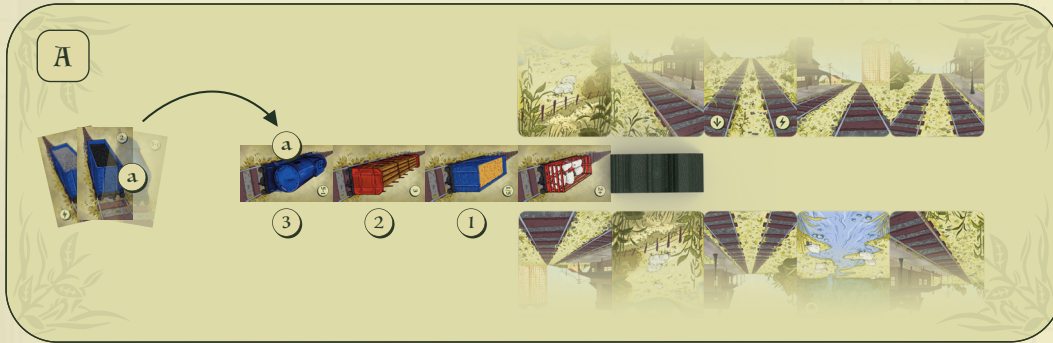
AVAILABLE ACTIONS

During the game, you may choose from the following actions: **place a Train Car Tile**, **Claim a Location**, or **Advance the Train**.

PLACE A TRAIN CAR

During the game, you and your opponent will build a **shared train**. at the start of the game, the train consists only of the locomotive, and as the game progresses, additional train cars will be added behind it.

When you perform this action, **choose a Train Car Tile from your hand and place it face up at the end of the train.** (A)



If, after placing the Train Car Tile, the end of the train extends **at least 3 cars beyond the line of the first Location Cards** (the ones next to the locomotive's starting position), the train immediately performs an **automatic advance** in the direction of the locomotive. Move the entire train **forward by 1 space**. This automatic movement **does not count as an action.** (B)



If the Train Car you placed shows a bonus icon, you must resolve that bonus this turn.
(For the list of bonuses, see pages 8-9.)

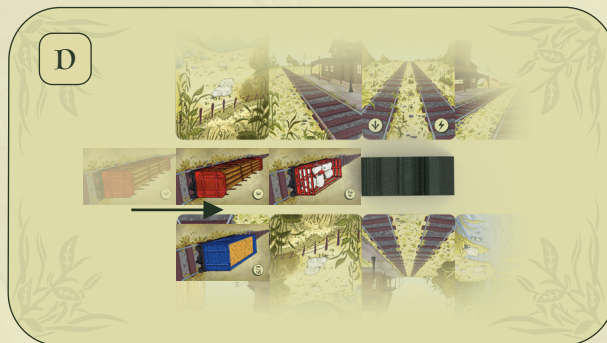
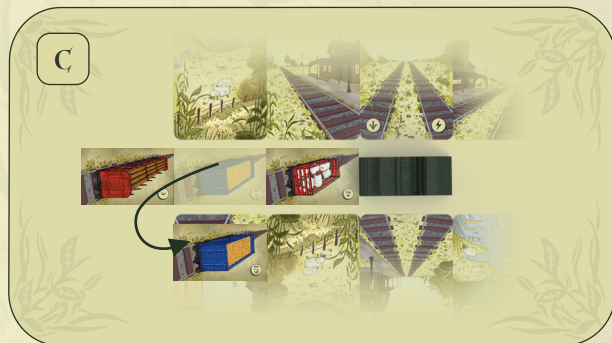
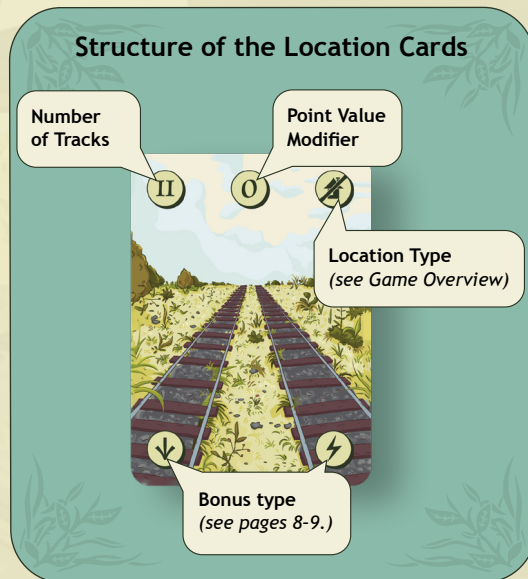
CLAIM A LOCATION

