

THE RISE & FALL OF
JOHN
COMPANY,

AN HONORABLE MONOPOLY
THAT ROSE TO PROMINENCE IN
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
AND THE FAMILIES THAT FOUGHT
TO CONTROL ITS FORTUNES.



A GAME OF SNAKES AND LADDERS authored by
COLE WEHRLE.

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PHIL EKLUND

and his illustrious venture
SIERRA MADRE GAMES.

This game is dedicated to my wife Cati whose encouragement brought the project to life and to Chris Contreras and all the games we didn't have a chance to make.

INDEX

- Angry Shareholders, 15
- Attrition, 18
- Bailout, 22
- Balance of India, 4
- Campaign Action, 13
- captains:
 - acquisition, 9
 - ships ownership, 13
 - interlopers and country trade 15
- Chairman:
 - election, 10
 - debt, 11
 - hiring responsibilities, 11
 - Debt Action, 11
 - allocation of revenue, 14-15
- Check, 10
- China Office, *see Superintendent of Trade in China*
- closed, 4
- Collapse (event), 18
- Company Failure, 22
- Company Phase, 10-14
- Conquest (event), 17
- Cube Management, 9
- Debt:
 - action, 11
 - expense, 15
 - emergency loans, 15
- depressed, 4
- Deregulation, 19-22
- Director of Trade:
 - hiring responsibilities, 11
 - Logistics Action, 12
- Disrupted Orders:
 - defined 16-17,
 - in Conquest and Revolt 17,
 - in Flip and Collapse, 17-18
- Dividends:
 - company, 16
 - firms in post-monopoly, 21
- Domestic Event, 18
- dominated, 4
- Elephant:
 - setup, 8
 - movement, 16
 - conquest redirect, 17
 - revolt redirect, 17
- Eliminated Offices, 18
- Emergency Loans, 15
- empire:
 - defined, 4
- defense, 13, 17
- fragmentation, 13
- Evening Post, 16-19
- Events in India, 16-18
- Exhaustion, 6
- Family Action, 9
- Family Phase, 9-10
- firm:
 - establishment of, 20
 - operation, 20-22
- Flip (event), 17
- gun:
 - purchasing and moving to armies, 12
 - exhaustion in Campaign, 13
 - defense, 17
 - police, 17-18
- Hostile Takeovers, 20
- Invest, 14
- Investment Bank, 15
- Jones Family
 - action, 10
 - hiring and nepotism, 11
 - general rules, 23
- Laws, 18
- Mergers, 21
- Military Affairs:
 - Purchasing Goods, 12
 - Logistics Action, 12
- Military Upkeep, 15
- Mutiny, 22
- Nepotism, 11
- officeholder:
 - defined, 4-5
 - removal after failure, 10
 - attrition and scoring, 18
 - eliminated offices, 18
- officer:
 - acquisition, 9
 - deployment, 12
 - exhaustion in Campaign, 13
 - defense, 17
 - police, 17-18
- Open Trade, 13
- open, 4
- Piece Limits, 6
- Plunder, 13
- Political Power, 18
- presidency:
 - definition, 4
 - acquisition of goods ships, and guns, 12,
- Campaign action, 13
- dissolution, 17
- President:
 - control of presidency, 4
 - hiring responsibilities, 11
 - Campaign Action, 13
 - Open Trade, 13
 - Sail Action, 14
- Presidential Bonus, 15
- Prizes:
 - scoring, 18
 - powers, 18
- Promise:
 - defined, 5
 - victory point penalty, 22
- prosperous, 4
- provincial offices:
 - defined, 4
 - action/attrition order, 10
 - creation, 13
 - Invest, 14
 - police, 17-18
- public expectations, 21
- Purchasing Offices:
 - Purchasing Ships, 12
 - Purchasing Goods, 12
- Refresh, 19
- Regions and Presidencies, 3-4
- Revolt (event), 17-18
- Sail, 14
- Seek Investors, 20
- South Seas Firm, 15
- sovereign:
 - defined, 4
 - loss of dominions, 13
 - target for open trade, 13
- Status Quo (event), 18
- Superintendent of Trade in China:
 - creation, 14
 - Sail, 13
- Tax, 15
- term, 3
- tilt, 4
- Trade Phase, 15-16
- Turn Structure, 8
- Vacancies, 10-11

A. GENERAL RULES

A1. Overview

Over the course of the game, players will advance the members of their family through positions in the East India Company, hoping to improve their family's wealth and their reputation in polite society.

The character of each game of *John Company* is determined by the performance of the Company, which is jointly operated by all the players. The Company will usually attempt to establish a profitable trade and a political foothold in India, but its goals are largely dependent upon the players.

A2. Learning the Game

John Company is a sandbox game, meaning players may only explore a small fraction of the game during the course of play. The best way to learn the game is simply to set up a mock game and work through the first two game turns, referencing the relevant rules as they are needed. When teaching the game only one player needs to be familiar with all of the rules. Many systems can be described after the game has begun.

In this booklet, easy to miss rules will be in **bold**. Examples and reminders will be in *italics*. **TERMS** that describe specific gameplay concepts are rendered in small capitals and will be defined the first time they are used. Rules that are referenced, such as the Campaign Action (F7) or Purchasing Office (F5), will use a title case. The first reference to a rule in each paragraph will also include a citation to that rule.

Rules that refer to the two or three player game only are printed in purple.

A3. Regions and Presidencies

There are eight region cards that represent an area comprising modern-day Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh.

Each region card has several important elements.

ANATOMY OF A REGION CARD

The diagram shows a Punjab region card with the following elements labeled:

- region number and name:** Punjab, with a green diamond icon containing the number 1 and an elephant icon.
- empire name:** Mughal Empire, written vertically on a green bar on the right side.
- sovereign event column:** A vertical column on the right side of the card, containing icons for Ben., Bom., Sin., and a curved arrow.
- order name:** Handicrafts, with a circular icon containing the number 2.
- demand:** £7, with a red circular icon containing the number 7.
- revenue:** Silk, with a circular icon containing the number 3 and a red circular icon containing the number 8.
- dominated event column:** Cotton, with a circular icon containing the number 5 and a red circular icon containing the number 12.

In these rules region cards will be referred to using these icons:

- (front):** A green diamond icon containing the number 1.
- (back):** A grey diamond icon containing the number 1.

In addition, each region has an economic status, a political status, and a trade status, which are indicated by the physical placement of the card.

Economic status: A region is either **PROSPEROUS** or **DEPRESSED**. The economic status of a region is indicated by which side of the card is face up, either the **PROSPEROUS** side (plain) or the **DEPRESSED** side (greyscale with striped watermark).

Political status: A region is either **DOMINATED** or **SOVEREIGN**. A region can be **DOMINATED** by another region or the Company. **DOMINATED** regions and their dominator are collectively referred to as an **EMPIRE**. When a region is **DOMINATED**, the right column of its event table is covered by the dominator. **SOVEREIGN** regions have the right column of their event table clearly visible.

Trade status: A region is either **OPEN** or **CLOSED** to British trade. **CLOSED** regions are placed to the left of the board. Regions that are **OPEN** are placed above the board near one of the three **PRESIDENCIES**.

Historically, to facilitate the trade in India, the Company used a system of **PRESIDENCIES**. Each **PRESIDENCY** was a fully independent administrative unit. In *John Company*, a **PRESIDENCY** refers to the Company office (called a President, F7), its holdings (money, ships, and goods), its army, and any regions opened by that **PRESIDENCY**.

PRESIDENCIES grow through successful Open Trade Actions (F7) and Campaign Actions (F7). These campaigns also create **PROVINCIAL OFFICES** (Governors and Residents) that the Company uses to manage its new territory. A **PRESIDENCY** can shrink through Revolt or Conquest (H2). If a **PRESIDENCY** is ever without a region, it is eliminated and will never be used again.

A4. The Balance of India

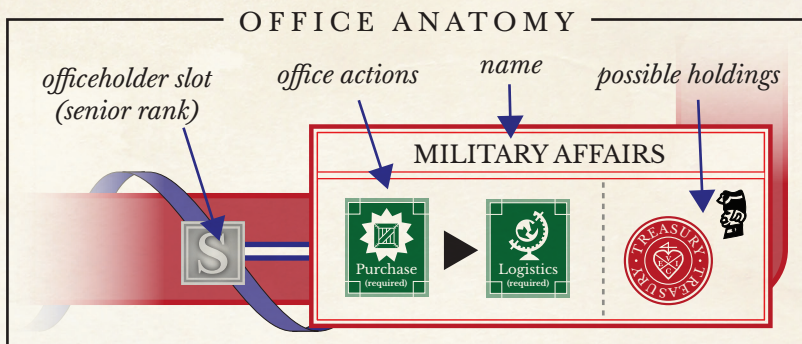
The general stability of the eight regions in *John Company* is indicated by the marker on the Balance of India track at the bottom left of the board. The marker will always be on one of three spaces: order (left), equilibrium (center), or chaos (right). When an event occurs, the status of the Balance of India is used to determine the event. During order, two dice are rolled and the **lowest** result is used. During chaos, two dice are rolled and the **highest** result is used. During equilibrium, only a single die is rolled to determine the event.

The Balance of India	Order	Equilibrium	Chaos
Number of Dice Rolled	2	1	2
Result	Lowest	Result	Highest

The Balance of India may change over the course of play. These changes are called **TILTS**. When a **TILT** occurs, the marker on the Balance of India track moves towards the direction of the **TILT**. If the marker was already in the space it **TILTED** towards, it does not move.

A5. Offices and Working for the Company

Throughout the game, players gain and lose control of offices within the East India Company. A player's family members (cubes) move through the Company via promotion. In general, writers are promoted first to senior offices and then to executive offices. When a player controls an office, they place one of their cubes on the slot associated with that office. This cube is known as the **OFFICEHOLDER** and will allow its owner to control different aspects of the Company's behavior.



Most commonly, **OFFICEHOLDERS** leave the Company through Attrition (H3), which is the primary scoring mechanism in the game. Players do not have full control of this process. However, the more family members a player has in the Company the more likely it is that some will be lost to Attrition. When an **OFFICEHOLDER** leaves the Company due to Attrition, the owning player may move that cube onto a prize card, exchanging money for victory points and special abilities. In general, the higher the rank of the office, the more favorable the exchange rate between money and victory points.

A6. Cash Flow

In *John Company*, money moves and its location matters. Money must always be located in a family treasury (near a player) or an office treasury (see icon below). The Company brings most of the money into the game through its trade in India. Players may earn a share of this money through Dividends (G6) or by placing their family members in various key offices and profiteering from the Company's activities. Money leaves the game when players claim prizes, take family actions, or perform Company actions.



A7. Negotiations & Promises

Players are free to discuss the game and negotiate during play. Players are not held to any promises of actions on future phases or game turns, but may give each other the following items:

- ☛ Family money and family-owned ships.
- ☛ Family cubes from their stock (these become **PROMISES**, which are described below).
- ☛ **PROMISES** on their family card.
- ☛ Family-owned Goods and firm shares after loss of monopoly (I3).

