

VOC

FOUNDING THE DUTCH EAST INDIES COMPANY

Corrected rules of the advanced game, v 1.1 AE

It's 1602... Merchants from the rich provinces of Holland and neighboring Zeeland gather in stately rooms to discuss the foundation of a mighty consortium: a company that will hold the monopoly of the very profitable East Indies trade. One question occupies their minds more than anything: who will control the new company? Amsterdam is puffing up its might, but a small group of merchants from the wealthy Zeeland town Middelburg have gathered almost as much experience, wealth and power in the East Indies. One of them in particular is seen as being exceptionally powerful. You could be him!

Each player takes the role of a merchant living at the end of the sixteenth century. These merchants sent out ships to explore and expand the profitable trade in the east, where they traded cloves, nutmeg, silk and tea in such remote areas as India, Indonesia, China and Japan. These goods were then sold at great profit in the West. The journey, however, was a dangerous one and fitting out a ship was prohibitively expensive. Merchants therefore cooperated in small groups, called 'compagnie' in Dutch, to fit out ships together.

At the same time, competition was cut-throat, not only at home, where Amsterdam was the most fearsome rival, but also abroad. Therefore, a united company was founded in 1602: the 'Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie', or VOC for short. The company was governed by a board known as the 'Seventeen Lords'. Historically, Amsterdam got about half of the 17 seats in this mighty body, with Middelburg getting only 4 and the rest going to smaller towns. Your objective is to improve upon Zeeland's historical fate if you succeed, Middelburg will rival Amsterdam as the capital of the United Dutch Provinces!

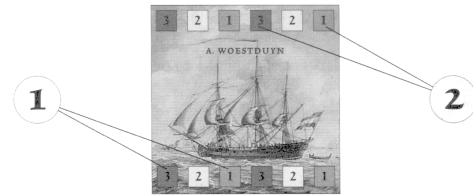
This sheet contains the rules for the advanced game, which can be played by 3 to 5 players. The rules for the basic game can be downloaded from <http://www.splotter.com/english/voc.html>.

GAME MATERIAL

This game contains:

Wooden cubes, representing men; depending on their placement, these can have different functions depending on where they are played on the board:

1. The contract with on the left side two cinnamon, two nutmeg and two cloves and on the right side one pepper is wrong; it should be understood as a contract for one cinnamon, one nutmeg and one clove, or two pepper.



1. Men which are placed are called merchants. They can carry goods from the East
2. Men which are placed here are called sailors. They can navigate the ship



Nutmeg



Cinnamon



Tea



Coffee



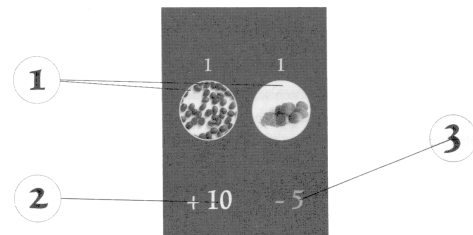
Textiles



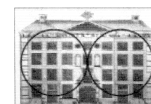
Cloves



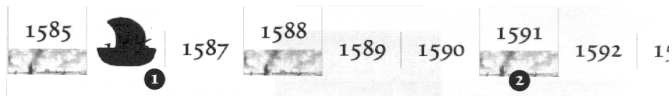
Pepper (placed in the harbor printed)



1. The goods needed to fulfill this contract. The numbers above the goods indicate how many are needed to fulfill the contract¹.
2. The amount you earn fulfilling this contract.
3. The amount you will lose if you do not fulfill the contract at the agreed time



Warehouses for each player. You can put your men and up to two goods in your warehouse.



1. Ship indicates the current year
2. In the years marked by a ships convoi, new contracts are turned open and scurvy occurs.



Four navigation cards; these can be written on using the marker provided (always use an erasable marker to do so!). The line at the bottom of each navigation card shows the starting area of each ship.



The year markers are used to define by the end of which year a contract must have been fulfilled



The Burgemeester card indicates which player is the current starting player.

PREPARATION

Put the board on the table. Sort the goods and place them in the matching harbors. Most harbors get four goods. Only the harbors selling pepper get one pepper each. Put the year markers in a row on top of the board.

Put the four navigation cards next to the board. Take the card marked 'VOC' out of the pile of contracts. Shuffle the remaining cards. Take 6 of them without looking. Shuffle these 6 together with the VOC card. Put this pile face-down on the table. Put the remaining contracts, face-down, on top of this pile.