Locations that contain one or more tracks can accept Train Car Tiles (not every Location has tracks!). A location with tracks can accommodate as many Train Cars Tiles as the number of tracks shown on it.

You may choose the *Claim a Location* action if your Train Car Tile is directly adjacent to a Location Card that contains at least one unoccupied track. When you take this action, move your adjacent Train Car Tile onto that Location Card, face up. This claims that Location for you. (C)

If you perform this action, a gap may appear in the train (because you removed a Train Car Tile from it). If this happens, slide the “rear” part of the train forward toward the locomotive to close the gap. (D) This automatic movement does not cost an action and takes precedence over all other effects.

There are only two types of automatic movement in the game: the ones described in examples B and D.

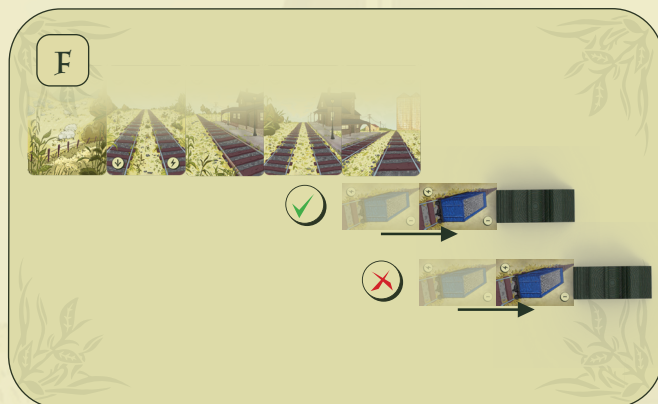


If the Location Card you claimed is a Siding and it contains any bonus icons, you must resolve all of those bonuses after completing the Claim a Location action, in any order you choose.

(For the list of bonuses, see pages 8-9.)

ADVANCE THE TRAIN

With this action, you **move the entire train forward** by exactly 1 Location Card in the direction of travel (E). You may not choose this action if the rear of the train has already passed beyond the final Location Card (F).



BONUSES

Both **Siding Locations** and the **Stone Cars** provide bonuses during the game. You activate a **Siding bonus** by performing the Claim a Location action onto one of the Siding's unoccupied tracks. When you do so, after completing the Claim a Location action, you must resolve **both** of that Siding's bonuses during your turn, **in any order** you choose.

You gain a **Train Car bonus** when you perform the Place a Train Car action and the Train Car Tile you played shows a bonus icon. **After placing** such a Train Car Tile, **immediately** resolve the bonus shown on it.

TYPES OF BONUSES

Bonuses do **not** count toward the number of actions you may take during your turn; they are performed **in addition** to your actions.

Lightning Icon ⚡ : When you gain this bonus, you receive **1 Bonus Action**. This allows you to choose one of the available actions, and you must perform it.

Reverse Arrow Icon (↩) : When you gain this bonus, you perform a **Shunt Bonus**: move the entire train one **Location Card** backward, opposite to the direction of travel.

If, after shunting backward, the train extends 3 Train Car Tiles beyond the starting line of the first Location Cards, then before resolving the automatic forward movement, first complete your second action for this turn (if you still have one). After that, resolve the automatic forward movement – but only if it is still required.

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The blue player uses their first action to place the (a) Train Car (1), which grants a Shunt Bonus. They immediately use this bonus and move the entire train one space backward (2). The newly placed (a) Train Car now ends up next to the Siding. As their second action, they use the (a) Train Car to claim the Siding (3), which provides a Shunt Bonus and a Bonus Action.

