



MUDWATER

S W A M P • O R I G I N S

◆ ◆ ◆ RULES OF PLAY ◆ ◆ ◆



2 PLAYERS ◆ ABOUT 10 MINUTES



◆ WELCOME TO MUDWATER ◆

Out past the docks, where the yacht club lights give way to fog and lily pads, the Apes play for keeps.

Mudwater is a head-to-head card game for two players. Play your Apes into the swamp, outnumber your rival on the edges that touch, and take their squares out from under them.

◆ OBJECTIVE ◆

Control **more of the nine squares** than your opponent when the board fills up. Win, and you take one of their cards home.

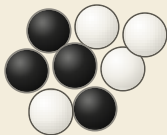
◆ WHAT YOU NEED ◆



14 Mudwater cards per player, from your own collection.



The Mudwater playmat — or any 3x3 grid that fits cards lying sideways.



Color markers, about 9 per player. Black and white work great.

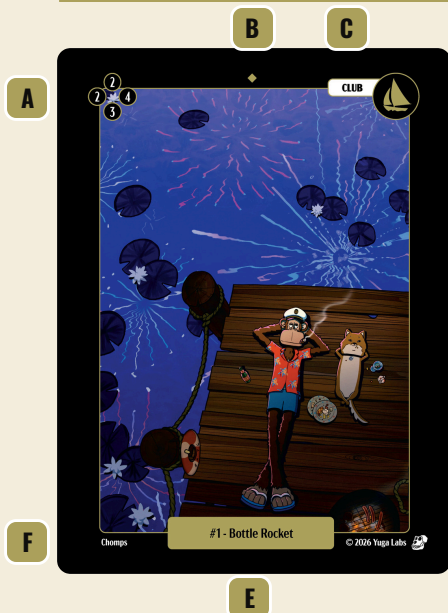
◆ INSIDE ◆

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THE GAME IN 30 SECONDS

- ◆ On your turn, play **one card**.
- ◆ **Level I** cards go face up into empty squares. Higher Levels go **on top** of squares you control, one Level at a time. Any card can go face down as a **rock** — but you can only have **one rock at a time**.
- ◆ When you play a card face up, it captures every enemy card next to it with a **lower touching number**.
- ◆ When all nine squares are filled, whoever holds the most wins.

♦ PARTS OF A CARD ♦



A EDGE NUMBERS

Four numbers, one for each side of the card, set out like a compass. Each number guards the side it points toward. **Higher is stronger.**

B LEVEL

One to five diamonds. The Level decides **how** the card can be played — see page 4.

C FAMILY

Club, Mutant, Cosmic or Arcana. Families only matter in *Advanced Mode*.

D TRIBE

The icon shows the Ape's tribe within its family. Just for collecting.

E NUMBER & NAME

Every card in Swamp Origins has its own number, from 1 to 120.

F ARTIST

The artist behind the card's illustration.

♦ READING THE COMPASS ♦



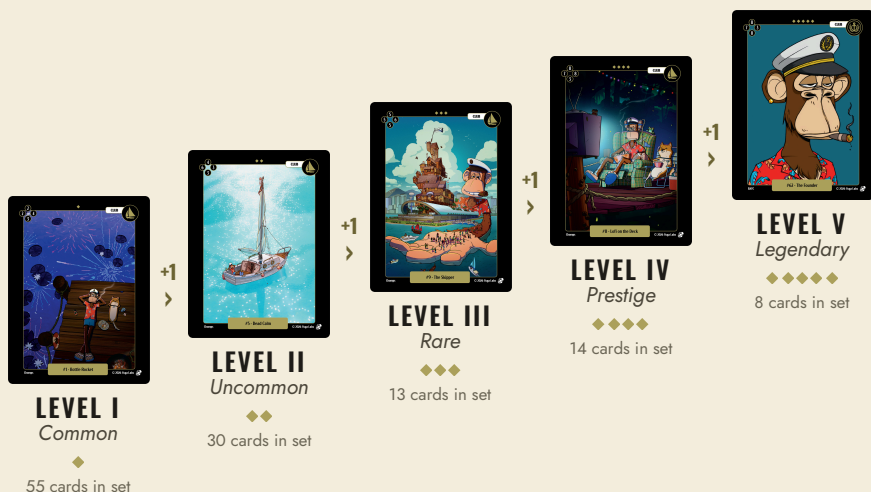
Bottle Rocket's top side is guarded by a **2**, its right side by a **4**, its bottom by a **3** and its left by a **2**.

WHAT MATTERS AT THE TABLE

Art, name, family and tribe make every Ape worth collecting — but in a standard game, only two things change how a card plays: its **four edge numbers** and its **Level**. Two cards with the same numbers and Level play exactly alike.

◆ THE FIVE LEVELS ◆

Every card belongs to one of five Levels, shown by the diamonds at the top. Higher Levels have bigger numbers — but they're harder to get onto the board.



