

Our Great Historian

The Bayeux Tapestry

For 3-6 players

Objective: To become the Great Historian by acquiring the most wealth and fame in the reconstruction of the Bayeux Tapestry. At the end of the game, the player with the most Silver is the Great Historian and the winner.

Setup: Shuffle the deck. The most educated player is the Sovereign first (judge) and the other players are the Historians for the first turn. If there is a dispute as to which player is the most educated, the oldest of the players is the Sovereign first. When the Sovereign is selected, that player begins the game with 1 silver piece for their privilege.

General Play: During each game turn, one player serves as the Sovereign (judge), and the other players each serve as Historians and contribute to the Bayeux Tapestry. The historians are each dealt 3 cards in a way that the historian can see its own cards but not anyone else's. The Sovereign then covers his eyes while the Historians contribute to the tapestry.

On the first turn, each historian is attempting to create the start of the tapestry by arranging their 3 cards sequentially. When a historian is satisfied with their contribution, they arrange their cards sequentially in the center of the table. Each other historian arranges their contributions parallel to the first so that the board looks something like this.

[A1] [A2] [A3]

[B1] [B2] [B3]

[C1] [C2] [C3]

(where the letters A, B, and C represent the different players, where the numbers 1, 2, and 3 represent the order in which the cards are to be interpreted)

When each historian's contribution is on the board, the Sovereign can uncover their eyes and interpret the contributions. Each historian remains silent during this step, or at least refrains from disclosing which contribution was their own. The Sovereign selects one sequence of 3 cards, and the Historian that contributed the sequence earns 2 silver coins. During the selection process, the Sovereign is encouraged to read each contribution aloud, and they can select the winning contribution based on their own criteria rather than what was more historically accurate. The sequence that was selected stays on the board as a permanent part of the tapestry, and the cards that were not selected are moved to the discard pile. The role of Sovereign then moves clockwise around the table (though the new Sovereign is not issued any silver).

On subsequent turns, the Sovereign deals each historian 3 cards from the deck, and they repeat the contribution process with the following changes.

- 1- Before a historian submits their contribution, they can pay one silver for an additional card, and must discard a card after the new card is dealt. A player can only do this once per turn.
- 2- The new contributions continue where the previous cards left off. The board might look something like this.

[A4] [A5] [A6]
[H1] [H2] [H3] [B4] [B5] [B6]
[C4] [C5] [C6]

(Where H1, H2, and H3 were the previous contributions, where the letters A, B, and C represent the different players, where the numbers 1-6 represent the order in which the cards are to be interpreted. Most tables are not long enough for the entire deck to be displayed in an unbroken line. As the game continues, the tapestry will need to be displayed in multiple lines like a comic book.)

- 3- When the deck runs out, the discard pile is shuffled and becomes the deck. When there will not be enough cards for each historian to be dealt 3 even after the discard pile is shuffled, the game enters its final turn as described below.

The Final Turn: The historians are each dealt 3 cards starting with the historian with the fewest coins. Any remaining cards (less than 3) are given to the Sovereign to be used later. On this turn, no player can purchase an additional card. Any historian with 3 cards plays the turn as usual. After the Sovereign has made a selection, the unused cards are given to the Sovereign instead of placed in the discard pile, and the Sovereign arranges all of the remaining cards as the ending of the tapestry, and earns 1 silver for the privilege.

The player with the most silver is the winner and the Great Historian, and must read the resulting tapestry from start to finish documentary style. If there are two or more players tied for the most silver, the winner is the tied player who played the cards closest to the end of the tapestry (This is always the last Sovereign if tied).

Optional rules and variations

One True King: one player serves as the sovereign for the entire game, making their criteria clear from the beginning. In this variation, ignore any rules about awarding the Sovereign coins, as the Sovereign is not truly trying to win. Instead, only the Historians compete, and only the Sovereign judges. For an additional challenge, the Sovereign might be trying to assemble the tapestry as accurately as they can without reference material, a task that is nearly impossible to do perfectly within the game's rules.

More Research: In this variation, each player has a hand of 5 cards, from which they select 3 to play when they contribute, and draw 3 more cards after their contribution is final. Any time a

player would have the option of paying a silver to draw an additional card, instead they choose to discard any number of cards from their hand and draw an equal number. When the deck and discard pile begin to run thin, the game would need to revert to the default rules for the final turns.

Dramatization: Instead of the historians submitting their contributions in a hidden way, the sovereign does not cover their eyes during submission. Instead, each historian in clockwise order from the sovereign takes turns playing out their submission, reading it in a dramatized way. The sovereign then selects a contribution based on the performance in addition to the cards themselves.

Independent Research: When historians have submitted their contributions, the top 3 cards of the deck are also laid out as if they were a historian's contribution. If the sovereign selects that sequence of cards, no one earns any silver for the turn. (recommended for 3 or 4 player games)

Too Many Cooks: The game could be played with 7 or more players, but the final turn would be bizarre, and the game will take much longer.

Room for expansion

If the card backings have no unique markings relating to the Bayeux tapestry, then additional sets and expansions of Our Great Historian can be produced and mixed together. This set of rules (with some changes in the points currency and judge titles) could be applied to decks of cards depicting other chronological historical events, for example hieroglyphics, or photographs from World War 2. They could be played as independent boxed games, or mixed together for a more comical experience. Smaller add-on expansions could be made for historical works related-to the larger boxed games, or even that are entirely unrelated (for example, a small deck of Ancient Aliens cards, for a History Channel experience).