

Objective

Santa needs a new head elf. There is a contest to see who will be the top elf by delivering the most presents. To win, be the first elf to deliver 10 presents for Christmas.

Ideally for 3-6 players

Time 20 – 40 minutes

Overview

The Elf Game is designed for families. I wanted the game to be accessible for kids and adults that didn't play many games. Something easy and fun to pull out when everyone gets together for the holidays.

To accommodate those that don't read, each card's text is divided into 2 parts. The upper part uses symbols and the lower part is written out text. Players are not meant to do each half - they mean the same thing and either top or bottom part can be 'read' by players.

I'm also using this card game as part of my work with inspiring kids to write. I would like to gather kid written stories about the competition for head elf. These stories can be anything – fantasy, sci-fi, literary – and can be adventure, romance, comedy, or any combination the kids like. If your kids or class have written stories, I'd love to put them on my website for others to read. Send them to stories@sa-schneider.com

Quick Start

Each player needs a workbench playmat – there are 3 workbenches to build up to 3 presents at a time.

Shuffle the deck of cards and deal each player 3.

Like most games, each player takes a turn.

If any counters on playmat, move each 1 step closer to delivery (reindeer).

Draw a card and play a card. Most cards allow you to build a present or stop others from building presents. When you build a present, put a counter on the appropriate spot on the playmat (red, blue or yellow present lane and large (3), medium (2), small (1)).

First player to 10 wins.

Setup

Each player gets a workbench playmat. Each playmat has 3 lanes – one for each color of present to build. There are also 3 build 'levels'. Think of it as large presents take 3 turns to completely build, medium presents take 2 turns to completely build, and small presents take 1 turn to completely build. This is represented on the playmat by placing a counter on the corresponding location (large red at 3 in the red lane, medium blue at 2 in the blue lane, etc)

Shuffle the cards. Deal each player 3 cards. Place the rest within reach of all players as a draw deck.

Counters of some sort are needed for tracking building presents and the 3 types of blocks – snowstorm, coal, on a shelf. These counters can be anything – pennies, beads, Lego. Best to have a different color to be able to tell the difference between snowstorms, coal, and on a shelf blocks and the build counters.

Each Turn

1 - Move 1 build token from each in progress present on your bench. Tokens at level 1 move to the reindeer. If no presents are being built, skip this step. Once a token is moved from level 1 to reindeer, it will be delivered the following turn. Add the token to your score pile or use a present token card to represent the built present – best to have the same color token as the present you are building.

2 – Draw a card. If you start the turn with no cards in hand, you draw 3 cards instead of 1.

3 – Choose to do 1 of the following:

- Play a card from your hand by doing the following:
 - Perform the action on the card.
 - Put the played card on the played discard pile.
- Discard a card and draw another card. You don't play a card.
- Discard 2 cards to remove a block

Basic Rules

Each player has 3 workbenches in front of them that are used to build presents. Your team of elves can build 1 present of each color at a time on each workbench. In other words, you have 3 workbench areas, so you can only build 3 presents at once. Head elves want to keep their team busy building so they can deliver presents.

When you play a card to build a present, place a token in the appropriate workbench 'lane' for that color of present and at the correct build level (3 or 2 or 1). At the beginning of each turn, you will move 1 build token from each present on your workbench 1 step closer to the delivery reindeer. Once a present build is at level 1, the next turn the token will be moved onto the delivery reindeer. At the beginning of a turn, any token on a reindeer gets delivered to your score pile. You can only build one present of any color at one time.

Coal, snowstorms, and on a shelf are block cards.

- Coal is played on an open workbench lane and prevents presents from being built there until the coal is removed. Any present already being built in that workbench lane can't continue being built, the build markers don't move until the coal is removed.
- Snowstorms are played on delivery reindeer and block that color present from being delivered until the snowstorm is removed. A present that is already being built can still be built (the build marker moved) but it can't be moved to the reindeer and can't be delivered until the snowstorm block is removed.
- On a shelf blocks the whole workbench and elf crew preventing any build to occur (you don't move the build token on your turn), until the On a shelf block is removed. Any presents already on delivery reindeer can still be delivered after an On the shelf block.

Each block prevents that action from happening until the block is removed.

When you play a card that allows you to block, you take the appropriate block token (coal, snowstorm, on a shelf) and add it to your opponent's workbench at the appropriate location.

- on the reindeer for snowstorms
- On the build track for coal
- Anywhere for On a shelf

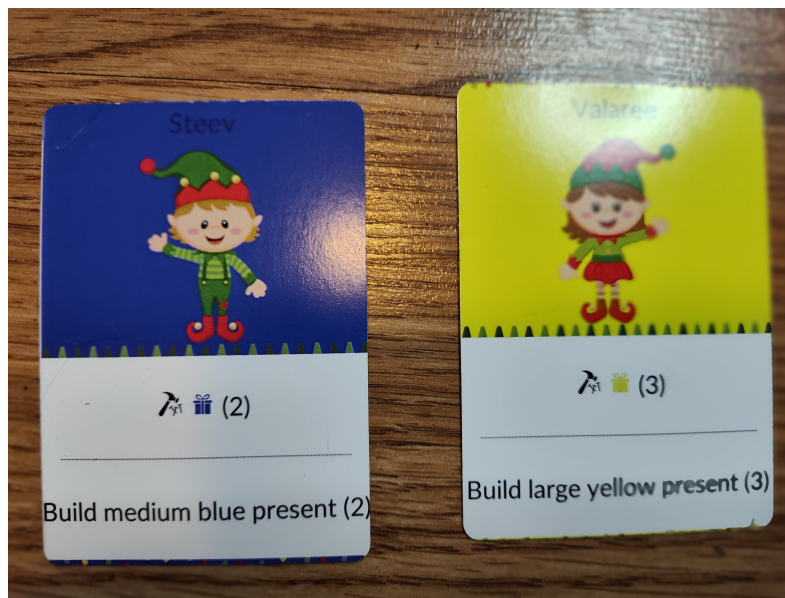
Playing a blue build card. Will build a medium present. You will place a marker on the 2 spot on your workbench.



