Mini Express   Quick Start Rules

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Component List

- 1 x 60*42 cm Map Board
- 1 x 42*21 cm Tracking Board
- 100 x Track Cubes *(25 each in 4 company colors)*
- 32 x Demand Tiles *(Each will have 2 different colors on it)*
- 36 x Share Tiles *(9 each in 4 company colors)*
- 1 x Golden Spike Tile *(US Map Specific Rule modular rule)*
- 20 x Player Markers *(5 each in 4 player colors) (Recommend discs for ease of stacking)*
- 1 x Draw Bag *(Only used during setup)*

Note on colors: Player colors and company colors are different. Players are not companies but own shares in different companies. The companies in Mini Express have Tracks, Shares, and Demands in their own company color. Orange, Brown, Gray, and White are printed on the map as starting company locations.

4-Player Game Setup

1. Place 6 Shares of each color in the "Shares" space of each color. Take 2 extra Shares of each color and group them into 4 unique sets of 2 different colors next to the board, they will be given out in step 6. (There are 6 possible combinations, use them all for 5 player game. Everything else is the same for 5 player game.)
2. Place 1 cube of each color on their starting locations on the board: Orange—Erie, Brown—Baltimore, Gray—Wilmington, White—Tallahassee. Place 1 cube of each color on the "0" space of the Track Length Chart.
3. Place 4 cubes of each color in the "Tracks" space of each color. Place remaining cubes (19 each) next to the board as the general supply.
4. Randomly place one Demand Tile face up on each Gold, Black, Brown city hex. Don't place demand tiles on the starting company locations.
5. The most recent player to ride a train will be the starting player and will take the starting player token. Order of play will be clockwise.
6. Beginning from the starting player, each player chooses a set of 2 share tiles of different colors and place them in front of themselves. Shares are OPEN Information in this game.
7. Each player puts 4 markers of their own color on the 4 company colors "1" space of the Influence Track. The extra player marker is only used for scoring at the end of the game; keep it in front of each player as a reminder of player color.
8. You can now start playing!

Game End

The Game ends when one of the following conditions is met:

- **When there are 2 empty stacks of company share tiles**
- **When 2 companies have no tracks in both general supply and "Tracks" area**

Then, continue playing until each player has an equal number of turns.
After that, the game is over and final scoring begins.

Sequence of Play

The game is played over several turns until the game ends. On your turn, you must take one of the following actions:

1. **Take a Share**
   Choose and take one of the available share tiles.
2. **Build Track**
   Build and place track cubes for **ANY** one company.
3. **Build Track on West Coast (US Map Specific Rule)** *(Not recommend for first game)*
   After any company track reaches or passes the dotted blue line, this action becomes available.

Players CANNOT pass in this game.
After your action, check if the game end condition is triggered, then the player to your left takes a turn.

Take a Share

Share tiles are the ONLY source of points in this game. Each tile will provide points according to the Track Length Chart at the end of the game, but will also depend on <u>how high is your influence in each color</u>!

1. Choose a company that still has available share tiles on the board.
2. Check if there are any cubes in the "Tracks" space of this company.
   For each remaining cube, <u>**you must**</u> decrease your influence in this company by one space per cube.
   Note: You **cannot** take a share if it will make you go **below 0 influence** on the Influence Track.
3. Add 3 cubes to the "Tracks" space of this company. There is a **<u>limit of 5 cubes</u>** in the "Tracks" space.
   If there are not enough cubes in the general supply, refill as much as you can.

Note: There is NO money in this game. We just assume you are rich enough to invest in any company you like.

Build Track

You may build track for any of the four companies. Each time you choose this action you must connect to a single city. There are no landscape costs in Mini Express game; you may place cubes on any hex adjacent to a hex containing cubes of the same color. But when placing on hexes occupied by other companies, the first comers will receive a track from the supply.

1. Choose one company that has enough available cubes in its "Tracks" space.
2. Choose a nearby city following these rules:
   a. **Has space for expansion:** Each city has a limit of how many **different** companies may enter: Gold — 3 times; Black — 2 times; Brown — 1 time. *(Recommend first time players to disregard color coded limit, and let all cities be entered 2 times.)*
   b. **Close enough:** You can build a connection **to** this city by using the currently available cubes in this company's "Tracks" space. You will need 1 cube per hex, including the target city.
   c. **Different Color:** You cannot build into a city that already has a cube of the same color.
3. Place 1 cube per hex on the <u>shortest route</u> into the chosen city.
   a. You can only connect to **ONE new city**; you can't pass through other cities along the way.
   b. You don't have to start from a city. Branching routes are allowed in this game.
   c. If there are multiple routes of the shortest distance, you may freely choose any to build upon.

d. When placing into an occupied hex, add 1 cube to the "Tracks" area of the company(s) that arrived first from the general supply. This **includes occupied cities**. *(Skip this step for 2P games.)*
e. You **cannot take the long way around** to use extra cubes.
Note: The shortest route to the chosen city will sometimes not be from another city, it could be by creating a new branch route from the network of the chosen company.