PROMISES. As part of a negotiation, a player may offer one or more cubes from their stock. These cubes are held by the **player** accepting the offer and are now called **PROMISES**. At the end of the game, players lose two victory points for each of their **PROMISES** held by another player.¹ A **PROMISE** **must** be returned to its owner player if, **at any time**:

- † You pay the player holding the **PROMISE** cube £2.
- † You show hiring preference by promoting the player holding the **PROMISE** over at least one other player.
- † The holder returns the **PROMISE**. If you have one of the holder's **PROMISES**, it is returned to him.

Example: Drew needs money but has none. He asks the other players if anyone would be willing to loan him £5. Chas agrees if Drew will give him four promises. Drew agrees. If Drew cannot get these promises back by the end of the game, he will lose eight victory points.

A8. Exhaustion

Certain game pieces may be exhausted throughout play. When a piece is exhausted, it must be moved to the corresponding exhausted holding box. Exhausted pieces cannot be used until after the next Refresh (H5).

B. COMPONENTS

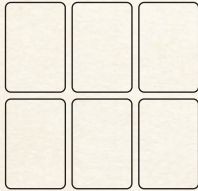
B1. Game Components

Each copy of *John Company* includes the following (not drawn to scale):

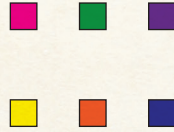
game board



6 player cards



6 sets of 20 family cubes



8 region cards



5 status marker cubes



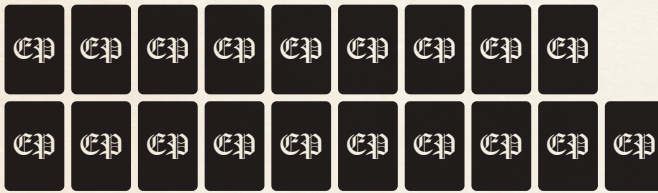
8 provincial office cards



wooden elephant



19 evening post cards



post-monopoly card



18 prize cards

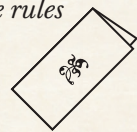


30 wooden ships



& of course, these rules

30 wooden goods



30 white, 15 red, 15 blue, and 20 black disks



10 dice



B2. Piece Limits

If players run out of ships, goods, or money some substitute should be found. However, family cubes are strictly limited (E3).

C. SETUP

C1. Choose a Scenario

Choose a scenario from those listed in section K. These setup rules refer to the Early Company scenario (K2) and may be adjusted by the other scenarios.

If playing with two or three players, use the Jones Family (C4, F3, K1).

C2. The Board, Prizes, and Events

Place the board in the center of the table. Deal out six random prize cards face-up and place them in a row at the bottom of the board.

Shuffle all of the Evening Post cards except the “Monopoly Revoked” and “Revoke Monopoly” cards which are not used in this scenario. Place the Evening Post deck on the board facedown on the top right of the board.

Place a status marker cube on the:

- ☛ “4” space of the share price track.
- ☛ “1” space of the game turn track.
- ☛ “o” space of the Company revenue track.
- ☛ Center space of the Balance of India.
- ☛ Picture of parliament on the bottom right side of the board.

Place a black disk on the officeholder slot of the China Office (F9).

C3. Family Cards, Money, and Cubes

Give each player a player card to place in front of them (family side face-up) and a starting treasury of £5.


Family Powers. Each of the six player cards has a unique benefit that is active as long as the family side of that player card is face-up.

Each player chooses a color and takes a number of cubes determined by the player count. These are the player’s starting cubes. Place these cubes **above** the player’s family card.

Number of Players	2	3	4	5	6
Starting Cubes	8	7	6	5	5

Then, each player takes an additional 12 cubes of their color and places them below their family card. These cubes form the player’s stock. Any remaining cubes are returned to the box, unused.

Starting with a random player and proceeding clockwise, each player places one of their starting cubes on **any** available vacancy (the **empty** squares along the blue ribbon). Once each player has filled a vacancy, repeat the process in the reverse order, with the player who previously placed last taking the next turn. Continue until all vacancies are filled.

- ☛ When a cube is placed on an executive office (denoted by a gold square), an additional starting cube of that color is placed on the Court of Directors. 

After all vacancies in the Company are filled, players roll one die for each of their remaining starting cubes and place the cube in the resource box corresponding to the die roll.

Shipyard cubes can be placed in the highest empty slot in any column *e.g. the “6” slot must be filled in any column before the “5” slot.*

Cubes placed on officer or captain resource boxes provide a bonus cube **from the player's stock** in the writer resource box.

For each cube randomly placed in the Court of Directors, the Chairman must immediately allocate £4 from the bank to any of the office treasuries as if it were revenue (G5).

Teaching Note: For a first game, consider setting up the game before the players arrive. For starting offices have each player "select" the next office along the ribbon and place cubes according to the rules above.

C4. Piece Stock and Starting Company Assets

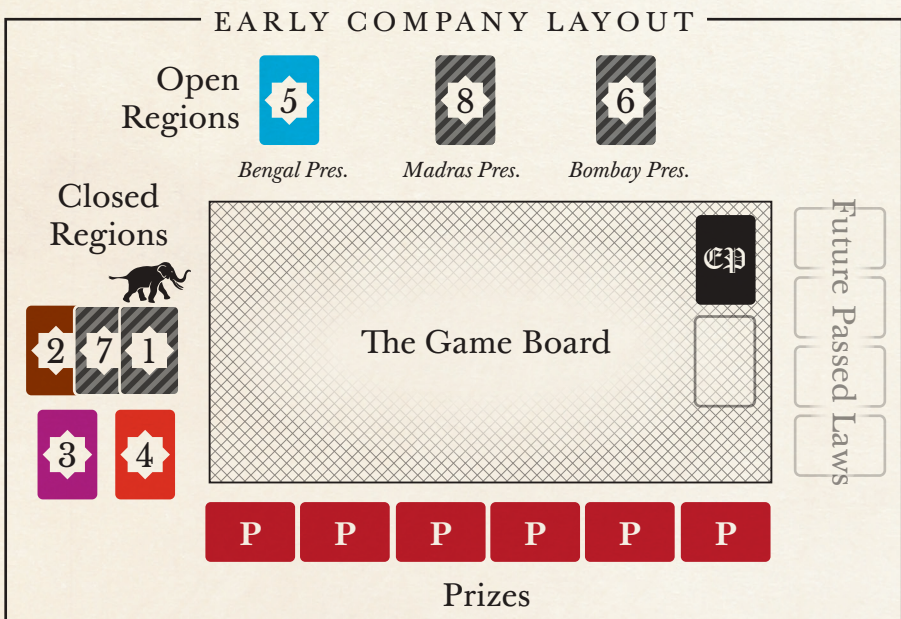
Place the goods, black disks, ships, and the bank near the area of play.

Place £5 on each office with a treasury icon.

Place two ships on each PRESIDENCY. Place six ships on the ship slots in the shipyard resource box and ten goods on the good slots in the factory resource box.

C5. Region Cards

Place the regions as indicated below.



PROVINCIAL OFFICES should be placed near the area of play.

Place the Elephant on the Punjab region card.

The game is now ready to begin.

D. SEQUENCE OF PLAY

D1. Game Turn Structure

Every game turn consists of four phases:

- ☛ **Family:** Beginning with the Chairman, each player takes a single family action.
- ☛ **Company:** After filling any vacancies, each office in the Company operates, beginning with Ship Purchasing.
- ☛ **Trade:** Revenue is generated and allocated.
- ☛ **The Evening Post:** A new event card is revealed and resolved.

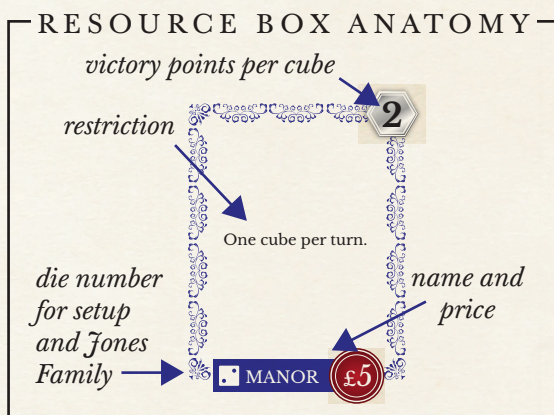
E. FAMILY PHASE

E1. General

Beginning with the player controlling the Chairman office and proceeding clockwise, each player takes a single family action. If the Chairman office is currently vacant, begin with the player who was most recently Chairman.

E2. The Family Action

Each game turn all players **must** take **one** family action. Choose a **single** family resource box and place a number of cubes on it. Some resource boxes require players to pay a cost to the bank for each cube. If there is a cost, it is listed next to the name of each resource and must be paid from the family treasury. When placed, cubes take the name of whatever resource box they are placed on *e.g. a cube in the shipyard resource box is now referred to as a shipyard*.



Some resource boxes have additional restrictions detailed below:

- ❖ **Shipyards² and Factories.** Cubes in the shipyard and factory resource boxes must be placed within the outlined squares. A player may only place a shipyard cube in a “5” slot if the “6” slot above it is occupied.
- ❖ **Shares.³** The cost of this action depends on the current share price. The total cost for the action should be given to the Chairman for immediate allocation to Company treasuries. If the Chairman office is vacant, the money is placed on the Chairman box and will be allocated immediately after the election of the new Chairman.
- ❖ **Writers, Officers, and Captains.** A player may place one or two cubes in one of these boxes. If playing with two or three players, players may place up to three cubes in one of these boxes.
- ❖ **Manors.** A player may place only one cube in the manor resource box per game turn.

E3. Cube Management

Players are restricted by the cubes in their stocks.⁴ If a player without remaining cubes needs to place one or more cubes, that player must use their cubes on any prize card or the manor resource box. If a player cannot remove any such cubes, they are excused from having to take a family action that game turn.



E4. The Jones Family Action (2/3 players only)

After each player has taken a family action, the Jones Family places cubes in family resource boxes. With two players, roll 4 dice. With three players, roll 2 dice. Then, using an extra color of cubes, place a cube in the family resource box corresponding to each die roll (as in C3). However, unlike C3, cubes placed in either the captain or officer resource boxes do not spawn bonus writers. If the Jones Family runs out of cubes, use another extra set of cubes. Any money generated by Jones Family cubes should be paid to the bank. Captains belonging to the Jones Family purchase a ship if one is available, using funds from the bank and will purchase the leftmost available ship. Any Jones Family cubes placed on shipyards should take the leftmost “6” slot and, if these are all filled, should take the leftmost “5” slot. If the Jones Family places a share cube, the bank gives the Chairman money equal to the current share price for immediate allocation. *Note: The Jones Family does not place cubes during setup.*

F. COMPANY PHASE

F1. Overview and Office Actions

In the Company Phase, Company offices are given the opportunity to take actions. The Chairman begins the phase by calling the Company to order and filling any vacancies. Then, following the red Company track starting with the Ship Purchasing office, each office is given the opportunity to act. **PROVINCIAL OFFICES** act after their corresponding Presidents in order of formation (oldest office acting first). **When an office acts, it must resolve its actions in the order indicated on the office.** Blue and black actions are optional with blue actions requiring a Check (F2), as described below. Green actions are mandatory. **If an action has a cost, the cost must be paid using funds from the acting office.**

F2. Checks and Consequences

Blue actions require a Check⁵ to see if the action is successful. To perform this Check, a player rolls as many dice as the “strength” of the action minus any penalty (penalties are described in each individual action). Of the dice that are rolled, only the **lowest** die counts. A roll of 1 or 2 is a success. A roll of 3 or 4 has no effect. A roll of 5 or 6 is a failure, and the **OFFICEHOLDER** is immediately returned to that player’s stock of unused pieces. A vacated office has no further opportunities to act this game turn. Any blue action may be taken more than once as long as the Check has not failed.