Card Design

Each card text area is divided into 2 parts – an upper and a lower. They say the same thing, but the upper half is done as symbols for those that can't read. The bottom half is text, but both halves mean the same thing and have the player do the same thing. You don't do both halves and you don't 'choose' one or the other.

Example of two build cards. The top is symbols for those that can't read. The bottom is the text. They mean the same and you don't perform both.



After playing blue build card, a token (we used pennies as build markers) is placed on the blue workbench at the #2 spot for medium present.



At the beginning of my next turn I move the build marker for the blue present from the #2 spot to the #1 spot. Each turn, the presents on your workbench get closer to being build and then delivered. I then play a yellow build for a large present and place a token in the #3 spot on the yellow workbench.



This is then what my workbenches look like at the end of my 2nd turn, with the build marker for the blue present now in the #1 spot and it will be built and ready for delivery next turn. The new yellow present just had the marker put into the #3 spot, so it won't move until next turn.



Before my next turn, an opponent plays a coalbin card and places a coal on my red workbench (a nickel is used). This means I can't build any red presents until I remove the coal block.



Rules Clarification

If a card says to draw another card, you don't get to play another card. The only time you could play another card is if the first card you played tells you to do so.

Cards that say build allow you to build the specified color present on one of your empty workbench spaces. You can only build to open workbenches – not a workbench filled with coal or another present. You can only build to your own workbench. If a card specifies the color of present, you must place a marker on the workbench lane of that color to build the present. If Any Color is specified, you choose what color to build.

Each build card has a number specified after the build instructions. This indicates the size of present and how long it takes to build.

- Large presents have 3 build
- Medium presents have 2 build
- Small presents have 1 build

The size of the present doesn't matter except how long it takes to build. There is no difference in scoring because a present took longer to build (is bigger).

Cards that say to Move a Build Token mean to take a move a token from one of your presents being built on your workbench one step closer to delivery (it's more built). If you can move a build token on an opponent's present, it means you can move it further from being built. EX – move it from 1 to 2. Some card specify moving yours or your opponent's build marker and some let you decide.

You can only deliver your own presents to your own score pile. If a card says you can deliver a present immediately, you can deliver that present regardless of the number of build tokens on it.

If a card specifies a certain color of present, you may only perform that action on the specified color present.

If a card allows you to steal an opponent's present, you steal it and any build tokens on it. If you steal a present, you must have an open workbench for the present unless it says to deliver immediately.

There are 3 cards with holly berries that say "Play This Card Immediately". Whoever drew that card must show it to everyone and everyone follows what the card said. This does not count as that players drawn card or played card. These cards give kids an advantage and adults a disadvantage. Kids love

these cards. They can be removed from the game before you start play. This is common if playing with older kids. Once everyone has taken the action on the card, add the card to the discard pile and that player gets to continue with their turn like normal by drawing a card.

Winning

The first person to deliver 10 presents wins!

Alternative rules

1 – deal each player 5 cards to start instead of 3

2 – you can make the number of presents to deliver more or less than 10 for a longer or shorter game

3 – there is a blank card that you can make your own cards

Print and Play

I am offering this game for free as a Christmas present to everyone. Please enjoy. One problem is that you need to print them out and prepare them so you can actually play with them. This is typically done by getting sleeves and putting the cut out cards in the sleeves along with a real card – like a playing card. Ask CCG players or baseball/football card collectors about sleeves. The penny sleeves (100 for \$1.00) work just fine.

Card Clarification

Christmas Stocking – If any build tokens on the card, they get removed. If blocked by a snowstorm, the snowstorm gets discarded.

Buggum – The present to add the token to is the one blocked by the snowstorm.

Definition:

Player – Each person in the game is a player

Opponent – Everyone else is your opponent and you are their opponent

Play – On your turn when you use a card. Do what it says and it then goes to the discard.

Discard – If you have to discard a card, it means you take a card from your hand and place it in the discard pile. You don't get to play it or do what it says.

Score Pile – Where you keep your build and delivered presents (the tokens).

Build – Placing a marker of some sort on the workbench for presents. These markers move closer to the reindeer by 1 each turn.

Add/Delete/Move Build Token - Some cards can allow you to move your build marker quicker or to move an opponent's build marker further from being built.

- Block – stopping an opponent from building and delivering
- snowstorm block – You can still build presents, but because of the snowstorm, the reindeer can't deliver. Snowstorms only block one color workbench, but you can have multiple snowstorms placed on your workbenches.
- Coal block – Stop you from build any presents on the color workbench the coal block is placed. This includes moving the build marker.
- On a shelf block – All the elves are out partying. You can't build any presents. This includes moving the build marker. If you have a present already with a reindeer and ready to deliver, you may deliver on your next turn.

Workbench – you have 3 color workbenches, one for each color present. Only 1 present can be built for each color at a time.

Play challenges:

1 – have a minimum of 3 of each color to win