4. Remove the demand tile if the city has reached its limit for placing cubes. Removed tiles are placed back into the box. *(You can keep the tile on the board for pictures, removing them makes it easier to see which cities are available for building)*

5. Increase value of the company that you just built tracks for.
a. Count the number of new cubes placed on **NON-CITY Hexes** in the previous step.
b. Advance the company's marker a number of spaces equal to this number on the Track Length chart. This will be zero if you are building into an adjacent city.
Note: This chart shows the current number of track cubes each company have on the board (excluding cities), so it should be updated accordingly if you find errors during gameplay.

6. Increase your influence depending on the colors indicated by the Demand Tile of the city you entered.
a. **2 different colors:** Increase your influence by 1 in these 2 colors.
b. **2 of the same color:** Increase your influence by 2 in this color.
c. **1 color + 1 Purple:** First increase your influence by 1 in the indicated color, then increase your influence by 1 in a **different color** of your choice.

Final Scoring

1. **Rank Influence:** In case of a 1st place tie, then there are no 2nd place players. If there is only one player in 1st place, then there can be a multiple tie for 2nd place players.

2. **Value of Shares:** Each share tile will provide points to its owner; however, the value of each share is different for each player. Share value is determined by each player's **influence ranking** in that company and the length of track that company has on the board (excluding cities).

Influence Ranking	Reputation Value (VP)
1st	First column
2nd	Second column
3rd ～5th	Third column
0 Influence or less	Zero VP

However, if you have **0 influence or less** in a company, then **each share will be worth 0 VP**.
Golden Spike Bonus: The colors on the Golden Spike Tile advance 2 extra spaces on the track chart.

3. Multiply your reputation value (VP) by the number of share tiles you have in that company. Add your total VP across the four companies. The player with the most VP wins the game. In case of a tie, the player with fewer share tiles wins. If still tied, the player closer to the start player in turn order wins.

3-Player Game Setup

Change these steps during setup:

1. Place **6 shares** of each color in the "Shares" space of each color. Then place one of each is put aside for starting shares.
6. Beginning from the starting player, each player takes **1 share tile** of their choice and place in front of themselves.

The rest of the rules are unchanged.

Gameplay Examples

Build Example 1 (Simple Build)

It is Claire's (Purple) turn. She decides to Build Tracks for the Orange company. She cannot build to Fort Smith since the limit is 2 but Brown & Gray is already there. Tulsa and Lincoln is empty, so the orange company may build there.

If Orange extends into Tulsa, the shortest route will need 3 track tokens and branches from the middle of the connection between Chicago & Louisville. There are no other legal routes of the same length.
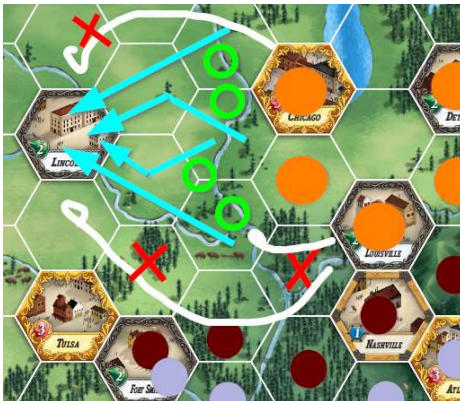
If Orange extends into Lincoln, the shortest route need 3 track tokens and there exists multiple routes of equal length. They are all legal routes, and the active player could freely choose where to build, regardless of tracks belonging to other companies along the way.

Claire decides to extend the Orange company into Tulsa. There are 4 track tokens in the Orange company's Asset Area, she takes 3 and places them along the shortest route (only route) into Tulsa. The demand tile is Gray + Orange.

Claire gains 1 influence each in Gray & Orange, and moves her purple markers from 1 to 2. For this build action, the total track length of the Orange network increases by 2 (count only the hexes between cities), so move the Orange Track marker forward two spaces from 3 to 5.

Claire's turn ends, and the next clockwise player Leon takes a turn.

Build Example 2 (Occupied Hexes)

It is Leon's (Blue) turn. He decides to Build Tracks for the Gray company, and evaluates his options:

For Louisville, the shortest route to the existing Gray network is 2 tracks to Atlanta.