F3. Filling Vacancies

Fill all vacant positions at the start of the Company Phase. First, fill the Chairman position, followed by the remaining vacancies in the order of their position along the blue ribbon on the board. **PROVINCIAL OFFICES** are filled after their corresponding President in the order of their creation. In the rare instance that a vacancy cannot be filled, the office remains open this game turn and is skipped during the Company Phase.

The Jones Family does not vote, nor can be nominated to be Chairman, nor do their cubes in the Court of Directors count for determining the number of votes needed for a majority. Jones Family officers are never promoted.

Chairman Election. The Court of Directors selects a player to be the new Chairman. The former Chairman makes the first nomination. Any player with at least one cube in the Court of Directors may be nominated. After a nomination is made, each player (clockwise starting with the nominee)



may choose to support the nominee with all their cubes in the Court or not. Each cube provides a single vote of support. **Nominees may choose to not support their own nomination.** If a nominee receives support from more than 50% of the cubes in the Court, the Chairman election is over. The successful nominee moves one of their share cubes from the Court of Directors to the Chairman office. If the nomination fails, the player to the left of the previous nominator makes the next nomination. If after all players have made a nomination, the Court fails to agree upon a nominee, the former Chairman decides who of the failed nominees becomes the new Chairman. The newly elected Chairman must immediately allocate any money from share purchases to Company offices with treasuries.

Other offices are filled according to the following rules:

- ❖ Executive offices are filled by the **Chairman**, who promotes any cube on a senior office (grey S) to the new executive office. If there are no senior **OFFICEHOLDERS**, the Chairman can promote any writer directly to the executive office.
- ❖ **PROVINCIAL OFFICES** are filled by their **corresponding President**, who promotes any writer or officer in any army to the office.
- ❖ **PURCHASING OFFICES** are filled by the **Director of Trade**, who promotes any writer to the office.

Nepotism. When filling any office, except the Chairman, players are penalized for Nepotism. If a player promotes their own cube over another player's cube, the promoting player must give one of their cubes from their stock as a **PROMISE** to every player with at least one eligible candidate. **If playing with the Jones Family, two promise cubes should be given for every instance of nepotism.**

Example: In a four player game, Cole as Chairman promotes his own cube from Ship Purchasing to the Madras Presidency. Chas had cubes in the other senior offices. Because Cole passed up Chas, he must give one promise to Chas.

F4. The Chairman and the Debt Action

Once, at any point during the Company Phase, the Chairman may take the Debt Action.

Debt Action. When taken, the Chairman places a black disk on the Court of Directors and immediately allocates £5 to treasuries in the Company. Each black disk on the Court of Directors costs the Company £1 each game turn during the Trade Phase (G3). This debt can never be repaid.



F5. Purchasing Offices

All three **PURCHASING OFFICES** (Ship Purchasing, Goods Purchasing, and Military Affairs) have the Purchase Action. The Military Affairs Office also has the Logistics Action. **All actions on Purchasing Offices are mandatory.**

The Purchase Action. **PURCHASING OFFICES** purchase as many ships or goods as they can afford. Ship Purchasing and Goods Purchasing give what they purchase to the Director of Trade. The Military Affairs Office assigns the purchased goods to any of the **PRESIDENCY** armies. These goods are now referred to as **GUNS**.

Purchasing Ships. Six ships are available for purchase each game turn. The price of a ship is indicated by the highest uncovered number below the ship. The cheapest ships must be purchased first. If a ship has one or more shipyards below it, the owners of the shipyards receive £1 from the bank for each of their shipyards below the purchased ship **after** the ship is bought.

Purchasing Goods. Ten goods are available for purchase each game turn. The price of a good without a player factory is always £3. If there is a factory

cube below the good, refer to the Evening Post card on top of the discard pile. The price is listed on the top right. If there is no card in the discard pile (*e.g. at the start of the game*) the price is £2. If the price is replaced with a red "X" only goods **without** player factories can be purchased. The cheapest goods must be purchased first. If there is a factory cube below a purchased good, its price is paid from the office's treasury to the player owning the factory. If there is no factory cube, the price is paid to the bank.



PRICE OF A SHIP			
1st ship costs £4 (£1 to yellow, £1 to orange)			
2nd ship costs £4 (£2 to yellow)			6
3rd ship costs £5 (£1 to yellow)			5
4th ship costs £6	4	4	4



The Logistics Action (Military Affairs). Move **all** officers and **GUNS** in this office's holdings to any **PRESIDENCY** army boxes. If an army has three officers, an old officer (stationed there at the start of the game turn) must be replaced by a new officer. Replaced officers return to their owner's stock. If not all officers can be placed, any remainder are returned to their owner's stock. During this action, the Military Affairs Office may transfer **GUNS** from one **PRESIDENCY** to another with the owning President's permission.



F6. Director of Trade

The Director of Trade must take the Logistics Action.

The Logistics Action (Director of Trade). In any order, the Director of Trade offers each captain in this office's holdings the opportunity to buy a ship. If the captain agrees, their family purchases a ship (as in F5, but may choose any available ship) and gives the ship to the Director of Trade, placing their captain cube on top of the ship. If the captain declines, or no ships are available, the captain cube is returned to its owner's stock. Then, the Director of Trade must assign any goods and ships (*with or without captains*) on their office to any of the three **PRESIDENCIES**. During this action, the Director of Trade may also transfer ships (*with or without captains*) and goods from one **PRESIDENCY** to another with the owning President's permission.

Captains on Ships. Captains are placed on ships to indicate family ownership. Once a captain is on a ship, the two are treated as one piece and are always moved together; however ownership may change as part of a negotiation. In this case the new owner's cube (taken from their stock) replaces the current captain, returning the original captain's cube to its owner.

F7. Presidents

There are three Presidents with three optional actions each, all requiring a Check (F2). The Campaign Action can be used to dominate new regions (opening them if they were **CLOSED**) and create new Company Offices (governorships and residencies). The Open Trade Action adds **CLOSED** regions to the corresponding **PRESIDENCY**. Finally, the Sail Action allows Presidents to complete orders on regions in their **PRESIDENCY** to generate revenue for the Company and a Presidential Bonus (G2) for their family.

The Campaign Action. Select a target from those listed next to the Campaign Action icon. Presidents have only one listed target. Governor cards list multiple targets. Any listed region can be targeted as long as it is not dominated by the Company. Calculate the strength of the attack. The Office taking the Campaign Action may choose any number of unexhausted officers/**GUNS** in the **PRESIDENCY** army to use in the attack *e.g. a governor within the Madras Presidency may use that presidency army*. Each officer/**GUN** exhausted increases the strength by **one**. After the attack, these pieces are considered exhausted and will be refreshed at the end of the Evening Post phase (H5). The strength of a Campaign Action can be boosted by hiring mercenaries. Every **£2** spent increases the strength of the attack by **one**. The penalty for this action is equal to the defense of the target. If attacking any part of an **EMPIRE**, the penalty is the sum of every region's defense in that **EMPIRE**. *Note: While Presidents only have one target, Campaign Actions on provincial offices offer more options.*



Victory. If the Check (F2) is successful, the region is conquered and is now **DOMINATED** by the Company and **OPEN** for trade. Move the region to the **PRESIDENCY** associated with the President or governor that took the Campaign Action. Create the corresponding **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** and place it on the region's card, covering only the right event column. This office will be filled at the start of the next Company Phase. If the conquered region was the **SOVEREIGN** of an **EMPIRE**, all **DOMINIONS** of that **EMPIRE** become **SOVEREIGN** and **CLOSED**.

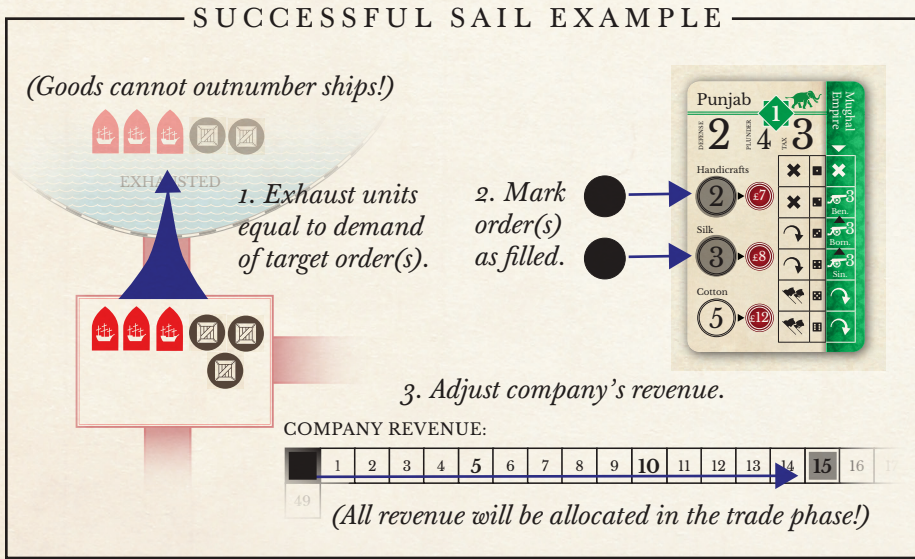
Plunder. If the attack is successful, the families that control cubes in the victorious army (officers) receive money from the bank equal to the region's plunder value for each cube present. Exhausted and unused officers still receive plunder.

Example: Chas is the President of Madras and wishes to campaign there. There is a gun and two of Drew's officers in the Madras army. He exhausts the gun and both officers for a strength of three. Depressed Madras has a defense of one so the modified strength of the action is two. If he is successful the Governor of Madras will be created and Drew will take £6 from the bank for his two officers (plunder).

The Open Trade Action. The President may attempt to open new regions to British trade, which brings a region or **EMPIRE** to a **PRESIDENCY**. First, determine the strength of the action. Every **£1** allocated to the action increases strength by **one**. There is no penalty for this action. Choose a target that is both **CLOSED** and **SOVEREIGN**. If the Check (F2) is successful, the target becomes **OPEN**. Move the region and its **EMPIRE** into the acting President's **PRESIDENCY** (A3).



