

ESCAPE NOW!

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ESCAPE NOW!

*Be resourceful and rely on your friends
to solve the puzzles before the time ends!*

COMPONENTS

6 pawns - red, green, blue, yellow, orange & purple

60 action cards - 11 cards of each of the 5 traits + 5 'lucky shots'

logical - perceptive - dexterous - tenacious - talkative - lucky shot



10 puzzle cards - combinations of the traits



PURPOSE OF THE GAME

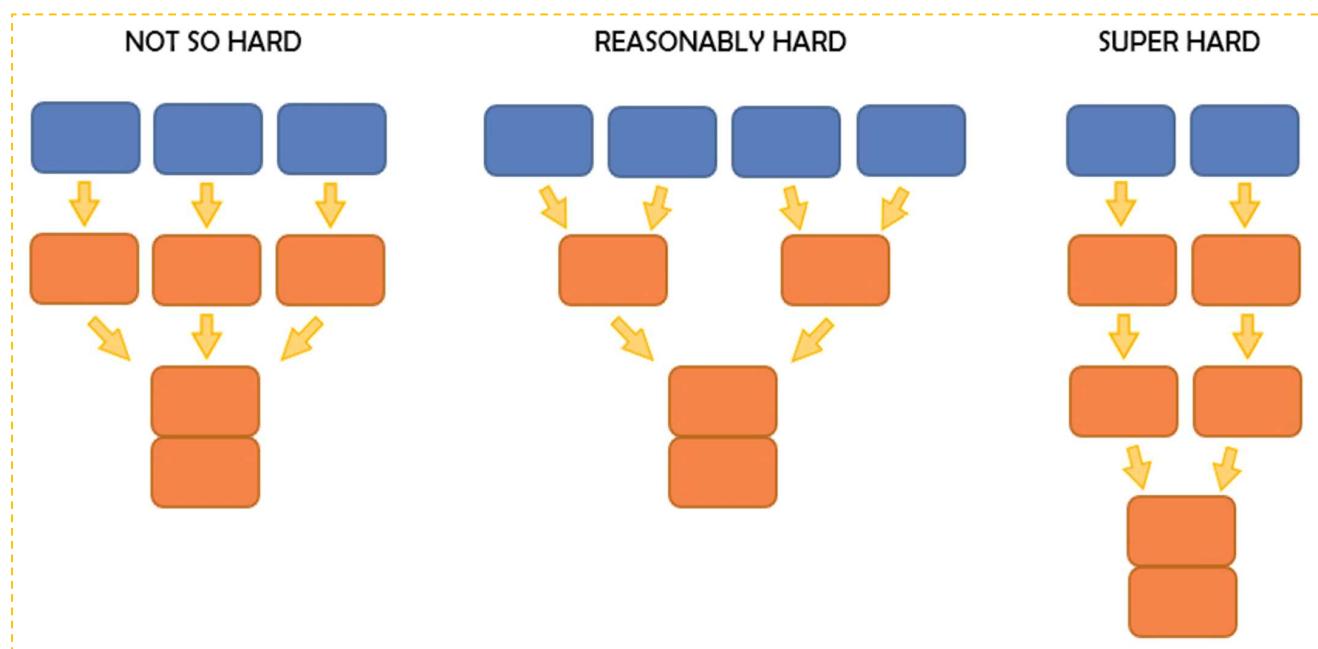
ESCAPE NOW! is a cooperative game where players try to escape a randomly laid out escape room within 60 minutes. The 60 action cards represent minutes, meaning that players must complete the puzzles from the escape room before the 60th card is played.

Unlike other cooperative games, players are not allowed to communicate with each other. If they wish to do so, that'll cost the team 1 minute, or otherwise said, one action card. If a team succeeds in escaping the room, the amount of remaining action cards state how many minutes were left to go. In that way, teams can challenge each other in having time records.

SET UP

The puzzle cards are laid out as shown below. According to the difficulty level, another set up can be chosen. The blue cards are puzzle cards put **face up** and the orange cards are puzzle cards put **face down**. The 2 remaining puzzle cards are put aside, without anyone seeing them.

Only the puzzles that are put face up are ‘visible’ and can be completed. Only after completion of a preceding puzzle, ‘invisible’ face down puzzle cards can be turned face up.



