

# Love Letter™



Rules of Play

# Overview

In *Love Letter*, 2–6 suitors compete to have their missives delivered to the kingdom's princess, who seeks an ideal partner and confidant for when she assumes the throne.

## Contents



21 CHARACTER CARDS      6 REFERENCE CARDS



13 FAVOR TOKENS

1 CLOTH BAG

# Setup

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1. Give each player a reference card and return any remaining reference cards to the box.

Reference cards list the values, effects, and quantity of each character card type.

2. Shuffle the 21 character cards to create the deck. Place the deck facedown on the table within easy reach of all players.
3. Take the top card of the deck and set it aside **facedown** without looking at it. If you are playing a two-player game, take three more cards and set those aside **faceup**.
4. Deal each player one card from the deck as their starting hand.
5. The player who most recently hand-wrote a letter takes the first turn.

# Playing the Game

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*Love Letter* is played over several game rounds in which you enlist the allies, friends, and family of the Princess to carry a letter of intent to her.

The card in your hand represents the person who currently carries your letter, but this can change during the round as you draw and play cards.

To win a round, you must either have the highest-value card at the end of the round or be the only player left in the round.

## Player Turn

Take turns in clockwise order. On your turn, draw one card from the deck. Then, choose and play one of your two cards, resolving its effect.

The played card stays in your play area **faceup**, and you keep the other card in your hand.



## Out of the Round

Some card effects knock you out of the current round; a competing suitor has ensured that your letter cannot be delivered.

When this happens, **discard your hand faceup in front of you** (without resolving card effects).

Until the next round, **you cannot be chosen for card effects, and your turn is skipped**. Flip over your reference card to the broken seal side as a reminder.

## Played and Discarded Cards

It is important that everyone know which cards have already been played and which cards are left in the deck, so any played or discarded cards **must always be visible to everyone**.

## End of a Round

The round ends in one of two ways: when the **deck runs out** or when only **one player is left** in the round.

### Deck Runs Out

**After any turn**, if the deck is empty, all players still in the round reveal and compare the cards in their hands.

If you have the highest-value card, you win the round and gain one favor token; your letter was successfully delivered to the Princess.



If there is a tie, all tied players win the round and each gains one token.

### One Player Left

If you are the only player still in the round (all other players are out of the round due to card effects), the round immediately ends; you win and gain one favor token.





# Starting the Next Round

To start a new round, repeat steps 2–4 of setup (shuffle the character cards, set some aside, and deal each player one card). **The player who won the previous round** takes the first turn.

If there was a tie in the previous round, randomly decide among the tied players who takes the first turn.

# Winning the Game

The game ends when one player has enough favor tokens to win (based on the number of players—see table below). Multiple players can simultaneously win the game.

	2	3	4	5	6
	6	5	4	3	3



# Card Effects

Each card features a key person in the Princess's life. A set of dots on the left side of each card shows how many of that card are in the deck (with yellow indicating what to remove for the classic version, see page 14).



The text on each card is a brief summary of the card's effect. The following section, pages 8–13, provides the complete rules for each character.



## 9. Princess

If you either play or discard the Princess **for any reason**, you are immediately out of the round.





## 8. Countess

The Countess has no effect when played or discarded.

You **must** play the Countess as the card for your turn if either the **King** or a **Prince** is the other card in your hand.

You can still choose to play the Countess as the card for your turn even if you do not have the King or a Prince.

When you play the Countess, **do not reveal your other card**; the other players will not know if you were forced to play it or chose to play it.

The Countess's effect does not apply when you draw cards for other effects (Chancellor).



## 7. King

Choose another player and trade hands with that player.





## 6. Chancellor ○○

Draw two cards from the deck into your hand. Choose and keep **one** of the three cards now in your hand, and place the other **two** facedown on the bottom of the deck in any order.

If there is only one card in the deck, draw it and return one card. If there are no cards left, this card is played with no effect.



## 5. Prince ●●

Choose **any** player (including yourself). That player discards their hand (without resolving its effect) and draws a new hand.

If the deck is empty, the chosen player draws the facedown set-aside card.

If a player chooses you for the Prince effect, and you are forced to discard the Princess, you are out of the round.





## 4. Handmaid ●●

Until the start of **your next turn**, other players cannot choose you for their card effects.

In the rare case that **all other players** still in the round are “protected” by a Handmaid when you play a card, do the following:

- ♠ If that card requires you to choose **another player** (Guard, Priest, Baron, King), your card is played with no effect.
- ♠ If that card requires you to choose **any player** (Prince), then you must choose yourself for the effect.



### 3. Baron ●●

Choose another player. You and that player secretly compare your hands. Whoever has the lower-value card is out of the round.

If there is a tie, neither player is out of the round.



### 2. Priest ●●

Choose another player and secretly look at their hand (without revealing it to anyone else).



### 1. Guard ●●●●●●●

Choose another player and name a character other than Guard. If the chosen player has that card in their hand, they are out of the round.



## O. Spy ○ ○

A Spy has no effect when played or discarded.

At the end of the round, if you are the **only player still in the round** who played or discarded a Spy, you gain one favor token.

This does not count as winning the round; the winner (even if it is you) still gains their token.

Even if you play and/or discard two Spies, you still gain only one token.

## Rule Mistakes

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Accidental or not, there are many ways in which a player could make a rule mistake, such as dishonesty when chosen for a Guard effect or by not playing the Countess when required.


Players should make sure they understand game rules and always double-check their cards; mistakes like these can strongly disrupt the play experience.


# Classic Version

Included in this edition of *Love Letter* are the rules to play the classic version of the game, though it supports **only 2–4 players**.

To play the classic version, before setup, return these cards to the bag:

 1 Guard

 2 Chancellors

 2 Spies

All other rules for the game are unchanged.

# Credits

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**Game Design:** Seiji Kanai

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**Producer:** Justin Kemppainen

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# Quick Reference

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## Setup & Start of Round

Shuffle the 21 cards. Set one aside facedown (and three more faceup if playing with two players).



Deal one card to each player. The player who last hand-wrote a letter (or won the previous round) takes the first turn.

## Taking A Turn

Draw one card. Play one of your two cards, resolving its effect.

## End of Round

The round ends in one of two ways, and the winner gains one favor token:

-  If the deck is empty, the highest card wins.
-  If all players but one are out of the round, the player still in the round wins.