The Sail Action. The President may attempt to fill any number of orders on regions **in their PRESIDENCY**. Determine the strength of the action. Every £1 allocated to the action increases strength by **one**. The penalty to perform this action is one less than the total number of regions in the presidency *e.g. to take this action in a three-region presidency the President faces a penalty of two*. If the Check (F2) is successful, the President may fill orders. To fill an order, exhaust a number of goods and/or ships in this **PRESIDENCY** equal to the order's demand.⁶ Orders may be filled in any order, but there can never be more goods than ships exhausted in a **PRESIDENCY**. After an order is filled, place a black disk on the order's demand and increase the Company's revenue on the revenue track by the amount indicated on the order. *Note: These disks will be removed during refresh.*



F8. Provincial Offices

There are two types of **PROVINCIAL OFFICES**: governorships and residencies. **These offices are created when a region is conquered during a Campaign Action (F7) and are filled by the associated President**. During their turn in the Company Phase, governors may take the Campaign Action. Both governors and residents may take the Invest Action.

The Invest Action. Using this action, a **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** attempts to end depressions in its region. Determine the strength of the action. Every £1 allocated to the action increases strength by **one**. There is no penalty for this action. If the Invest Action is successful, flip over the region card to the **PROSPEROUS** side, with any black disks maintaining their relative position. **Place the Elephant in this region and the Balance of India TILTS towards order**. The Invest Action can not be used in **PROSPEROUS** regions. *Strategy: The invest action allows players to reroute the Elephant, which can be an effective way to protect their investments and lower the chance of depression or collapse in key markets.*



F9. Superintendent of Trade in China

This office, known also as the China Office, is created whenever the Domestic Event card "Trade with China" is revealed during the Evening Post phase. Remove the black disk on the associated senior office. **This office behaves like a PRESIDENCY and is filled by the Chairman who promotes any writer to the office**. It can be allocated ships by the Director of Trade and is eligible for the Presidential Bonus (G2). During its turn in the Company Phase, it may take the Sail Action (F7) and fill the orders printed on the board near the office. *Note: Because it has only one region, the China Office will never pay a penalty to Sail.*

G. TRADE

G1. Overview

During the Trade Phase players generate personal revenue. Then, the Chairman must pay expenses and allocate **all remaining Company revenue** to Company Offices and/or dividends. Any money paid with company revenue to players or offices should be taken from the bank after lowering the revenue track by the amount paid.

G2. Player Revenue

Player revenue is generated in several ways and always comes from the bank.

- ☛ **Tax.** Place money equal to the current tax value of their regions on each **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** that currently exists. If a player occupies that office, he may transfer any portion of this game turn's tax revenue to his family's treasury or the region's **PRESIDENCY** immediately.
- ☛ **Presidential Bonuses.** The family controlling each **PRESIDENCY** takes money equal to the number of fulfilled orders on regions in that **PRESIDENCY**.
- ☛ **Interlopers.** Each family takes £2 for each of their ships with a captain.
- ☛ **Other Revenue.** The "Investment Bank" and "South Seas Firm" prizes provide additional revenue as described on the card. The Sykes and Paxton families also generate revenue according to their special powers described on their family cards.

G3. Company Expenses

The Chairman must now pay expenses using the revenue gained from filling orders. As expenses are paid, the Chairman should adjust the revenue marker on the revenue track.

The following expenses are paid to the bank:

- ☛ **Debt Service.** Pay £1 for each black disk on the Court of Directors.
- ☛ **Military Upkeep.** Pay £1 for each **GUN** and officer in a **PRESIDENCY**.
- ☛ **Country Trade.**⁷ Pay £1 for each captain on a ship.

The following must be paid to family treasuries:

- ☛ **Angry Shareholders.** If the Company share price is at "3," a Dividend (G6) must be paid if possible. **Emergency Loans cannot be used to pay this dividend.** If the dividend cannot be paid, a Bailout occurs (J3).

G4. Emergency Loans

If Company **expenses** cannot be met, take enough £5 emergency loans to cover the remaining expenses. As with the Debt Action (F4), add a black disk to the Court of Directors for each £5 taken. Any portion "left over" must be immediately allocated to any Company treasuries. Any new loans do not need to be paid for until next game turn. As with black disks gained through the Debt Action, these can never be repaid.

G5. Allocating Remaining Revenue

After paying expenses the Chairman **must** allocate **all** remaining revenue. Revenue may be sent to Company offices or paid out as Dividends (G6). When sending revenue to offices, place money from the bank directly on the holdings of any office **with a treasury symbol**. Then update the revenue track to indicate how much revenue remains to be allocated. This money may be spent during the next Company Phase.

G6. Dividends

After paying expenses, the Chairman may choose to pay dividends with remaining Company revenue. The cost of paying one dividend is equal to the number of shares (cubes) on the Court of Directors. £1 from the bank is given to each player per cube they have in the Court of Directors. Then, update the revenue track to indicate how much revenue remains to be allocated. Multiple dividends may be paid. If more than one dividend is paid, increase the share price one space. If no dividend is paid, the share price falls one space.

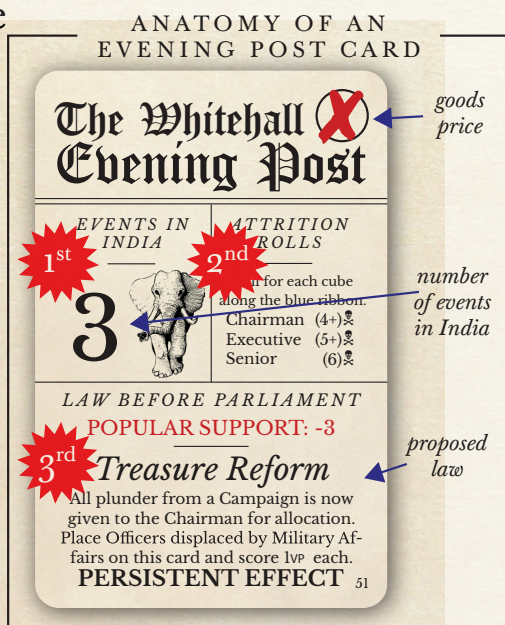
H. EVENING POST

H1. Reveal and Resolve

Draw the top card from the Evening Post deck and place it face-up on top of the discard pile. Then resolve the events. Each Evening Post card has three steps: Events in India (H2), Attrition (H3), and Local News which will either be a Domestic Event or a Proposed Law (H4).

H2. Events in India

Note: For players learning the game and those playing it for the first time, Events in India may be skipped. Continue with H3.



Each game turn there are a number of Events in India. The region where these events take place depends upon the movement of the Elephant. The Elephant moves as many times as indicated by the large number on the game turn's Evening Post card. Unless redirected by Conquest or Revolt, the Elephant's moves are dictated by each region's number and it will move to the next higher region *e.g. from Punjab (1) the Elephant moves to Maratha (2)*, and if the Elephant is in Madras (8), its next move will be to Punjab (1). An event occurs in each region the Elephant visits.


When the Elephant moves to a new region roll the event dice to determine the event. Use the highest roll if the Balance of India is chaos or the lowest roll if the Balance of India is order. Roll only a single die if the Balance of India is in equilibrium. Consult the region card's current event column to determine which of the events occurs.

After resolving the event, if additional events remain to be resolved, the Elephant continues its move and another event occurs.

Disrupted Orders. Whenever a region becomes **CLOSED**, any orders on it are **DISRUPTED**. The President (or former President if vacant) associated with the order immediately removes as many ships as the demand of

each filled order (if possible) from either the **PRESIDENCY**'s holdings or those ships it has exhausted, and returns them to the stock. Ships without captains must be removed before those with captains.


Event: Conquest. The acting region attempts to conquer the target region, listed below the Conquest event icon. If the target region has already been conquered by the acting region, follow the black arrow to the first unconquered region and attempt to conquer that region instead. If all regions are **DOMINATED**, the event should be treated as a Status Quo event.


To resolve the event, compare its strength (the number next to the ) to the target's defense. The target's defense is the sum of its defense value and that of all of its dominions. If the Conquest strength is greater, the target region becomes **DOMINATED** by the acting region and takes the acting region's Trade Status (A3). *Note: This may cause a region to move from one presidency into another or make a region closed, which disrupts any orders on it.* If the **SOVEREIGN** of an **EMPIRE** is conquered, all regions previously dominated by that **EMPIRE** become **SOVEREIGN** and **CLOSED**. When Conquest is successful, and if further events remain to be resolved this game turn, the **Elephant will next move to the lowest-numbered SOVEREIGN region (not including this region).**

Regions within a Presidency. If attacked, the corresponding President may allocate unexhausted **GUNS** or officers in the **PRESIDENCY** to boost the region's defense. Each **GUN** or officer allocated increases the defense by **one** and is exhausted. The President may also hire mercenaries that increase the defense by **one** for every **£2** spent.

Regions Dominated by the Company. Regions **DOMINATED** by the Company no longer use their written defense values. Instead, if attacked, the **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** of the region (or President if vacant) may allocate unexhausted **GUNS** or officers in the **PRESIDENCY** to the defense and may hire mercenaries as described in the previous rule. If a region **DOMINATED** by the Company is conquered, place a black disk on the **PROVINCIAL OFFICE**'s current **OFFICEHOLDER**. This office will be eliminated at the end of Attrition (H3).

Dissolution of Presidency. If a **PRESIDENCY**'s last region becomes **CLOSED**, place a black disk on that **PRESIDENCY**'s current **OFFICEHOLDER**. The office will be eliminated at the end of Attrition (H3). **If seven or more regions are now CLOSED the game may end (J4).**

Event: Flip to Depressed / Flip to Prosperous. Flip the region card. If flipped to **DEPRESSED**, any completed orders are **DISRUPTED**. Additionally, the Balance of India **TILTS** towards chaos. If the region was flipped to **PROSPEROUS**, the Balance of India **TILTS** towards order. 

Event: Revolt. The region becomes **SOVEREIGN** and **CLOSED**. Any completed orders are **DISRUPTED**. If a region **DOMINATED** by the Company revolts, place a black disk on that **PROVINCIAL OFFICE**'s current **OFFICEHOLDER**. This office will be eliminated. If a **PRESIDENCY** loses its last region, the corresponding **PRESIDENCY** is eliminated (see Dissolution of Presidency). The Balance of India **TILTS** towards chaos, and, if further events remain to be resolved this game turn, the **Elephant will move to the lowest-numbered DOMINATED region if possible.** 

Police. Revolts can be canceled in Company-**DOMINATED** regions if the **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** can equal the result of the event die roll that triggered the Revolt with the strength of its Police. The strength of its Police starts at zero and increases by **one** for each **GUN** or officer it exhausts from the **PRESIDENCY** and each **£2** it spends. If a Revolt is canceled by the

Police, the Balance of India does not **TILT** towards chaos and the Elephant is not redirected.

Event: Collapse. Any completed orders are **DISRUPTED**.
The Balance of India **TILTS** towards chaos.



Event: Status Quo. The Balance of India **TILTS** towards order.



H3. Attrition and Claiming Prizes

Roll a die for each filled office. If the result is equal to or higher than that office's stress threshold, the **OFFICEHOLDER** will vacate the office. Shift the **OFFICEHOLDER** above their slot to indicate this.