The arrows show which invisible puzzle card can be turned face up after completion of a previous puzzle. If more arrows point out to one invisible puzzle, this means that all previous puzzles need to be solved before it becomes visible. As shown, the last puzzle is each time made up from 2 puzzle cards! This double puzzle is a bit harder to solve (see also page 6).

HOW TO SOLVE A PUZZLE?

There are 5 different action cards, which stand for behavioral traits that are needed to solve puzzles: LOGICAL, DEXTEROUS, PERCEPTIVE, TALKATIVE and TENACIOUS. On each puzzle card a combination of these 5 traits are marked. In order to solve a puzzle, 5 action cards need to be placed next to the puzzle card showing the same traits as on the puzzle card. The puzzle is not solved as long as both traits haven't been placed next to the puzzle card.

Example: Anna wants to solve this puzzle. In previous turns 4 yellow DEXTEROUS action cards have been placed there. As Anna holds another DEXTEROUS in her hand, she cannot fulfill the puzzle as at least both traits are needed. The action card TENACIOUS ought to be played.



In the set of action cards there's a 6th action card: LUCKY SHOT. This card acts as a wild card. It can be used in 2 ways: it can be used as a copy of any trait action card or it can be used to solve a puzzle in less than 5 cards!

Example: Leon and Anna want to solve this puzzle together and only one green LOGICAL action card has been played (1). They both don't hold a green LOGICAL or blue PERCEPTIVE anymore, but they both have a LUCKY SHOT!

To be able to solve the puzzle in less than 5 action cards with a LUCKY SHOT, both trait cards need to be already present.

So, Leon, who's first at turn, plays his LUCKY SHOT and uses it as a blue PERCEPTIVE action card (2). Now that it's Anna's turn, she plays her LUCKY SHOT as well and uses it for solving the puzzle immediately (3)



Once a puzzle is solved, tap the puzzle card to show it's been solved and depending on the set up (and yellow arrows) shown in the overview on page 3, the next puzzle can be made visible.

Note: For more advanced players, the used action cards can be put face down on the discard pile. They'll have to remember what cards were used!

The last puzzle, which consists of 2 puzzle cards, needs 8 action cards to get solved. So, the end puzzle requires 3 or 4 different traits instead of 2. In the best-case scenario, if a lucky shot is being used, an end puzzle can be solved with 4 action cards only. ***Tip:** keep a LUCKY SHOT in your hand till the end of the game.*

Example: The last puzzle looks like this. Note that the 2 cards make up a single puzzle. To be able to complete this puzzle with 4 action cards only, the participants must first play a green LOGICAL, a purple TENACIOUS and also only one red TALKATIVE action card, before a LUCKY SHOT is played to finish it off.



START OF THE GAME

All players pick a color and take their colored pawn. These pawns mark which puzzle they're working on.

All players are dealt 4 cards, which they keep secret for the whole duration of the game. After having looked at their cards and depending on those cards, any player may choose to be the starting player. He then places his pawn on a puzzle card of his choice and then the following players do the same by order of the clock.

***Tip:** the player, who chooses as first a puzzle, is most often someone who can solve the puzzle without the help of someone else.*

The remaining action cards are put face down in the middle of the table. This will be the draw pile. During the course of the game action cards will be discarded face down, so there will also be a discard pile. To easily distinguish between these two piles, place the discarded action cards in the game box.

TAKING TURNS

The player that placed his pawn as first, may now play his first turn.

During a player's turn, he/she picks one of the 4 following actions. Only one action can be chosen per turn. Then turns are taken clockwise.

1 Solve the puzzle

Choose one of your cards and place it face up next to the puzzle card. This is explained in the section: 'How to solve a puzzle?' on pages 4-5.

2 Move to another puzzle

Each time you need to move to another visible puzzle, **discard any card from your hand** to the discard pile (put it face down!). The puzzle you want to move to doesn't need to be adjacent to the one you're already on. You'd probably do this action only after the puzzle has been solved, but when you choose to do this before it's been solved, all action cards that were already placed next to the puzzle are removed from the game onto the discard pile! This doesn't occur if there's another player on the same puzzle card.

Example: Kelly and Jack are on this puzzle of which they've solved 3/5. It's Kelly's (red) turn and she doesn't hold any corresponding action cards anymore. She chooses to move to another puzzle and discards an action card from her hand. The previously placed action cards are NOT removed from the game as Jack is still on the puzzle!



3 Replenish cards

Fill up your hand up to 5 action cards from the draw pile and then discard 1 card from your hand to the discard pile. The best timing to replenish your hand is when you hold no cards anymore.

