

Tips that Help You Triumph in “Age of Enlightenment”

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These tips build on the “Tips for Your First Encounters with 'The Rivals for Catan’” and the “Tips for Your Survival in ‘Age of Darkness.’” Most of the general tips for the Theme Games and “The Duel of the Princes” presented there also apply when playing with the new sets. Therefore, here we will only address the specifics of these new sets. The tips for “The Rivals for Catan” can be found here:

<http://www.catan.com/game/rivals-catan#tips-and-variants>

The Era of Explorers

In this set, many victory points are obtained via the sea cards. Games with “The Era of Explorers” are usually a race to make use of the sea cards' advantages and obtain the victory points these cards offer.

- At the beginning of the game, the most important thing is to get some sail points, so that you can start revealing sea cards early on. Initially, the most useful card is the *Shipyards*: besides 1 sail point and 1 cannon point, it also offers a trade function that can be used during the entire game. The card can be found in the faceup expansion card stack; it has no prerequisites and can be built directly at the beginning of the game.
- When choosing your starting cards, remember that you need lumber, brick, and wool to build the *Shipyards*. A card that costs only ore and grain – such as *Austin* or *Harald* – can be a useful addition to the *Shipyards*, to provide you with resources when the event “Celebration” is rolled.
- At the beginning of the game, further sail points can be obtained via the *Sailmakers' Shop*. There are 3 of these cards in total, and you should build at least of 1 them. If you have the *Shipyards* and the *Sailmakers' Shop*, you can already reach 4 sea cards.
- To avoid sailing blindly into the unknown, it is advisable to use the *Cartographer*. After you have revealed the first two sea cards, you should use him to view the two most distant sea cards; afterwards, you decide which of these sea cards you want to move closer to your *Explorer Harbor* so that you can reach them quickly. That way, you exchange an attractive but distant card for an unattractive one – e.g., an already revealed *Shipwreck* – that is closer to you.
- *Lars the Naval Hero* can be very useful for your first fight against a pirate. If you receive this card when replenishing your hand, you should hold on to it, even for several rounds: at some point, you'll definitely encounter a pirate who without *Lars's* help would be too strong for you.
- In this Theme Game, you should expand your principality only after all building sites in your two starting settlements are occupied. Expanding your principality by one settlement is usually sufficient, because you obtain victory points faster by means of sea cards than by means of expanding your principality.
- Be sure to build your first city adjacent to the *Explorer Harbor*: it is the only place where you later can build the *Explorer Metropolis*, which will earn you 2 victory points in one sweep.
- If you carry out a mission to the *Island of the Forgotten Tribe*, in half of the cases the result will be that you have to roll the event die. Before you go on this mission, check which player would obtain more benefits when an event is rolled: usually, the player who benefits from an event has the trade advantage, the most skill points, and possibly also a *Toll Bridge*. If your opponent would benefit from more events than you, you'd rather sail to some other place.
- Remember that only one of the two players can reach level 3 of each island or pirate – that is, the level featuring the victory point. Therefore, you should monitor your opponent's progress regarding these cards.

The Era of Sages

This set's tactical emphasis is on the possibility to affect the event die roll result and remove event cards or delay their arrival. To be able to use this possibility wisely, you should have gained some previous experience with other Theme Sets in which the players are usually at the mercy of the events, their only option being to prepare for the consequences of the events.

- If you have built all your starting cards – which may well be the “usual suspects” you have become familiar with in the other Theme Games – you should immediately draw cards from the *sages* stacks or search these stacks for *sages* and/or *groves*. Particularly the *Grove of Freedom* can help you obtain the other *sages* and *groves* faster.

- When you expand your principality, you should – if possible – use a *Scout* to choose regions with identical production numbers and then place *sages* adjacent to those regions. That way, it is easier to get more owls via the *Brigitta* action card.
- As long as you haven't built a *Granary*, you should always retain 1 grain if possible - otherwise, you'll lose 2 resources if the *Famine* event card is played.
- If your opponent benefits from the events “Celebration” and “Trade,” you should be on the lookout for the *Grove of Vigilance*. With this card, you can stop those events from occurring. If, however, you are the one who benefits from the aforementioned events, then the *Grove of Justice* is your most useful means to ensure that they actually happen.
- Only the *Academy of Sages* allows you to convert resources directly into owls. To become less dependent on the production die, you should build at least one of these cards.
- This set contains only one action attack card: *Wise Protection*. In most cases, playing this card in the Theme Game won't be of any use. Therefore, you'd better use the card to save 2 owls when rotating the *Manifesto of Humane Conduct* to the next higher level.

The Era of Prosperity

The “contentment points” featured in this set not only can protect you from harmful events - they also provide you with more possibilities for actions that require some “lateral thinking.” Before your first game, screen all cards of the Theme Set for the benefits you derive from them by paying contentment points.