Stress thresholds:

- ☛ Chairman, 4+
- ☛ Executive Offices, 5+
- ☛ Senior Offices, 6



After **all** attrition dice have been rolled, each vacating cube may score one prize of that office's rank or be returned to its owner's stock. Prizes are claimed starting with the Chairman and following the blue ribbon. Pay the cost indicated on the prize card to the bank and then move the cube from the vacated office to the prize card. *Note: The Chairman is treated as an executive office.*

Prizes Powers. Some prizes provide players with special benefits. All information relating to the timing of these benefits can be found on the prize. If a one-time-use power is used, move the prize cube to the right side of the card.

Offices with a Black Disk.⁸ Offices with a black disk automatically roll a "6" and must vacate. In order to score an office with a black disk, the player must pay a penalty of £2 in addition to the cost of the prize. After removing the **OFFICEHOLDER**, the office is eliminated. Eliminated offices should return all ships, goods, captains, and money to the appropriate stocks. Eliminated **PROVINCIAL OFFICES** placed with the other unused **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** cards. Eliminated offices on the board should keep the black disk placed on the **OFFICEHOLDER** slot to indicate that the vacancy can no longer be filled.

H4. Local News

All Evening Post cards have either a Proposed Law or Domestic Event at the bottom of the card.

Domestic Event. Six Evening Post cards have Domestic Events that trigger one-time effects. Domestic Events always take effect.

Proposed Law. Thirteen Evening Post cards have a law that changes the rules of the game. All effects of passed laws are cumulative.

Voting. Before voting, the Chairman (or former if vacant) should place a status marker on the voting track (bottom right) to indicate the proposal's popular support. Then, starting with the Chairman and proceeding clockwise, each player votes. When a player votes, they either increase or decrease the proposal's current support by their total **POLITICAL POWER**, which is the sum of shipyards, factories, and any money they choose to spend. A proposal's support cannot go below -10 or above 10. After one round, if the proposed law ends with support greater than 0, it passes and is placed to the right-hand side of the board, remaining in effect for the rest of the game.

H5. Refresh

The board state is reset for the next game turn. In general, pieces move along the black arrows. Specifically:

- ☛ In each region, remove any black disks on completed orders.
- ☛ Exhausted ships are returned to their **PRESIDENCY** or owning firm (I3). **Exhausted goods are returned to the stock.** Exhausted **GUNS** and officers are unexhausted.
- ☛ Cubes in the captain resource box move to the Director of Trade Office.
- ☛ Cubes in the officer resource box move to the Military Affairs Office.
- ☛ Place a ship on each empty ship slot in the shipyard resource box. Then, place a good on each empty good slot in the factory resource box.
- ☛ Move the marker on the game turn track forward one space.

I. DEREGULATION

Note: These rules do not apply to the Early Company scenario, and can be skipped by new players. Continue with J1.

I1. General

The Company may lose its monopoly as a consequence of the “Monopoly Revoked” Domestic Event or the “Revoke Monopoly” law. This has several important immediate consequences.

- ☛ Bailouts and Company Failure are modified (see J3).
- ☛ Presidents can no longer take the Open Trade Action (F7).
- ☛ Any ship with a captain is given to the player owning the captain. Captains are returned to the player’s stock. Ship ownership is now indicated by the ship’s position in front of its owner. Interlopers (G2) and Country Trade (G3) no longer occur.
- ☛ Any cubes on the captain resource box are returned to their owners. Place the “Post Monopoly” card directly on the captain resource box.
- ☛ **Jones Family Ships.** On a roll of a “6,” the Jones Family automatically purchases the leftmost available ship. That ship is then immediately auctioned to the highest bidder. Bidding starts with the Chairman and proceeds clockwise. Players may increase the high bid by any increment or may pass. Once a player passes they may not reenter the bidding for that ship. Bidding continues until all but one player have passed.

I2. Altered Family Action Phase

In addition to the changes listed above, players may take as many family actions as they would like. As with the regular Family Phase, play begins with the Chairman and proceeds clockwise. Each player takes a single family action, but players continue to take actions over multiple rounds until all players have passed. Four new family actions are added: Buy Ships or Goods, Establish Firm, Trade Mission, and Pass. **Players may only take each action without a cost (Trade Mission, Pass, Writer, Officer) once per game turn.**

Buy Ships or Goods. When a player takes this action, they may purchase one or two ships or goods. They may not purchase one ship and one good. If playing with two or three players, players can purchase up to three of either. Ship and goods purchasing follows the same procedure as outlined in F5 **with the exception that players do not need to purchase the most inexpensive ship or good and that they are given to the purchaser, not the Director of Trade.**

Establish Firm (families only). If a player does not own a firm, they may pay £3 to flip over their family card. Once a family becomes a firm, any ships or goods that belong to that family (or that will be gained later) are considered the property of the firm. Firms gain the ability to take the Trade Mission Action and may Set Sail and Resolve Trade Missions when they Pass.

Trade Mission (firms only). A player may place any number of ships on one **SOVEREIGN CLOSED** region. For each ship sent on a trade mission, the owning firm must place a single cube on top of the ship to indicate ownership. **Players may not take this action on the last game turn.**

Pass. Once a player passes they can take no further family actions that game turn. Firms that pass may immediately Set Sail and then must resolve any Trade Missions (see I5).

Set Sail. If the player is a firm, they may immediately take the Sail Action (F7). The Sail Action action follows the same structure as the Company action, but the player action's penalty is determined by the number of **OPEN** regions the firm wishes to sail to minus one. Completed orders are indicated by placing a cube from the firm owner's stock on the demand circle and any exhausted goods and ships should be placed above that player's firm card. **Place all revenue from orders on the firm card.**

Resolve Trade Missions. For every region where the player's firm has at least one ship on a trade mission, make a Check (F2) with the **total** of ships in the trade mission (**including other players' ships**) as the Check's strength. There is no penalty. If successful, the Chairman adds that region to any of the available Presidencies. Any **DOMINIONS** remain attached to their **SOVEREIGNS**. Each ship on the region earns money from the bank equal to the plunder of the Region (given to the firm that owns the ship). Then return these ships to their owners. When the ship returns to its owner, cubes indicating ownership are returned to the player's stock. If the Check was a failure, **all** ships on that region are lost and returned to the stock.

I3. Firms

Firms maintain a separate treasury from the family that owns the firm. A player may transfer funds from their family to their family's firm at any time, but funds may **not** be freely transferred from the firm to the family. Any ships or goods belonging to a player owning a firm are owned by the firm. **A firm's treasury may only be spent to Set Sail, Buy Ships and Goods, and pay dividends (I4).**

Seek Investors. At any time a player may offer up a portion of their firm's revenue (in 10% increments) to the other players at the table and may accept or reject any bid for that share. Once accepted, the bidding player places a cube(s) on the appropriate space of the firm card. Potential investors may offer any combination of goods, ships, or money to the firm as well as money or **PROMISES** to its owner. As per A7, these revenue shares can be exchanged and bought and sold among players at any time. *Note: Seeking investors may lead to a transfer of firm ownership (see below).*

Hostile Takeovers. At any time, if another player ever secures the largest share of the firm's revenue, that player **may** initiate a Hostile Takeover. The firm's treasury, ships, and goods should transfer to the new player and the previous owner should place a cube representing their share of that Company's revenue on the new owner's firm card. If the new owner's family card has not yet flipped, flip it to the firm side, and the former owner's firm card should revert to the family side. If the new owner already has a firm, a merger **must** be negotiated in order for the Takeover to occur (see below).

Mergers. At any time, players may consolidate any number of firms through a negotiated merger. A negotiated merger can only ever create a single firm, and the total ownership of that firm cannot exceed 100%. Any other firms involved in the merger must transfer their treasuries and any of their ships and goods to the remaining firm and then revert to their family side. During the merger a shareholder's stake may be lowered with that shareholder's consent. If there is a tie among shareholders to determine who is the owner, all of the tied players must agree on who will own the firm. **If there is any disagreement on the terms of the merger it will not occur.**

Example of a hostile takeover: Chas and Drew both own 30% each of Cole's firm's revenue. By default, Cole then owns the uncommitted 40%. Drew purchases Chas's share during a negotiation, giving him 60% of Cole's firm. Drew, who has no firm, chooses to initiate a hostile takeover. Cole loses control of the firm, surrendering any goods or ships that he owns to Drew. Cole flips his firm card back to the family side. Drew flips his card from the family side to the firm side. Cole then places a cube on the 40% space of Drew's family card. Note that if Drew already had a firm, he may not want to initiate the takeover as Cole would likely demand that his 40% share would be preserved in the merger.

Example of a merger: Chas is the sole owner of his firm. Drew owns 90% of his firm and Cole owns the remaining 10% of Drew's firm. The three owners attempt to negotiate a merger of the two firms. Cole refuses to be bought out and demands that his 10% share be preserved. Chas agrees to take a 50% stake of the consolidated firm. Drew agrees to cut his stake to 40% so that Cole's 10% is preserved. Chas will be the owner of the new firm. The treasury, ships, and goods of Drew's firm are transferred to Chas's firm and Drew's firm card is flipped to its family side. Note that because the merger was between Chas's and Drew's firms, Cole's firm (if he had one) would be unaffected.

I4. Payouts and Public Expectations

At the start of the Trade Phase, each firm must pay out a portion of its treasury to its owner(s). **Each firm must match or exceed PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS determined by the number of open regions** (see table below). Shares are paid out according to the payout chart listed on the board, which rounds up any fraction of 3/4ths or more to the nearest whole number. The firm's owner takes whatever revenue remains after paying their shareholders. If they cannot make the minimum payment, the firm fails. It pays out its entire treasury. The firm card then reverts to its family side, and all goods and ships owned by the firm are returned to the stock. *Note: Except on the last turn, players can transfer money freely from their family to any firms to increase a firm's ability to keep up with public expectations.*

PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS

No. of Open Regions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Minimum Payout	£2	£5	£7	£10	£14	£19	£27	£38

HOW TO USE THE DIVIDEND TABLE

3 regions are open so the firm Benyon & Co. must pay at least £7 to meet public expectations.

Benyon & Co. has two shareholders at 30% each and £12 in its treasury.

The firm must pay out between £7 and £12.

		MINIMUM PAYOUT									
SHARE	10%	8	18	28	38	48	58	68	78	88	98
	20%	4	9	14	19	24	29	34	39	44	49
	30%	3	6	10	13	16	20	23	26	30	33
	40%	2	5	7	10	12	15	17	20	22	25
	50%	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

DIVIDEND PAID

If £7 to £9 is paid, shareholders will make £2 each. If £10 or more is paid, shareholders will make £3 each. In either case the owner will get whatever remains of the payout.

I5. Game End Victory Points from Firms

On the final game turn, any firm can pay £3 + Sail Action penalty (F7) for an automatic success on their Sail Action. **If that Sail Action revenue matches or exceeds PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS**, all revenue from the firm's last Sail Action is paid in victory points (1:1) and split among shareholders according to ownership. **No additional money from a private firm may be paid out on the last game turn.**

Example: Cole's firm has two shareholders, Chas owns 30% and Drew owns 10%. During the final Trade Phase his firm's Sail Action brought in £14. Drew will gain 1 VP, Chas will gain 4 VPs, and Cole will take the remaining 9 VPs.