For Detroit, the shortest route to the existing Gray network is 3 tracks to Atlanta, or 3 tracks to a branching point between Atlanta & Wilmington. Both are legal and he is free to choose either route. Leon decides to take the Eastern route to Detroit.

He takes 3 tracks form the Gray Company's Asset Area, and builds along the chosen path. Since he passes through 1 hex occupied by Brown & 1 hex occupied by Orange (Detroit), add 1 track each to Brown & Orange's Asset Area.

The demand tile in Detroit is Brown + Orange, so he gets 1 influence each in those 2 companies. The track length of Gray increases by 2. Leon's turn ends, and the next clockwise player Jill takes a turn.

Take Share

It is Ada's (Red) turn. She decides to Take a Share from the Gray company.

Since there is still 1 track token in the Gray company's Asset Area, she cannot take a share tile for free, and must deduct 1 influence she has in the Gray company.

Ada has 3 influence in the Gray company, so she reduces her influence by 1 and moves her red marker to 2.

Ada takes one Gray share tile and places it in front of herself. Then she takes 3 Gray train tokens from the general supply, and places them to the Gray company's Asset Area. Since there are still shares & trains for all 4 companies, the end game condition is not satisfied, and the game continues clockwise to the next player Brad.

Final Scoring Example

It is now the end of the game. First we will look at the influence rankings for Claire the purple color player.

Claire is tied for 1st in the White Company, 2nd in the Orange Company, 3rd in Gray, 4th in Brown.

Track length or the companies are 9 for White, 7 for Orange, 5 for Gray, 12 for Brown. Thus for Jill, each share tile of White is worth 8 VP, Orange is 5 VP, Gray is 2 VP, Brown is 4 VP.

Claire's total score is 8 + 8 + 4 + 2 + 5 = 27 VP
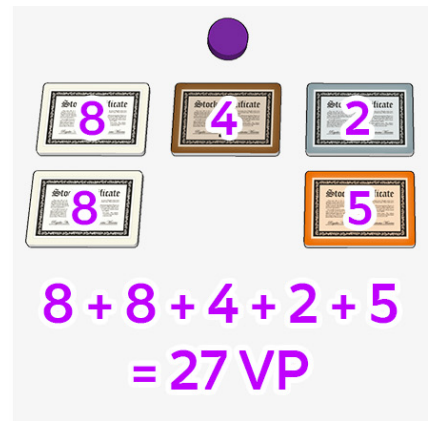
2-Player Game Variant Rules (Basic -- Automatous Bot)

This lighter 2P variant uses automated bots between each human player, which simulates unexperienced players that will make non-optimal actions that might benefit the next player.

These following rules are changed from the standard game:

Setup

1. Place **7 shares** of each color in the "Shares" space of each color. Then **one of each** is put aside for starting shares.

6. Beginning from the starting player, each player takes 1 share tile of their choice and place in front of themselves.

7. Place 2 extra sets of player markers from unused colors, and place one set on the **"4" spaces**, and the other on the **"8" spaces** of each company.

Sequence of Play

The starting player takes 1 action, then the bot takes 1 actions, then the other human player takes an action, then the bot, then the start player and so on. Notice on build actions:

- When placing tracks into an occupied hex, the previous companies **DO NOT receive** a track compensation.

The Bot's turn

Draw a bot action tile to determine which color the bot will use for this turn. If the "Reset Tile" is drawn, reshuffle all bot tiles and draw again. Then the bot will take an action according to the number of tracks available for that company:

- **0-1 Tracks:** The bot will invest in this company.
  - ◆ Remove 1 share tile from the game, and add 3 tracks to this company's available area.
- **2-5 Tracks:** The bot will build for this company following these rules.
  1. Bot always leave 1 or more unused track after building.
  2. *Bot always try to build closer to the target city of this company. (San Francisco for now)*
  3. If the Bot cannot advance closer using available tracks without violating #1, then the Bot will pass and DO NOTHING.
  4. The Bot will not gain influence points after building.

End of Game

Game ends immediately when there are **Two** piles of empty share tiles or tracks cubes.

Note: The game can end on a bot's turn. If it ends on a human player's turn, then the bot does not do anything afterwards.

Scoring

The unused colors **are included** when ranking influence.
Additionally, if a player's influence is **equal or less than the "4"**, then they **score zero VP** for that company.

The rest of the rules are unchanged.

2-Player Game Variant Rules (Advanced -- Player Controlled Bot)

This is a slightly heavier 2P variant that lets the players make decisions for the bot, thus better simulates a 4P game with experienced players that will block their opponents.