CLIMBING THE LADDER

- ◆ Only **Level I** cards can be played face up into an **empty square**.
- ◆ Every other card is played face up **on top of a square you control**, exactly one **Level higher** than the card already there: II on I, III on II, IV on III, V on IV.
- ◆ No skipping rungs — a Level III can never go straight onto a Level I.
- ◆ Any card can also be played **face down** as a rock (page 7).

◆ FAMILIES & TRIBES ◆

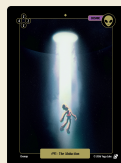
Each card also belongs to one of four **families**, and to a **tribe** within that family. In the standard game they're just for collecting — families only come into play in *Advanced Mode* (page 11).



CLUB



MUTANT



COSMIC



ARCANA

♦ BUILDING YOUR HAND ♦

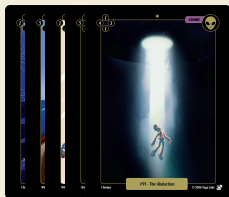
There's no starter deck in Mudwater. Every hand is built from cards you've pulled from packs — so the more you collect, the more choices you have.

♦ YOUR HAND ♦

- ♦ Before each game, secretly choose **14 cards** from your collection.
- ♦ **No duplicates:** your hand can't contain the same card twice. Your opponent may have the same cards as you.
- ♦ Keep your hand **hidden** from your opponent for the whole game.
- ♦ You'll play with 13 of them. One is set aside at random as the **ante** (page 6).

♦ A GOOD FIRST HAND ♦

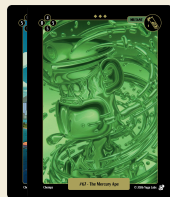
Just a suggestion for beginners. Once you know the game, build any hand you like.



×5 LEVEL I
Common ♦



×3 LEVEL II
Uncommon ♦♦



×2 LEVEL III
Rare ♦♦♦



×2 LEVEL IV
Prestige ♦♦♦♦



×1 LEVEL V
Legendary ♦♦♦♦♦



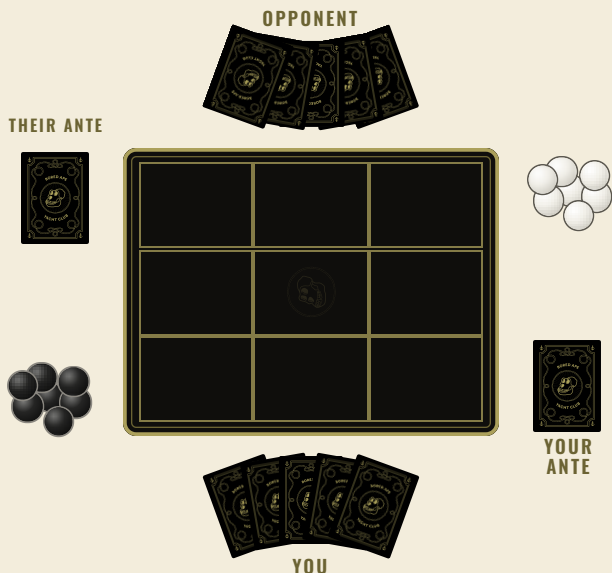
×1 ANY CARD
your choice

= 14 CARDS

♦ TIP ♦

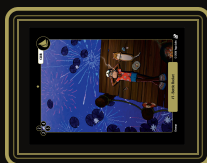
Any card in your hand could be drawn as the ante, so only bring cards you're willing to play for.

◆ SETTING UP ◆



- 1 **Lay out the playmat** between you. Sit on the long sides, each facing a MUDWATER logo.
- 2 **Choose colors.** One player takes the black color markers, the other takes white. (Any two colors will do.)
- 3 **Ante up.** Shuffle your 14 cards face down and let your opponent draw one at random. Set it face down beside the mat — nobody looks at it until the game ends. That's your **ante**.
- 4 **Pick up your other 13 cards.** This is your hand for the game.
- 5 **Decide who goes first** — flip a coin. In a rematch, whoever went second goes first.

◀ TOP



◀ TOP



CARDS PLAY SIDEWAYS

Every card lies sideways, and **every card faces the same way**, no matter who played it. Turn each card so its top points the same way as the top of the skull in the mat's center square. On a home-made grid, just agree which way the tops point.

◆ YOUR TURN ◆

Players take turns. On your turn, do **exactly one** of these four things — then it's your opponent's turn.



LEVEL I · FACE UP

1 PLACE

Play a **Level I** card **face up** into any empty square, and put one of your color markers on it.

Then check for **captures** (page 9).

Only Level I cards can be played face up into an empty square.



ANY LEVEL · FACE DOWN

2 ROCK

Play **any card** — of any Level — **face down** into an empty square, and put one of your color markers on it. A face-down card is called a **rock**. A rock:

- ◆ captures nothing when it's played,
- ◆ can **never** be captured,
- ◆ counts as **Level I** when you upgrade it — so a Level II card can go on top.

ONE ROCK AT A TIME

You can only have **one rock** on the board at a time. Once you upgrade on top of it, you're free to play another. Only you can upgrade your own rock.

Tip: a rock is safe until you upgrade it — and it can carry any card onto the board.