J. VICTORY

J1. Game End

The game ends either at the end of the 6th game turn or the 10th game turn (campaign game); players complete that turn's Attrition rolls and the game is over. The player with the most victory points wins the game. If there is a tie, the player with the most prize cubes wins. If there is a further tie, the player with the most money wins.

The game may also end with Company Failure (J3) or Mutiny (J4).

J2. Victory Points and Promises

Players gain one victory point for each share cube and two victory points for each manor cube. Players also gain victory points for each prize cube gained during Attrition (H3). The amount of victory points associated with each prize is listed inside the large hexagon on the prize card. Players lose two victory points for each of their **PROMISES** held by another player.

J3. Bailout and Company Failure

A Bailout⁹ occurs when the share price would fall below "3." First, reduce shares. If a player only has a single cube in the Court of Directors, it is returned to the stock. If a player has more than one cube in the Court of Directors, all but one cube are returned to their stock. Then, reset the share price to "3." Finally, each executive **OFFICEHOLDER** (*Note: The Chairman is an executive officeholder*) must vacate and may score a prize **if the owner pays an additional £2 to the bank for each prize cube.**

Bailouts after Deregulation. If the Company has lost its monopoly, a Bailout will not cause the elimination of any shares.

Company Failure. If, after reducing shares during a Bailout, no **player** cubes remain in the Court of Directors, the game is over. Each **OFFICEHOLDER** in an **executive office** subtracts three victory points from their owner's final score.

Company Failure after Deregulation. If the Company has lost its monopoly **and** there is at least one firm at the end of the game turn, the game will continue for **one** more game turn, but will skip the Company Phase.

J4. Mutiny

After the third game turn, if 7 or more regions are **CLOSED** at the end of the Refresh (H5), India has moved away from European interests.¹⁰ The game is over immediately. Each **PRESIDENCY**, **PROVINCIAL OFFICE**, and the Chairman subtracts three victory points from its holder's score.

K. SCENARIOS

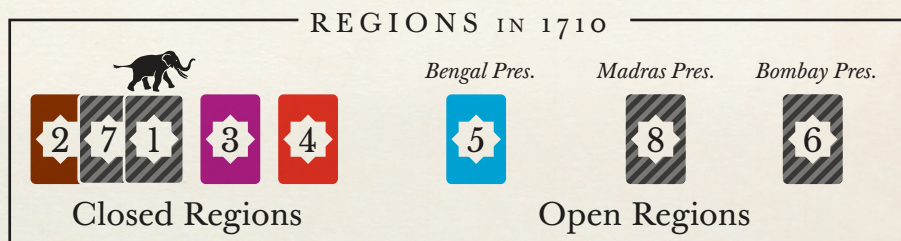
K1. General

It is strongly recommended that players begin with the Early Company scenario at tournament length (6 game turns). After players get comfortable, they should consider the Post Monopoly scenario, which provides the challenge of dealing with a deregulated Company. At this point, players who have the luxury of time can begin to explore the campaign game. The next scenario, the Company under Siege, begins after the Battle of Plassey and provides much of the dynamism of the full campaign game in a much shorter span. For this reason, it should only be played by experienced players. The experimental John & Co. scenario offers a minimalist take on *John Company* that provides many new challenges. This can likewise be said of the solo game which offers a completely different play experience.

Jones Family Setup (Two and Three Player Game). Any scenario can be played with two or three players with the following adjustments. Eliminate the Madras **PRESIDENCY** (place a black disk on its **OFFICEHOLDER** slot). With the exception of the John & Co. scenario (K5), Madras begins **CLOSED** and **SOVEREIGN**. Finally, set aside an extra color of cubes for use as the Jones Family, which will be placed randomly during each game turn using the Jones Family Action (E4).

Universal Setup Rule: Unless otherwise specified, each company office with a treasury will begin with £5. Each non-eliminated **PRESIDENCY** will begin with two ships. Each player will begin with £5.

K2. Early Company & The Campaign Game (1710)

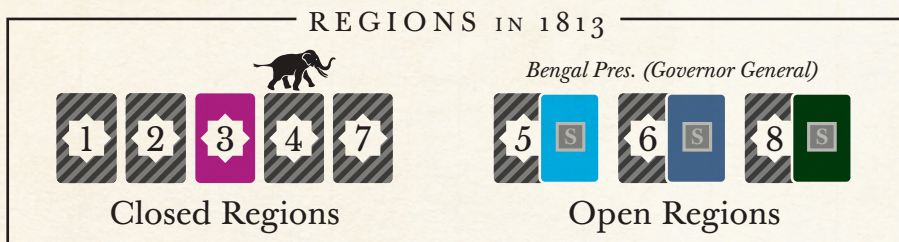


🔦 **Other Adjustments:** Remove the cards “Revoke Monopoly” and “Monopoly Revoked” from the Evening Post deck.

🔦 **The Campaign Game:** Deal three piles of three, two, and four cards from the Evening Post deck. Shuffle the “Monopoly Revoked” domestic event into the second pile and then stack the piles so that the first stack is on top, the second is in the middle, and the third is at the bottom. The game ends at the end of the tenth game turn.

K3. Post Monopoly (1813)

This scenario begins in 1813 with the revoking of the Company's monopoly on trade in India. Players will likely need to work together to make money, as a private venture to India with only the starting funds would likely end in disaster.



- 🔧 **Setup & Adjustments to Offices:** In addition to their starting family treasury, all players begin with a single ship. During setup, every “6” rolled gives that player a ship. Governor of Bengal, Governor of Bombay, Governor of Madras, and Superintendent of Trade in China begin created. Place a black disk on the Madras and Bombay **PRESIDENCIES**. *Note: The Superintendent of Trade to China will start with two ships.*
- 🔧 **Laws in Effect:** Revoke Monopoly, Governor General, Tenure Limitations
- 🔧 **Other Adjustments:** Remove the “Monopoly Revoked” domestic event. No Company Offices begin with any money.

K4. Company under Siege (1758)

With the Battle of Plassey won, the Company gained control of Bengal and the outlines of what would become the British Empire in India began to take shape. However, Clive's brazen military exploits did not sit well with everyone in the Company. Even as he consolidated power in India, Clive faced opposition from both within the Company and from the broader public back home.



- 🔧 **Setup & Adjustments to Offices:** Each player starts with two additional starting cubes. Governor of Bengal begins created. In the two and three player game, players will start with fewer than twelve cubes in their stocks.
- 🔧 **Laws in Effect:** Board of Control. Calico Acts.
- 🔧 **Other Adjustments:** Remove “Monopoly Revoked” from the Evening Post deck. Set aside the “Revoke Monopoly” law. Each time a Bailout (J3) occurs, the “Revoke Monopoly” law becomes the active game turn's event card. If it fails to pass, it is set aside until the next bailout.

K5. John & Co. (1653)

From 1617 till the end of the English Civil War, the East India Company struggled to remain viable. The shares issued in this period produced little or no return, and, by the late 1630s, private firms began to challenge the Company's monopoly. In 1650 these private firms were merged with the Company, but, unable to raise enough capital to maintain operation, the new Company collapsed in 1653. With this failure, the private firms resumed their trade while the weary directors of the Company waited for Cromwell's government to take action. It was not until 1657 that Cromwell restored the Company's monopoly and raised the necessary funds to revitalize the enterprise. This scenario imagines that the independent British trading firms were able to successfully lobby Cromwell to establish free trade in place of a state-sanctioned monopoly.



- 🐘 **Setup:** Flip the board over to its reverse “John & Co.” side. Give every player £6 and one ship. Prizes and Evening Post cards are not used.
- 🐘 **No Presidencies.** There are no **PRESIDENCIES**. Place all the **CLOSED** regions on one side of the board. When a region is **OPENED** with a Trade Mission (I2), it moves to the opposite side of the board.
- 🐘 **Family Income:** When a player passes that is not a firm, they take £1 from the bank.
- 🐘 **Victory Points:** At the end of the game players earn victory points for firm revenue (I5). In addition, players receive two points for each manor, one point for each shipyard, and one point for each factory.
- 🐘 **Altered Sequence of Play:** Use the abbreviated sequence of play displayed on the “John & Co.” board.

Bases. Through Revolts and Campaigns players can establish control of regions. Regions controlled in this way are called bases. Like a good or ship, a base is **always controlled by one firm**. Like ships and goods, bases may be bought and sold between firms and are lost if the firm fails. Bases are always considered **OPEN** but trade may be restricted by the base owner (see below).

Formation during Revolt. After a region Revolts during the Events in India players may make a bid to establish authority over the region. The bid begins with a random player and proceeds clockwise until all players but one have passed. The minimum bid is twice the value of the region's defense. Bids may be increased in any increments. Players who pass may not reenter bidding. After the auction, the winning bid is paid to the bank and the region is placed in front of the winning bidder. Place the corresponding base card (on the reverse side of the **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** card) over the top of the region as if the Company had conquered it. Any ships that would have been lost during a Revolt remain on the card.

Operation of Bases. Bases confer several advantages. Bases generate tax revenue for their owner at the start of the Trade Phase. Other players may sail there only with the permission of the owning player. This permission must be granted before the Sail Action is taken. As a Family Action, a base's owner can take any of the base's listed actions (Invest or Campaign)

according to the standard rules. If a campaign is successful, the conquered region becomes a base immediately. Players may not campaign against other bases. *Note: As firms have no standing armies, they must rely entirely on mercenaries to conduct campaigns.*

Bases in Negotiation, Merger, and Firm Failure. Bases can be negotiated like a good or ship. They may be bought and sold and are subject to merger. If a firm fails, any bases owned by that firm immediately become **CLOSED** and **SOVEREIGN**.

K6. The Militant Company (Solo Game)

The goal of the solo game is simple: conquer India. The game is won at the end of an Evening Post Phase when all **PROVINCIAL OFFICES** have been established. The game ends one of four ways: at the end of the twelfth game turn, by Mutiny (J4), if expenses cannot be paid, or if no regions are dominated by the company when the Governor General is created.

☛ **Setup:** In the solo game, there are no families, only the Company. No prize cards are used. Player cubes are not needed. Setup the region cards and **PRESIDENCIES** as per the Early Company scenario. Shuffle all of the Evening Post cards but “Revoke Monopoly,” “Monopoly Revoked,” and “Governor General.” Make a stack of eleven Evening Post cards and then place the “Governor General” roughly halfway in the stack.