Regardless of the number playing, each player gets 10 cubes, a warehouse and 10 daalders.

Take the top three contract cards and put these face-up next to the board, all facing the same way so that all players agree which side is left and which is right.

A game of VOC starts in 1585. Put the wooden ship on this year.

The youngest player gets the Burgemeester card, indicating he be the starting player in phase 3.

OUTLINE OF PLAY

VOC is played in a number of rounds, each symbolizing a year in the history of the VOC. Each year consists of 4 or 6 phases. In some phases, all players get a turn. In others, they do not.

Phase 1 (new orders) and 2 (scurvy) are played only in years marked with a ships' convoy. In the first round (1585), skip phase 1 and 2 and start with phase 3 immediately. We will now describe the phases in more detail.

PHASE 1: NEW ORDERS

This phase is played only in years indicated by a ships' convoy (but not in 1585!). All cards which do not have a man (cube) on them at the beginning of this phase are given to Amsterdam. Then, three new cards are turned open and placed to the right of the cards already on the table. If the VOC card is turned open, the game ends immediately (see the last page).

PHASE 2: SCURVY!

This phase is played only in years marked with a ships' convoy. Each ship which is not in the harbor of Middelburg loses one sailor to the effects of malnutrition on board. Take the left-most sailor from each ship and hand it back to the owner of that color.

If a ship has no more sailors, it sinks. Put back all goods into the harbors they came from. Give all men to the respective players. The ship can be refitted later in the same year.

Note that ships in harbors in the east still suffer from scurvy. Only those in Middelburg are exempt.

PHASE 3: INVESTMENTS

In this phase, players can invest to fit out ships. The Burgemeester (Mayor) of Middelburg, that is, the player holding the Burgemeester card, starts, followed by the others in clockwise order. In their turn, players choose to perform one of the following actions. When all players have had two turns, the phase ends.

Fitting out ships: a player places 4 men on one of the ships currently in Zeeland. On each ship, all slots marked 1 must be filled before any of the 2's can be used. The 3's can be used only if all 1's and 2's are gone. In the advanced game, the colors of the slots are not important.

A player may only place less than 4 men if he does not have enough men or if the ship has not enough slots to fill: in that case, he must place as many men on the ship as possible. It is never allowed to place more sailors than merchants on the ship. When there are two slots with the same number available for placing a sailor, the rightmost slot must be taken. The same rule applies to merchants.

A player can invest in multiple ships, but the 4 men placed

in one turn must all go into the same ship. Players may not add men to a ship that has sailed to the East.

Taking out a contract. Put a man on one of the unclaimed contracts. Take a year marker, and place it on the contract. This indicates before the end of which year you promise to fulfill the contract.

It is possible to take over a claimed contract by putting an earlier year-marker on it. The original player then gets his man back. To prevent others from taking over your contracts, it is allowed to put an earlier year-marker on a contract you have claimed yourself. In this case, keep the original man on the contract. When a contract is taken over or secured with an earlier year marker, the year marker which was on the contract before is put back in the row on top of the board, so that it can be reused later for other contracts.

In case all the year markers are gone (or indicate years in the past), you can always take out a contract for 1602. Put a man without a year marker on the contract to indicate this. Note that this is only allowed if no year markers are left!

Passing, or taking back men. A player may also pass, or take back all of his men from a ship currently in Zeeland. When men are taken back, the other men on the ship are moved to the right: men in the left half of the ship are move towards the middle of the ship as far as possible; men in the right half are shifted right as far as possible. Players may not take back men from multiple ships; neither may they take men from ships that have sailed to the East.

A player may freely determine which actions to take in his two turns. For instance, he may take out a contract both turns, or first pass, then fit out a ship, or first fit out a ships, then take out a contract, etcetera.

PHASE 4: TO THE EAST, AND BACK

In this phase, the ships A, B, C and D sail one after the other. Ships fitted out during phase 3 may sail immediately. Typically, a ship will try to move a certain distance. Ships are controlled by their skipper, that is, the player owning the leftmost sailor on the ship.

In the sixteenth century, navigating was no small task. The available maps were often imprecise. Moreover, it was impossible to determine the exact position of the ship in east-west direction. North-south position could be easily determined looking at the stars.

In the game, ships sail by means of a navigation card. Each ship has its own card. The skipper takes the pen provided with the game and puts it on the navigation card at the exact spot which marks the location of his ship. Ships sailing from Zeeland start anywhere on the line at the bottom of the navigation card.

