

Territories

Overview
Set-Up and Basic Gameplay
Expansion
Harvesting
Trade and Communication
End-Game
Tips and Strategies

Overview

Territories is a game of knowledge and information. The game is played on a square grid with parallel sides connected; keep going up and you'll reach the bottom. Each player starts with nine spaces arranged 3x3 and must expand outwards in order to get more points than anyone else. However, the players cannot see the board. They can only interact with the game through a central mediator and must keep track of the game themselves, keeping a record of their own movements and what can be discovered about other players.

Set-Up and Basic Gameplay

The central mediator creates a grid and randomly enough 3x3 blocks for each player's starting positions, each with a different color. Each player then chooses a color and the game begins.

Every day, each player gets five actions. These reset to five each night and cannot be stored up over this amount. If a player does not use their actions for the day, they are lost. Players must tell the mediator what actions they want to take, who will then carry them out on the game board if possible. The mediator will also deliver any messages available to the player.

Each of the following constitutes an action: expansion, harvesting, sending trade requests, accepting trade requests, sending messages, ending alliances.

Expansion

One action players can take is expanding their territory. This involves taking over spaces adjacent to their own controlled spaces. Any uncontrolled space adjacent to the player's spaces can be expanded into and expanding into each space costs one action. If the space cannot be expanded into because it is already controlled by a player, the action is still spent, but nothing is gained except knowledge. Each space is worth one point.

Harvesting

Harvesting utilizes controlled land in order to gain resources. Harvesting a space costs one action. From each space, one unit of resources can be extracted, but only once. If a space has been harvested, no more resources can be extracted from it, even if it is traded to another player. It is therefore important for players to keep track of their harvested spaces. Each resource extracted by the player is worth one point, but any resources extracted by other players are worth two points.

Trade and Communication

Players will quickly learn that the most important part of Territories is learning to interact with the other players around them. Messages and trade requests can be sent to any player who owns adjacent land to the player. Messages can be as long as needed and each cost one action to send. Players will not be notified when their message is received, but will be told it cannot be delivered if they do not own land adjacent to the player they are trying to send it to.

Trade requests cost one action to send and one action to accept, but it does not cost an action to reject a trade request. Players will only be notified if a trade request they have sent has been accepted, not if it has been rejected. Trade requests are available to be accepted until the next allocation of actions after a player receives it.

Trades can involve spaces, both harvested and unharvested, and resources. Players can specify whether they want to receive a specific type of space or resource in trade, but if they don't, it is up to the discretion of the player sending it. For example, if someone asks for three unharvested spaces and five units of resource, the player accepting the trade request has to give them unharvested spaces, but can trade away any resource they want, be it harvested by them or someone else.

Alliances can be created if all players involved are willing. An alliance means two or more players want to combine their points total to potentially share a victory. This does not cost an action, players just have to tell the mediator it's what they want. However, any player in the alliance can spend an action to destroy the alliance and take their own points for themselves.

End-Game

The game ends once every space belongs to a player. Once this happens, the points are added up and a winner is declared. The players are now allowed to see the board.

When totalling points, each controlled space is worth one point, each resource belonging to the player who harvested it is worth one point and each resource belonging to a player who didn't harvest it is worth two points.

Tips and Strategies

Territories is designed to welcome many different play-styles, but some probably end up being more successful than others. Here are some helpful ideas to improve your game.

- Messages can be sent even if you don't know who's there. Try sending out a “ping” message and see if anyone knows about you.
- Other players could be trading away their spaces at any moment. Don't assume the map you're keeping of their movements is up-to-date.
- Don't be afraid to bluff. You can't send a trade request offering things you don't have, but you could always send a message with some boastful claims.
- Don't believe a player's boastful claims? Have them send you a trade request to prove it.
- Information is power. Sometimes you'll have to buy a little knowledge if you're lacking a variety of neighbors.
- The game ends when every space is captured, so keep an empty one free from other players. That way, you control when the game ends. Maybe.
- Early in the game, it's best not to worry too much about harvesting. Gain control of territory or scout out in different directions to see what's out there.
- Blocking supply lanes is always handy. You might even be able to trap a player early – how much are they willing to pay to escape your clutches?
- Games can get long, so plan a few days or even weeks ahead. Don't get too excited, though. Who knows what's out there?
- Messages cost precious actions, but emails don't.
- Even with an alliance, there's no sure way to know another player's standing. Ask around and see what others think of this player you're thinking of getting involved with.
- Have fun. Even though the game seems involved, the actual daily implementation of actions often just takes a few minutes. Relax and take your time with it; there's no rush.