Rules Differences:

- ☛ In the Evening Post Phase, skip Attrition and Proposed Laws, except the Governor General, which will always be created after that game turn’s event rolls. **If no regions are dominated when the Governor General is created, the game is over.**
- ☛ During the Company Phase, an unlimited supply of goods and ships can be purchased. Ships always cost £3. The price of a good depends on the Evening Post card. If the price of goods is zero, no goods are purchased that game turn. Factories are always assumed to be present.
- ☛ If an office takes an action which fails, the office cannot act until the next Company Phase.
- ☛ Plunder gained in Campaign is ignored.
- ☛ During Expenses, the Company must pay £1 for each **PROVINCIAL OFFICE** and for each **GUN** and officer. After the Governor General has been created, the Company must pay £2 for each **PROVINCIAL OFFICE**.
- ☛ The Debt action and Emergency Loans (G4) may never be taken.
- ☛ **Scoring.** The player’s score is the number of regions conquered when the game ends. As a tiebreaker, the score achieved in fewer game turns should be considered better.

L. NOTES

L1. Design

The outlines of *John Company* were first sketched out sometime in late 2009 on a porch in Bloomington, Indiana. Design continued intermittently over the next few years. A serious attempt was made to finish the design in 2011 in Austin, Texas and again in 2013. Active development for this iteration began in early 2016 and was completed in the spring of 2017.

- ☛ Game Design, Graphic Design, Research: Cole Wehrle
- ☛ Game Development, Master of India: Chas Threlkeld
- ☛ Our Venerable Rules Editor: Travis D. Hill
- ☛ Playtesting: Cati Wehrle, Drew Wehrle, Grayson Page, Mark von Minden, Morten Kattenhøj, Christopher Felleisen, Matthew Clark and the First Minnesota, Nathan Spillman, Davey Janik-Jones, Andy Mesa, Brad Keusch, Jim Parkin, Adam Brock, Chris Broadbent

Special Thanks to the many friends who indulged my early designs and whose confusion and dissatisfaction pushed me to scrap bad ideas in search of something better. Thanks also to Karim Chakroun for his many suggestions for the game's graphic design, work polishing the event icons, and his excellent rules questions, and to Dominique Bonjour for excellent proofing of these rules.

L2. Scale

Each game turn represents about half a generation (about fifteen years). A successful writer in the service of the Company could expect a full career, though many left before aging out due to other opportunities. This turnover is modelled with the attrition system.

The value of a single coin is harder to track. In the beginning, a single coin in the family treasury represents about two thousand pounds and in the Company treasury represents several times that value. This difference in magnitude is one reason why players may not freely transfer capital between Company Offices and their family's treasury. When money does transfer from Company to player, it is assumed to be greatly diminished either because of corruption (both Company and government rent-seeking) or scale (directors paying out dividends). The one place where the design necessitated the breaking of this rule is in the purchase of shares where family money can be put back into the Company. Here the share purchases of a single family should be understood as standing in for renewed public investment in the Company.

L3. A History of *John Company* by Cole Wehrle

Some games begin with specific mechanics. Others begin with a particular mood. The design of *John Company* began with an institution, the British East India Company. How did that Company come to dominate the economic and political future of the Indian subcontinent? How did it make decisions and what led to its demise? Who were the people who shaped it and, by extension, shaped so much of the world around them?

None of the answers to those questions came easily. I have been trying to make a game about the Company for nearly a decade. The designs have never quite worked, but the process proved generative. *Pax Pamir* began as a rumination on the Company's policy on India's northwestern frontier. *An Infamous Traffic* began as a highly asymmetrical economic simulation about the Company's trade with China. In the development of both games, there was a shift in perspective—moving from Auckland's Office to Afghan villages in the case of the former and from the trading rooms on Leadenhall Street to the black markets of Lintin island in the latter. Making a game that actually directed its attention on the Company itself seemed impossible. The key breakthrough happened while reading two books. The first was K. N. Chaudhuri's *The Trading World of Asia and the East India Company*. The second came while reading Jean Sutton's *The East India Company's Maritime Service, 1746,1834*. Chaudhuri's book is the product of a decade of close research in the East India Company's archives and presents an unparalleled view of the Company's decision-making process and the economic circumstances that guided official policy. Sutton's book provided a secondary "bottom-up" perspective through detailed account of a family that through three generations rose through the Company's ranks to eventually control the Company's shipbuilding. Together, both books presented a view of the Company as a vast and deeply conflicted institution. It wasn't long before I had a new approach to my design problems. The scattered and contradictory Company that I had been wrestling with for years wasn't a barrier to the game. It was the game.

Some players will be alarmed by the degree to which this design relies on dice. Dice were central to the design from the start. While I generally dislike dice games, any game on eighteenth century trade at this scale that does not include some element of chance is simply an exercise in wishful thinking. The spending decisions faced by governors, residents, and presidencies captures the basic budgetary tension that was faced by their historic counterparts: how should one balance trade with security? But even a well-formed budget can be foiled by a single bad roll. The dice system guarantees that failure is always a possibility. However, by having players spend Company money and not their own, they were shielded from the worst iniquities of fate. Thematically, the sense of pooled risk enabled by the organization of the Company seemed like a perfect way to capture the spirit of the East India Company and other early joint stock and charter companies like it.

Indian politics offered an interesting design problem. In a region with hundreds of small political actors, several full-fledged empires, and enough espionage to make Le Carré's head spin, I knew I would need a hefty dose of restraint to stay sane. Yet, at the same time, there needed to be some representation of this political landscape. The old idea of the event table came to the rescue. Using a few simple guidelines, I was able to write the event tables into a simple Python script which was then greatly improved by the game's developer, Chas Threlkeld. Using this script, hundreds of thousands of games were "played" and a huge range of metrics could be assembled to guide alterations to the 32 event tables. Though obviously limited by the scope and complexity of the game, the event system produces reasonably realistic results where ahistorical outcomes can usually be explained by a little historical knowledge. In an ideal world, I would have loved to have printed a sentence or two about each of the games 192 events. If the game doesn't always produce the specific situations that faced officers of the East India Company, I hope it does provide players with a window into their anxiety about the land in which they worked.

Over the course of the game, that spirit of cooperation will erode, just as it did historically. Interests on the subcontinent with taxing operations or back home in manufacturing may encourage players to not always consider the Company's best interests when various proposals come up for a vote in Parliament. Families with interests outside of the Company will certainly be interested in making the Company more cumbersome and having its charter revoked, but they were not the only forces working to regulate the Company. The increased oversight and regulation brought through various India Acts should be understood as something of an "inside job" with families deeply invested in one part of the Company seeking to reform the other elements.

To these two groups, I should add a third: those elements of society who supported a more militarized Company. If a single group deserves blame for the Company's deterioration and end, it belongs with these western despots who saw India as a land for personal glory. They left behind not only a shattered political landscape but also a massive industrial-military complex with an overhead so high it eventually crushed the Company's profitability. In the game, this element of the Company is reflected in the three Presidency Armies and the promise of security they offer, as well as the power of the Military Affairs Office and the provincial offices. Of course, many licenses were also taken with the military matters, which dramatically simplified the command structure of the Presidency Armies and greatly exaggerated the profit potential of soldiers in it through the plunder system. However, I felt that this incentive was critical in capturing the very real warmongering that caused such headaches back in the Company Offices in London and that contributed to the collapse of the Company.

The historical narrative of growth and decay is certainly possible in *John Company*, but so too are other stories. A strong East India Company lobby could protect the monopoly and early regulation may keep its excesses in check. Or, perhaps the free traders could get an early start and break its monopoly before it gains a political foothold. So too might the Company evaporate if the subcontinent proves too hostile to British interests. Though there are only five unique events in the game, a huge variety of outcomes are certainly possible. I hope you find as much joy in exploring them as I did in building this design.

L4. Business or Bureaucracy? by Phil Eklund

The difference between force and persuasion is the most fundamental distinction in political science. A street hawker and a street mugger can both empty your wallet. But one uses persuasion, in such a way as both parties profit, while the other uses force, at knife or gunpoint.

Defining “government” as the institution with a monopoly of force in an area, the street mugger is the government, at least on this street. At least until the police arrive. But in an anarchy, the mugger's governance can be permanent.

The collapse of Mughal authority in the eighteenth century created such an anarchy of competing warlords in India. To protect their trade, the East India Company (E.I.C.) gradually took a larger political role on the subcontinent. The parts of India that came under Company governance drew their profits as taxes from the merchants and landowners, both of whom benefited from the restoration of order.

A business is a cooperative whose members only use persuasion in their dealings. If they use force, either colluding with or becoming the government, they become de facto bureaucrats, and the business becomes a branch of the government. Stocks or profits do not define a business, as politicians also take profits and issue stocks.

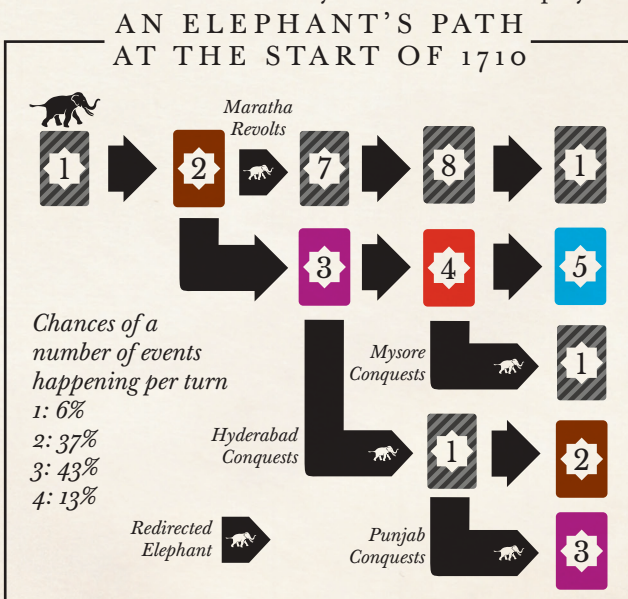
The E.I.C. is a prime example of a de facto bureaucracy. Not only did it enjoy a monopoly backed by the cannon of the British Navy, to the exclusion of competitors, it had the monopoly of guns in the areas of India it controlled and governed. Like all bureaucracies, if it took a loss, it was bailed out by the crown.

The British government was the most benevolent governing institution during its day. Thanks to the Enlightenment, it introduced to the world the concepts taken for granted in the West today: separation of powers, equality of all under the rule of Law, the king not exempt from the Law, and the abolition of slavery and the caste system. All of these innovations were stonewalled by the E.I.C. in India. Although domestic monopolies were abolished by the Long Parliament, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688, overseas monopolies lingered on, as rewards for those who sided with the crown. Especially scandalous was the delay in the abolition of slavery, a full decade after it was abolished in the rest of the British empire in 1833. It was a good thing for India when the E.I.C was disenfranchised by rival bureaucracies.

L5. Cole's Guide to India

Before we begin our tour of India, it's worth making a general point about the event system in *John Company*: events are not as random as they seem. Whenever players consider the risks of a particular action, there are three things they should always keep in their mind.

- The location of the Elephant. On average the Elephant will take between two and three steps per game turn. By looking at the Elephant's current location you can be certain where it will take its first step that game turn, and have a pretty good idea the various paths it can take. Remember to keep in mind the way the Elephant can be redirected.



- ☛ **The Balance of India.** The Balance of India tilts throughout play. When tilted to chaos, there is a 74% chance that the event roll will be a 4, 5, or 6. Chaos means depression, revolt, and war. Whereas order translates to peace and prosperity.
- ☛ **Not all regions are the same.** Just because two different orders in two different regions provide the same revenue doesn't mean that the risks associated with them are comparable.