Then, the skipper closes his eyes and draws the route he

wants the ship to sail. The other players look on and can provide limited assistance. For each sailor a player has on the ship, he may call out once. Calls are limited to the words ‘North’, ‘South’, ‘East’, ‘West’ or ‘Stop’. Each word counts as one complete call. If a player calls another word, or calls more often than allowed, he has to pay 5 daalders to the bank. The skipper, meanwhile, is free at any time to follow or ignore the instructions given.

When the skipper decides he has sailed far enough, he stops, takes the pen off the card and opens his eyes. Then, he puts a little cross on the card to mark the new location of his ship.

If a skipper crosses a coast while drawing, other players call out: ‘Land ho!’. The ship has run aground. Sometimes it is unclear whether a ship has crossed the coast, or if it is a near miss. It is advisable to let the skipper draw on, and judge afterwards if he has run ashore. This is the case if the line drawn crosses the coast, i.e., part of the line drawn is visible on the inside of the coastline. Running off the map is treated in the same way.

If a ship runs aground, the skipper cannot sail any further that year. Any drawing after the hit is ignored. Moreover, the leftmost sailor falls overboard and is given back to the player of that color. If there are any sailors left on the ship, this means that there will be a new skipper, who can assume his position one year later, starting from the spot where the ship has run aground.

If there are no more sailors on the ship, it sinks (see below).

If the skipper succeeds in reaching a harbor (that is, he draws his line into one of the encircled areas on the navigation card), players may buy goods. All merchants on the ship get a chance to do so, starting with the leftmost merchant. If goods in the harbor run out, trading ends.

Each merchant can only carry one item. He is not obliged to do so, but may also pass in the hope of procuring more valuable goods in a later harbor. Merchants do not pay for the goods they procure. Each item is placed on the ship, under the merchant who carries it. Goods taken up cannot be discarded until the ship reaches Zeeland. Thus, a merchant taking up a good can not take up any other goods until the ship has been to Zeeland and back.

A ship does not have to stop when it enters a harbor, provided the skipper does not open his eyes. Thus, it is possible to visit multiple harbors in one year. These harbors are then handled one after the other. The harbors are safe: as long as you stay inside the circles, you cannot run aground, not even if you draw across the coast line. Only if you draw on the land outside the circle, you run aground. But if the skipper has drawn inside of the circle first, the merchants can first take goods, before the ship runs aground and a sailor is lost.

If the skipper hits the line at the bottom of a navigation card, the other players call: “Home!”, and the ship automatically sails home to the harbor of Middelburg. All men and goods are taken from the ship and given to the respective players. The ship may then be refitted in the next year.

Note that it is possible, and even quite likely, that not all players will be skippers in a particular year. Others may even

control two ships. This is normal—those who have little control now will fare better next year.

Sunken ships

As soon as a ship no longer has any sailors, it sinks. Put back all goods into the harbors they came from. Give all men to the respective players. The ship can be refitted in the next year.

PHASE 5: SALES

This phase occurs only if players have brought goods to Zeeland in this or a previous year. All players may negotiate for one minute to buy or sell goods from each other. Only goods that have been brought back can be traded. Players may pay each other in daalders.

As soon as the minute has ended, each player wishing to do so may fulfill contracts. A player may only fulfill contracts he has claimed by putting men on them. He puts back the goods indicated on the contract card in the harbors they came from, and earns the amount of daalders indicated on the card. The card itself is discarded. The year marker is put back in the row on top of the board, so that it may be reused later for other contracts.

If a contract has a slash, you may choose to deliver either the goods shown on the left side or the goods shown on the right side.

At the end of phase 5, check if there are still any contracts open which had to be fulfilled by this year. The player that has taken out such a contract loses the number of daalders indicated on the card. The card is discarded, and the man is returned to the player. If a player cannot pay a fine, he is out of the game.

At the end of the sales phase, each player may store up to two goods in his warehouse. Any excess goods are placed back in their harbors of origin. A player may freely decide which goods

to keep and which to return.

PHASE 6: NEW YEAR

The Burgemeester gives his card to the player to his left. The wooden ship is moved one year further.

GAME END

The game ends as soon as the VOC card is turned open. The Company is founded, and only the richest players will get a position on the board. All players count their daalders. Any contracts still on the table yield no daalders; neither do they have to be paid for. Whoever has earned most, wins the game.

However, all cards that have gone to Amsterdam are counted as well. If Amsterdam has gathered more daalders than any of the players, all players lose. None of the great merchants of Zeeland then makes it into the body of Seventeen Lords.

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