Tabletop Board Games

All the stuff you need to know

Much like RPGs, board games have seen a huge resurgence in popularity in the past decade. Literally thousands of new games come out every year, so it can be a bit dizzying to keep up. But fear not, you don’t have to! We can get you acquainted with the staples of the new board gaming world that are the cornerstone of a good gaming group.

When we talk about modern board games, it’s important to know that we are not talking about Monopoly, Sorry, Candy Land, etc. For many adults, that’s the first and last exposure to board gaming, but it doesn’t have to be! To put it mildly, the new breed of games are not your grandparent’s board games. With respect to the past, these games breathe new life into the medium that many people never imagined was possible.

There are many different types of games to choose from, and each brings their own style to the table. Party games are games that are usually shorter, have simpler rules, and can accommodate a high player count with plenty of interaction. You might have heard of games like Apples to Apples or it’s adult-counterpart Cards Against Humanity, but the genre goes much deeper. Popular titles include Codenames, Decrypto, Captain Sonar, One Night Ultimate Werewolf, and Dixit.

Card games are another genre of games that falls under the umbrella as board games. These games involve cards, but can also involve boards and other pieces as well. The giant here is Magic the Gathering, but there are many other games that fall into this category. Examples include Dominion, Citadels, Netrunner, and Lord of the Rings Living Card Game.

The biggest type of game is the strategy game, which casts the largest net that many games fall under. These games involve more complex rules and strategic thinking. They can involve cards, dice, and other components. Perhaps the biggest game in the modern era and certainly one credited for kickstarting the boom we are enjoying today is Catan, also known as The Settlers of Catan. Other examples include Puerto Rico, Orleans, Terraforming Mars, and The Castles of Burgundy.

An important subgenre of games to know is the cooperative game. These games are usually teams or the entire group versus the board itself. Players work together to try and win, cooperating on strategies and ideas. Big names in this entry include Pandemic, Magic Maze, Robinson Crusoe, Mysterium, and The Grizzled.

Finally, it’s important to realize that family genre has been brought into the modern age as well, making gaming fun for both the kids and adults. Games are available for all ages so don’t get stuck playing Monopoly ever again! Examples include King of Tokyo, Ticket to Ride: First Ride, and Pass the Panda.

There are many subgenres in gaming, and even more games that can be classified by their mechanics. But to start off, you don’t need to know of that. You can just start gaming and it will all fall into place. When you are looking to know more, an excellent resource for all things gaming is BoardGameGeek.com.

To start a game group can be pretty easy- you need a room where gamers can play and a few games. That’s it! Actually, you might not even need the games- many gamers bring their own. As with the other groups, you want a consistent date and time so you can build a community around it and to decide what age range you want. We run our sessions for 2 ½ hours- anything less might be hard to have people play anything more than party games. Try and make sure it doesn’t conflict with another group, if possible. We have both a family and adult one, so we can accommodate all ages and skill levels.

Aside from flyers in your library, consider finding friendly local gaming stores and seeing if they will let you hang up fliers. Post in groups online and see if you can tap into other local groups. People are always looking for places to play and new people to play with. Good luck!