Now let's look at those regions, starting at the top.

The **Punjab** is the seat of Mughal authority in India. At the start of the campaign game, the Mughal Empire is the dominant force in India, but will likely crumble in the first few turns of the game. The defeat of the Marathas at the start of the century proved short lived and by the 1720s the Empire was experiencing massive revolts. Like many regions in *John Company*, Punjab behaves very differently depending on its economic status. When depressed it will lash out in times of chaos, while the same aggressive behavior is more likely during order if Punjab is prosperous. And, while conquest will likely be cost prohibitive when Punjab is part of an empire, its 4 plunder can make it an enticing target if it can be attacked when alone.

Maratha's low plunder, tax, and possible revenue from orders usually keep it outside of the Company's influence. This is mostly a representation of the logistical nightmare presented by the thousands of Maratha microstates that frustrated British and Mughal authorities alike. More than any other region, Maratha's behavior changes dramatically depending on its economic status. When prosperous, it will seek to create a vast central Indian state and can threaten company interests in Bombay. Until their defeat by the British in Second and Third Anglo-Maratha wars of the early 19th century, the Maratha Confederacy was the primary power on the subcontinent.

Hyderabad offers the company their most lucrative trading opportunity at some considerable risk. While not easily conquered, orders can be easily disrupted in times of chaos and even a depressed Hyderabad, if still lucrative, can prove damaging if the collapse events are triggered. This uncertainty reflects both the interference of other European powers and also the local piracy that constantly threatened the precious natural resources of the region. The possibility of a significant empire emerging around Hyderabad is remote. If Maratha revolts, the tilt to chaos will usually keep Hyderabad from developing dominions. However if Mughal authority stays strong, India will sometimes polarize between that northern empire and a southern one.

Mysore is similar to Hyderabad. The emergence of a southern empire of some size often hinges on which region begins conquering its neighbors first. Like Maratha, Mysore is usually less valuable to the company for its limited potential revenue, but it can be a good idea for the Bombay Presidency to open the region to trade in chaotic times to prevent Mysore from threatening Bombay.

Bengal is the region that will usually guarantee the Company's financial viability during the opening turns of the Early Company scenario. It can also be a tempting first conquest with high tax values and weak revolts. The only downside to the conquest is that it reduces the regions excellent natural defense of 2 to 0 and forces the Company to garrison an army large enough to fend off the other Indian states—such as the Punjab, which might threaten it again.

Bombay is a puzzle. Though western India had been a huge commercial fixture in the Company's past history, by 1710 it was exhausted and subject to infighting. The puzzle it offers to the Company is easily stated but hard to resolve: no region benefits more from prosperity than Bombay, but conquering Bombay and providing the investment necessary to jumpstart the region can open the company up to the threat of revolt and of conquest. No region is as likely to be attacked and conquered by non-British actors as Bombay.

Sindh is also a not a desirable conquest. This is less a function of the threat offered from other regions than from its tendency to revolt—representing both the autonomy of local power in the Sindh and the predilection of Afghan tribes to raid the area. For

this reason, the Company should probably stay away until late in the game, though the region is often a good target for the open trade action. The two strength 6 conquest events represent the invasion of India by Nader Shah of Persia. If the Mughal Empire can avoid the revolt of Maratha, the power of this invasion can splinter even a stable empire.

Madras may seem like a good Company target both for the possibilities of investment and for its high tax value. However, Madras should only be attempted if the Company can defend it. The revolts on the Madras card represent the interference of France and other European powers against British dominance in India.

L6. Endnotes

¹ Most SMG games take place in relatively lawless arenas: *fin de siècle* Mexico, nineteenth century Afghanistan, fifteenth century Europe. For this reason, negotiations are never enforceable. This matter is different with respect to the British Empire. One of the most important advantages of the British Empire was its robust legal system, especially with regards to tort law and enforceable contracts. These legal codes were additionally reinforced by a social and cultural environment that punished dishonorable behavior. Of course, these codes often only applied to the actions of the British men with other British men. *John Company's* promise system reflect the consequences of these systems and allows for the possibility of multi-turn agreements between players.

² By the eighteenth century, the Company was directly responsible for the construction of its own ships. However, it relied on a broad network of suppliers both for materials and for the provisioning of those ships--costs which often dwarfed the actual construction of the ships. Player cubes in the shipyard resource box therefore represent the development of these non-Company industries and the growth of the ship building lobby within the company.

³ The cubes on the Court of Directors represent more than stock certificates. Those with considerable interest in the Company formed the Court of Directors, which managed the Company under the direction of a Chairman elected from the court. Though the Court of Directors was answerable to the broader General Court (shareholders of more limited interest), in practice the broader court never interfered with Company business.

⁴ The cube limit reflects the ability of a family to be cohesive. The removal of a prize or manor cube represents the children of an established wing of the family seeking their fortune elsewhere.

⁵ Global trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth century involved considerable risk, and those who held executive positions in a Company often had to make difficult budgetary decisions. Company profits could fluctuate from 22% (1713) to -8% (1722). Later in the century, these profits stabilized somewhat around 5%, but the stability was mostly due to an increase in lending practices that allowed factories and foreign Offices to continue to operate through challenging circumstances. Within the game, chaos is driven both by events and by player choice. Checks represent the chaos of the Indian political landscape as well as global forces. The failure of a roll might represent company corruption, accidents, or mismanagement.

⁶ In *John Company* the difference between goods and ships represents two different Company strategies. Ships represent investments in infrastructure and capacity. Good, in contrast, represent a higher bandwidth commercial strategy that relied on short-term shipping contracts with third parties. So, when goods move with the Sail Action, their physical movement should be understood as dependent on actors outside of the game.

⁷ Captains were allowed to profit directly from inter-Asiatic trade (sometimes called the "country trade") so long as they did not attempt to privately export to the West. Though these trades were allowed, they did considerable damage to the Company's profitability due to the opportunity costs associated with these trades. In game terms the money paid from the Company to its Captains should be understood as money earned by the Captains through their own private efforts and the Company's losses should be understood as a theft of time. Though Captains may have been able to make the most revenue from such trades, virtually all Company employees could participate in the inter-Asiatic trade and even develop businesses that operated solely in Asia. For this reason, even low-level Company positions such as writers could be quite lucrative. Regrettably the scale of *John Company* does not allow for a full treatment of this level of the Company's operation. For more, see Holden Furber's book *John Company at Work* and Peter Marshall's article "Private British Trade in the Indian Ocean before 1800" which can be found within Patrick Tuck's massive edited collection, *The East India Company 1600-1858*.

⁸ A black disk on an office represents some barrier in a player converting their status in the Company to respectability back home. This may be due to corruption and scandal (via the Board of Control) or because the region was eliminated through revolt or conquest. Even the highly publicized trial of Warren Hastings did not derail reentry into polite society.

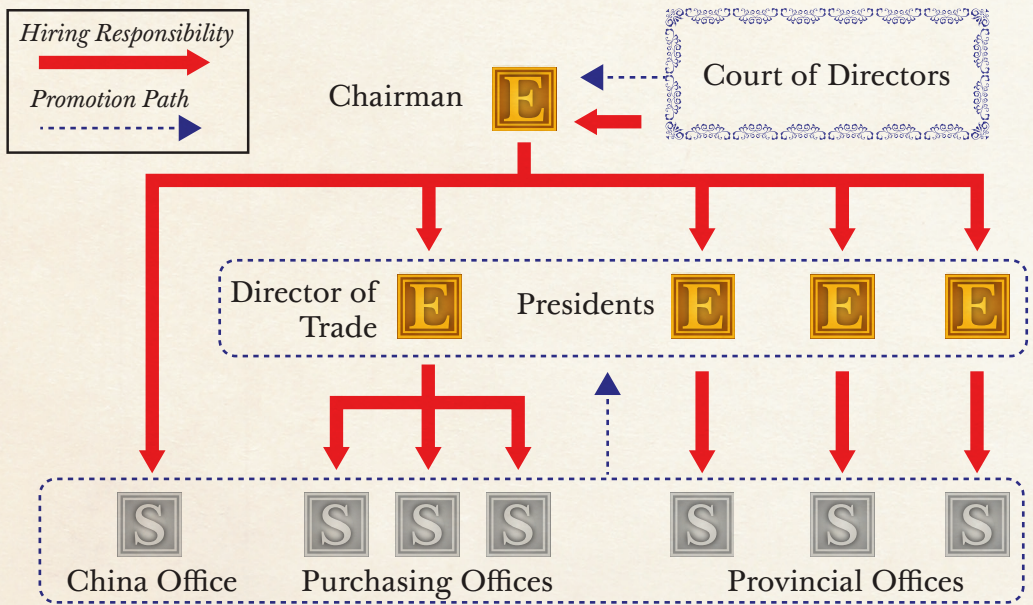
⁹ Over the course of the eighteenth century the East India Company was bailed out over a dozen times. Many of these bailouts were small and are captured, partly, through the debt action. However the Company also benefited from several massive bailouts, including, most famously, in 1772 which led directly to both the Tea Acts and the Regulating Act of 1773. The forces leading to these bailouts usually related to either British domestic policy (most especially protectionist policies meant to shield the budding British textile industry from superior Indian products) or economic depressions and collapses in India.

¹⁰ The Sepoy Mutiny/First War of Indian Independence was simply one of many international debacles that would have led to the British government seizing control of the Company's political project in India. In *John Company* such an event could occur gradually or in one dramatic burst of revolution. In some of these instances the British Government may have stepped into the vacuum and reasserted British power in the region. However, in other situations, especially those where there was little investment in the area, the British government would likely have not mounted an intervention. *John Company* leaves this question open.

What Are My Chances?

	1d6	2d6	3d6	4d6	5d6	6d6	7d6
✓	33%	55%	70%	80%	87%	91%	94%
✗	33%	33%	26%	18%	13%	9%	6%
↩	33%	11%	4%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Who Hires Whom?



What's Happening in India?

- Flip region. TILT direction of flip. DISRUPT orders if now DEPRESSED.
- TILT to chaos. DISRUPT any complete orders.
- TILT to order.
- Region becomes SOVEREIGN and CLOSED. TILT to chaos. May cancel with Police Action.
- to lowest DOMINATED
- If attack strength is > target's defense, target becomes DOMINATED.
- to lowest SOVEREIGN

Officers may also be promoted to PROVINCIAL OFFICES

Writers

	Punjab	Maratha	Hyderabad	Mysore	Bengal	Bombay	Sindh	Madras
6 TURNS								
Conquered	14%	10%	37%	17%	50%	77%	16%	57%
Depression	11%	50%	82%	64%	67%	36%	45%	33%
10 TURNS								
Conquered	28%	13%	49%	30%	65%	88%	29%	71%
Depression	34%	62%	90%	84%	82%	58%	63%	52%

Probabilities indicate chance of event happening at least **once** in a game with a sample size of 250,000 games. Depression numbers include flips to Depressed and Collapse events.