◆ ROCK, THEN CLIMB ◆



YOUR ROCK

counts as
Level I



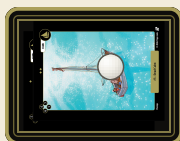
LEVEL II ON TOP

A Level II card can go straight onto your rock. Once it's covered, you can play a new rock.

◆ YOUR TURN CONTINUED ◆



+1
>



◆ LEVEL I → ◆◆ LEVEL II

3 UPGRADE

Play a card **exactly one Level higher** on top of a square **you control**. Move your color marker to the top.

The new card then **captures just like a fresh play** (page 9).

You can upgrade any square you control — including one you captured, and your own rock.



4 PASS

If you have **no legal move**, you must pass. You can't pass if you're able to play.

If **both players pass in a row**, the game ends.

Cards stay in your hand until you play them. You'll rarely play them all, and leftover cards don't count for anything.

WHERE CAN I PLAY? (YOU ARE BLACK)

EMPTY SQUARE



Place a Level I face up or **Rock** any card face down

YOUR SQUARE



Upgrade with a card exactly one Level higher

THEIR SQUARE



Never. Capture it instead (page 9)

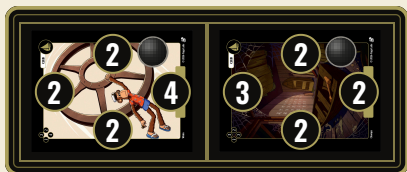
♦ CAPTURING ♦

Whenever you play a card **face up** — by placing it or upgrading — it looks for captures.

Look at each square right next to it: above, below, left and right (not diagonals). For each neighboring card your opponent controls, compare **the number on your card that points at it** with **the number on their card that points back**.

In these pictures the edge numbers are shown large. The **gold** pair are the two numbers that touch.

HIGHER WINS



Black plays The Deckhand. Its **4** beats The Boathouse's **3**, so Black swaps White's color marker for a black one.

TIES HOLD



Black plays The Deckhand above The Boathouse. Its **2** meets a **2**. Equal numbers — nothing changes.

♦ CAPTURE RULES ♦

- ♦ **Higher wins.** The captured card stays exactly where it is — only the color marker changes.
- ♦ **No chain reactions.** A card you capture doesn't go on to capture its own neighbors.
- ♦ **Rocks are safe.** A face-down card can never be captured.
- ♦ **Look once.** A card only looks for captures on the turn it's played. After that, it just defends.

BIG PLAYS

The center square touches four others — one well-timed card there can capture four squares at once.

♦ EXAMPLE OF PLAY ♦

Black goes first. Here are the opening four turns, seen from Black's seat. A gold outline marks the card just played, and the large gold numbers are the two edges being compared.



Turn 1 — Black places The Boathouse (Level I) in the bottom-middle square. No neighbors, so nothing to capture.



Turn 2 — White places Sea Dog in the center. Its 3 points down at The Boathouse's 2. White captures it.



Turn 3 — Black places The Deckhand bottom-left. Its 4 beats The Boathouse's 3 — Black takes it back.



Turn 4 — White upgrades Sea Dog with **Dead Calm (Level II)**. Its 6 points down at the same 2. White captures again.

♦ WINNING THE GAME ♦

The game ends the moment the **ninth square is filled** — or when **both players pass** in a row. You don't need to empty your hand; you usually won't.

- ♦ **Count your squares.** Each square with your color marker on it counts as one.
- ♦ **Most squares wins!** On a full board someone always holds at least five, so there are no ties.

CLAIM THE ANTE

Both players turn over their ante. The **winner takes the loser's ante card** — for keeps — and takes back their own.

♦ ADVANCED MODE ♦ OPTIONAL ♦

Ready for more? In Advanced Mode, **families break ties**. Both players must agree to it before the first turn.



- ♦ If the two touching numbers are **equal**, your card captures when its family **beats** theirs.
- ♦ Each family beats the next one around the circle: **Club** beats Mutant, **Mutant** beats Cosmic, **Cosmic** beats Arcana, **Arcana** beats Club.
- ♦ Families opposite each other — Club & Cosmic, Mutant & Arcana — are neutral: ties hold.
- ♦ Families only ever break ties. A lower number **never** beats a higher one, and rocks still can't be captured.

♦ QUICK REFERENCE ♦

PLAYERS

2

HAND

14 different cards, kept hidden. One is set aside at random as the ante, so you play 13.

LEVELS

I Common · II Uncommon · III Rare · IV Prestige · V Legendary.
One diamond per Level.

YOUR TURN

Do one: **Place** a Level I face up in an empty square · **Rock** any card face down in an empty square · **Upgrade** exactly one Level up on a square you control · **Pass** only if you can't do anything else.

ROCKS

You can only have one at a time. Captures nothing, can't be captured, counts as Level I for your upgrades.

CAPTURE

Higher touching number takes the square. Ties hold. No chain reactions.

GAME END

Ninth square filled, or both players pass in a row.

WINNING

Most squares wins and takes the loser's ante.

ADVANCED

Optional. Families break ties: Club > Mutant > Cosmic > Arcana > Club.



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