These following rules are changed from the standard game:

Setup

1. Place **6 shares** of each color in the "Shares" space of each color. Then **one of each** is put aside for starting shares. *(This is used to control the length of the game. Feel free to adjust to your tastes.)*

6. Beginning from the starting player, each player takes 1 share tile of their choice and place in front of themselves.

7. Place 2 extra sets of player markers from unused colors, and place one set on the **"4" spaces**, and the other on the **"8" spaces** of each company.

Sequence of Play

Beginning from the start player, on each human player's turn they will perform one action of their own, then direct an action for the bot, then next player takes a turn. Notice on build actions:

● When placing tracks into an occupied hex, the previous companies **DO NOT receive** a track compensation.

Directing the Bot's action

The active player draws a bot action tile to determine which color the bot will use for this turn. If the "Reset Tile" is drawn, reshuffle all bot tiles and draw again. Then the active player will choose an action for the bot:

Note: The choice of action is not limited by the number of tracks available!

● **Take Share:** The Bot will invest in this company.
   ◆ Remove 1 share tile from the game, and add 3 tracks to this company's available area.
● **Build Track:** The active player will build for this company.
   ◆ The Bot/active player will not gain influence points after building.
   ◆ The active player may build anywhere they wish, but remember that in 2P games there are no track compensation when entering occupied hexes.

End of Game

Game ends immediately when there are **Two** piles of empty share tiles or tracks cubes.

Note: The game can end on a bot's action. If it ends on a human player's action, then the bot does not do anything afterwards.

Scoring

The unused colors **are included** when ranking influence.
Additionally, if a player's influence is **equal or less than the "4"**, then they **score zero VP** for that company.

The rest of the rules are unchanged.

2-Player Game Variant Rules (Expert - No Bots)

This is a very intense 2P variant since there are no hidden information, and no random elements to count on.

These following rules are changed from the standard game:

Setup

1. Place **5 shares** of each color in the "Shares" space of each color. Then one of each is put aside for starting shares. *(Lots of Analysis-Paralysis in this variant, thus recommended to use fewer share tiles)*
6. Beginning from the starting player, each player takes 1 share tile of their choice and place in front of themselves.
7. Place 2 extra sets of player markers from unused colors, and place one set on the **"4" spaces**, and the other on the **"8" spaces** of each company.

Sequence of Play

The starting player takes 1 action, then all players take 2 actions per turn. Notice on player actions:

- The 2 actions MUST be for 2 different companies.
- When placing tracks into an occupied hex, the previous companies **DO NOT receive** a track compensation.
- Players **CAN NOT end the game** on the **2nd action** of their turn.
- No limit on type of action taken within a turn as long as it is available.
  May be different or may be same type of action. eg: Take 2 share, Build for 2 companies etc...

End of Game

Game ends immediately when there is **ONE** pile of empty share tiles or tracks cubes.
Note: Players **CAN NOT end the game** on the **2nd action** of their turn.

(We find most playtesters will develop quite evenly across all companies in this variant, so only one pile is needed to trigger the end game.)

Scoring

The unused colors **are included** when ranking influence.
Additionally, if a player's influence is **equal or less than the "4"**, then they **score zero VP** for that company.

The rest of the rules are unchanged.

Build Tracks on West Coast   Still Under Development

(This is a US map specific modular rule)

After any company track reaches "Lincoln" or "Tulsa", this action becomes available to all players for the rest of the game. America is committed to completing the transcontinental railroad and connecting both coasts!

But a building penalty will occur when taking this action. Once there is a connection to the East coast (can be a mixed color route), then this action is disabled and normal building rules apply.

Start in San Francisco:
First a company must start a new network on the West coast.

1. Choose a company that has at least 1 cube in their "Tracks" space.
2. Place **any number of cubes** in San Francisco as long as it will not breach the limit. If there are other cubes in San Francisco, then they will receive the occupied hex bonus.
3. Gain the listed influence on San Francisco's demand tile.
   Note: You only get the influence once even when you add more than 1 cube.

Build Tracks:
Once a company has a foothold on the West Coast, it can start building to nearby cities.

1. Choose the city to build into. If this city does not connect East and West coasts networks (through any color), then you must pay 1 extra cube from "Tracks" space to supply.
2. After paying the penalty, build tracks and increase influence according to normal rules.

Golden Spike Bonus:
When the East and West coasts networks are connected, record the colors in the city that made the connection. Place 1 cube of each color from the supply onto the Golden Spike tile, at the end of the game **increase 2 spaces** on the Track Length chart for these colors.

Water Connection from San Francisco to Portland:
The dark blue line connects San Francisco to Portland with no distance. This blue water connection line is also used in the Europe Map.
Note that if there are no land connection from the East to West, the building penalty is still applied.