The Blue player first uses the Shunt Bonus (4), then spends their Bonus Action to Claim the Silo Station (5) with their Grain Car (b).

Thanks to this excellent combination, this Grain delivery will be worth +5 points instead of -5 points to the Blue player at the end of the game.

End of the Game

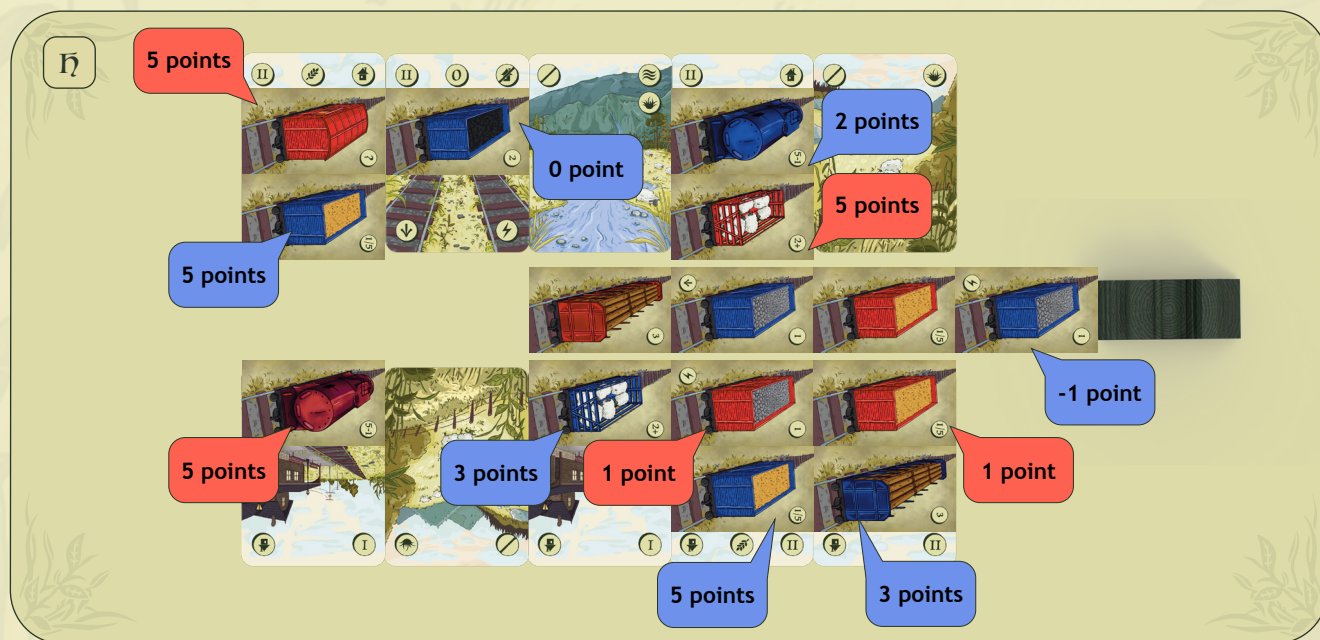
The game ends when either of the following two conditions is met:

1. If you place your final Train Car Tile – meaning you have no tiles left in your draw pile, discard pile, or in your hand – you still finish your current turn. If you were the starting player, your opponent then takes one final full turn. If you were not the starting player, the game ends immediately after you finish your turn.
2. If the final unoccupied Station space becomes filled as the result of a Claim a Location action, the game ends **immediately** after that action is completed. (Remember: a Siding is not a Station!)

End-Game Scoring

At the end of the game, each player counts the points earned from their own Train Car Tiles. **Only Train Car Tiles that are located on a Station** (🏠) at the end of the game score points. If any of your Train Car Tiles are positioned **beyond the last Location Card that contains a Station**, those Train Cars score **negative points** instead. (H)

The winner is the player with the higher total score. If both players have the same number of points, the victory is shared. (A scoring aid can be found on the last page under *Game Overview*.)





Solo Mode

Setup is the same as in the two-player game, with the following changes: do not draw three Train Car Tiles for the Automa; simply prepare its face-down draw pile. In this mode, the Automa is always the starting player. On the Automa's first turn, draw one Train Car Tile from the top of its draw pile and place it face up directly behind the locomotive. Then you take your first turn. From this point on, you and the Automa alternate turns.