- Since this set offers the possibility to improve the production of fields and pastures, at the beginning of the game you should place these two regions on one side of your principality.
- Particularly at the beginning of the game, the *Insurrection* event card can set you back considerably by making you lose one of your starting buildings. Therefore, it is advisable to start with units instead of buildings.
- As early as possible, search the theme stacks for a *Village School* or the *Feeding the Poor* action card; however, instead of sacrificing grain or lumber for this purpose, you should rather pay gold or ore. This allows you to quickly obtain contentment points, given that the *Public Feeling* card you collect the contentment points on is placed at the very beginning of the game.
- The *Traveling Theater* can also help you obtain stars. However, if you have the *Traveling Theater*, you should do without the *Mercenaries* and the *Small Market Town*, so as not to restrict the freedom of movement of the artists.
- At the end of your turn, you should always hold 1 of your contentment points in reserve, to be able to protect yourself from the *Insurrection* event card.
- If you have a *Thieves' Hideout* roaming around in your opponent's principality, you can occasionally take a resource from your opponent, which you then can use for a building project.
- After you have built your first city, you should build the *Prince* or the *Princess* to collect more stars by means of *Artworks*. Afterwards, you may want to build a *Builders' Hut*.
- The *Builders' Hut* not only earns you more contentment points during the game, it also helps you to build the rather expensive *Aqueduct* for only 5 resources instead of 6. The *Aqueduct* increases the production of adjacent fields regions and pasture regions; therefore, in one of your cities you should save a suitable building site for the *Aqueduct*.
- Never forget to actually use your stars! If you end your turn with 3 stars on your *Public Feeling*, you can neither receive a star via your *Village School* when the event “Trade” occurs nor receive a star via your *Builders' Hut* when the event “Celebration” occurs. Although you can't use the stars directly for building, you can pay 2 stars for a resource you need for a building project.

Your First “The Duel of the Princes” Game in “Age of Enlightenment”

The possibility to use 3 out of 9 sets makes “The Duel of the Princes” more varied and dynamic than when using only the 3 sets of the base game and the 3 sets of “Age of Darkness.” Although the rules provide an element of randomness regarding the selection of the sets, you and your opponent are certainly free to determine all three sets by mutual agreement: if there is a set that none of you likes, nobody will force you to use it, unless you are participating in an official tournament or playing online, where the rules are preprogrammed.

- For your first "Duel" games, before the game starts you should definitely review the cards used - otherwise, since only part of the cards from each set is used in the "Duel," your experience with the Theme Game might induce you to wait for a certain card to appear that actually isn't part of the mix. An overview of all "Duel" cards can be found here: <http://www.catan.com/game/rivals-catan-age-enlightenment#downloads>
- If you play with three thematically very different sets, it is often beneficial to focus on only one of them, so that you can fully use its possibilities. However, the strong sea cards in a "Duel" that includes "The Era of Explorers" are an exception. The sea cards can be very dominant in the "Duel," because victory points can usually be generated faster by means of sea cards than by means of expansions of principality and cities. Even if you want to focus mostly on another set, you should secure at least 2 sail points in order to be able to use 4 of the 6 sea cards included in the "Duel."
- In the "Duel," the cards that most strongly counteract the cards from "The Era of Explorers" are the cards from "The Era of Barbarians." If you mainly use sea cards, while your opponent focuses on the barbarians, it may be worthwhile for you to "stash" the only *Triumph Card* used in the "Duel" in your hand: that way, you can withhold the card from your opponent. Conversely, if you are the player focusing on the barbarians, you should secure this card for yourself early on.
- In the "Duel," the *Insurrection* event card can be a permanent threat for the player who is unable to collect contentment points for defense - particularly if the event card stack contains both *Insurrections*, due to the random selection of event cards. In a "Duel" that includes "The Era of Prosperity," each player starts with one *Public Feeling* card, but unlike the Theme Games the "Duel" offers fewer possibilities to obtain stars. If "The Era of Turmoil" set is also included in the "Duel," the *Riots* also threaten the units featuring trade points or strength points. If your opponent has stars on the *Public Feeling*, you can best protect your units if the "Duel" includes "The Era of Sages" and you can manipulate the event card stack via the functions of this set. If the "Duel" does not include "The Era of Sages," you should try to focus more on the expansion of your principality and on units instead of focusing on buildings; in this case, buildings that earn you victory points should be built as late as possible. Otherwise, your only - and rather costly - possibility is to build buildings that are cheap but not quite necessary, so you can remove them instead of the expensive buildings when an *Insurrection* occurs.

Finally, here are four special tips meant to prevent you from robbing yourself of the chance to place region expansions when playing the "Duel" with "The Era of Explorers," because in this case the region expansions of other sets and the region expansions that can only be built adjacent to the *Explorer Harbor* compete with each other for building sites.

- If the "Duel" includes "The Era of Explorers" and "The Era of Merchant Princes," remember that the "Duel" cards of the "Merchant Princes" includes the useful *Paper Merchant's Residence*, to be placed adjacent to a forest region. You thus shouldn't place a forest region adjacent to the *Explorer Harbor*, because otherwise, you may obstruct the building site for the *Residence* by building the *Shipyards* or the *Landing Stage*.
- If the "Duel" includes "The Era of Explorers" and "The Era of Sages," you should pay special attention to the position of the regions at the beginning of the game. Since the only sages included are *Frederich*, *Peter*, *Piet*, and 1 *Principal Sage Woman*, and since the *Landing Stage* and/or the *Shipyards* should be placed adjacent to the *Explorer Harbor*, don't place mountains, hills or forest on the side where the *Explorer Harbor* is located.
- If the "Duel" includes "The Era of Explorers" and "The Era of Intrigue," you shouldn't place a fields region adjacent to the *Explorer Harbor*, because the *Abbey Brewery* is placed adjacent to fields.
- In a "Duel" including "The Era of Explorers" and "The Era of Barbarians," you should save a place for the *Border Fortress*.

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