By the end of the game you might choose to draw fewer cards, because you want your fellow players to be able to draw some cards before the draw pile runs down.

Example: Jack, Anna, Kelly and Leon are heading towards the last puzzle. In the draw pile are still 8 action cards left. Jack's only possibility is to replenish his hand, as he only holds one useless card. Instead of drawing 4 cards, he calculates that by drawing only 2 cards (and then discarding one) he will leave enough cards in the draw pile for his fellow players to have the ability to draw some cards before the draw pile runs down.

4 Ask a question

If you want to ask a question, remove the top card from the draw pile to the discard pile (face down!). As the core idea of game is about not talking about which cards you hold in your hand, this action is restricted to one question. The answer to the question should be a one-word-answer like: "Yes", "No", "Here" (while pointing at a puzzle), "Me" or the name of a color. It's not accepted to have some sort of discussion, although all players (except you) may reply to the question. Here are some examples of commonly asked eligible questions:

- "Who holds a LUCKY SHOT?"
- "Should I move to another puzzle?"
- "Of which color do you hold the most cards?"
- "To which puzzle should I go first?"

Remark: by exception, there's one question that can be asked throughout the game without having to discard the top card from the draw pile: "How many cards do you hold in your hand?".

TO ESCAPE OR NOT TO ESCAPE?

The game is won when the team succeeded in solving the last big (two cards) puzzle before the draw pile with 60 action cards is depleted. The total amount of remaining cards in all players' hands plus the amount of action cards left in the draw pile equals the total amount of minutes left!

If the player at turn holds no cards and cannot take cards from the draw pile anymore, the time has run out, even if the other players still hold cards!

TIPS FROM THE MASTER

▲ Count cards

For each trait there are 11 action cards and on the 10 puzzle cards each trait is shown 4 times! Make the calculations for yourself... ;-).

The played action cards next to the puzzle cards stay on the table when a puzzle is solved to make the counting easier.

More experienced gamers, although, can choose to put those cards face down on the discard pile once the puzzle is solved (see page 5).

▲ Don't replenish too often

To increase efficiency, you'd probably move to another puzzle or ask a question instead.

▲ Look out for the perfect timing

It's not always useful to just solve a puzzle right away. You'd want to keep a specific card depending on how fast other puzzles get solved.

▲ Consider the turn order

This is one for the pros. Some dilemmas can be solved by looking at the turn order to speed up the time with 1 or 2 minutes...

RULES FOR 2 PLAYERS

In a 2 player game the same rules apply with the difference that a 3rd fictional player plays along, so both players play alternately with a 3rd pawn and a 3rd set of 4 starting cards.

This 3rd set of starting cards is placed in the middle between the players and is slid in the direction of the other player after the active player has performed an **action** to make it clearer who plays with the 3rd pawn.

The term **action** here means every action that involves peeking at the 3rd set of cards: solving a puzzle, moving, replenishing, asking a question, but also answering a question and choosing the starting puzzle.

TOO EASY FOR YOU? TRY THIS!

Like in real life escape rooms, escaping goes smoother with fewer people... If the game has become too easy for you, certainly when playing in smaller teams, remove LUCKY SHOT cards from the playing deck and keep:

- 4 LUCKY SHOTS with 4 players** (so you have now a deck of only 59 cards)
- 3 LUCKY SHOTS with 3 or 2 players** (to play with 58 cards instead of 60)

And if you've become really good at ESCAPE NOW! you can try escaping by yourself in **SOLO MODE** by keeping only **2 LUCKY SHOT cards** in your deck!

CREDITS

Many thanks to the following people who made this game come alive:

- Boris Debeuf & Nore De Grez for planting the seed of the game idea.
- All the play testers for their patience and positive criticism.
- Nele De Gendt for her relentless support and eagerness.
- Bartel Bruneel for his graphic design skills: he makes it look so easy!

**Be resourceful and rely on your friends
to solve the puzzles before the time ends!**

In Escape Now! every action counts! You only have 60 actions to escape. No talking is allowed, unless you spend a card to do that!



The possible actions are:

1 Solve a puzzle

Place a corresponding action card next to a puzzle.

2 Move to another puzzle

Choose and discard an action card from your hand.

3 Replenish cards

Fill up your hand to 5 cards and then discard a card.

4 Ask a question

Discard the top card from the draw pile and ask a question.

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