On your turn, everything works exactly as in the two-player game. However, on the Automa's turn there is only one phase: the **Action Phase**; it does not perform the **Hand Management Phase**.

On its turn, the Automa always performs **3 actions**, while you still perform only **2 actions** on your turn. The Automa resolves its 3 actions as follows:

- **Before each of the Automa's three actions**, check whether the Automa is able to perform a **Claim a Location** action onto any *Station* space. If yes, it performs that action, following the priority rules below:
 - **If multiple Train Car Tiles could claim a Location**, the Automa uses the one that is **farther from the Locomotive** first.
 - **If multiple Location Cards are eligible**, choose according to the following priority:
 1. A Location Card with a **Silo** icon.
 2. A Station that yields **more points for Livestock**.
 3. The Location that has **fewer unoccupied tracks**.
 4. If still tied, the Automa chooses any **eligible Station** (your choice).
- The Automa never claims a Siding
- If the Automa is unable to perform a Claim a Location Action, it chooses the Place a Train Car Action. The Automa never draws three cards; **it always plays the top Train Car Tile of its Draw Pile**.
- If the Train Car Tile it places contains a Bonus Action,  the Automa immediately performs one Advance the Train Action. The **Shunt Bonus**  works for the Automa **exactly the same way** as for the player, and must be resolved immediately.
- If the Automa's Draw Pile is empty during its turn and it still has actions remaining, and it cannot perform a Claim a Location Action, it performs an Advance the Train Action instead.

The solo game ends under the same conditions as the two-player game. Scoring is also handled the same way, **with the exception that the Automa cannot gain negative points**.

The Automa has three difficulty levels, which differ only in how many Train Car Tiles it places behind the locomotive during its first turn. On Level 1, it places 1 Train Car. On Level 2, it places 2 Train Cars. On Level 3, it places 3 Train Cars.

Game Overview

Phases of Your Turn:

1. Hand Management Phase
2. Action Phase

Available Actions

(Choose and perform 2 of the following actions each turn):

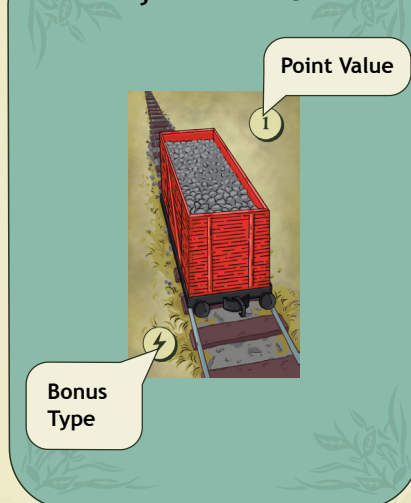
- A. Place a Train Car
- B. Claim a Location
- C. Advance the Train

Bonus effects and automatic movements **do not** count as actions!

End of the Game

- All Station spaces are filled
- OR
- One player has placed all of their Train Car Tiles

Anatomy of a Train Car Tile



Meaning of the Icons

- Station
- Siding
- Silo Station
- Field
- River
- Shunt Bonus
- Bonus Action

Train Car Scoring Values and /minus values/

Stone Cars: 1 point / -1 point/, **Coal Cars:** 2 points / -2 points/, **Log Cars:** 3 points / -3 points/

Mail Car: Copies the point value of the other Train Car on the same Location Card, regardless of color. If it is alone on a Station or only together with another Mail Car, it is worth 0 points. It has no negative point value.

Livestock Car: Worth 2 points, plus +1 point for each Field icon and each River icon on the Location Card(s) adjacent to the Station it occupies. / -2 points/

Tank Car: Scores based on how far it is from the starting end of the map: On the first Location Card (starting side): 5 points, On the second: 4 points, On the third: 3 points, On the fourth: 2 points, On the fifth (last): 1 point / -5 points/

Grain Car: Worth 5 points when placed on a Station with a Silo icon , and 1 point on any other Station. / -5 points/