Geography × World History Card Game

Flag Museum

Players: 2–6
Time: 10–20 min
Age: 10+

(Planned: QR code to the rules video)

Overview

A competitive game: use a country's flag and trade goods as clues to guess its population, lifespan and more, then line the cards up from smallest to largest. Every time you flip a card, you'll say, "What? That many?!"

Components

- Flag cards: 155



Flag side　　Number side

- Topic cards: 10
  (4 Normal, 6 Hard)



Front　　Back

- Rulebook: 1 (this sheet)
- Flag reference sheet: 1

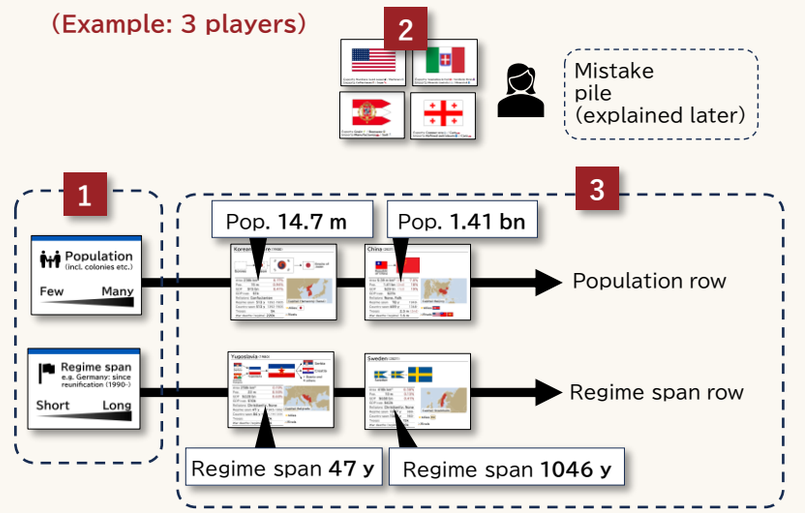
Produced by Mikeron Games
X:mikeron_games
mail:keima9955@gmail.com

Special Thanks:K. Tsunekawa

Flag images: works by Wikimedia Commons contributors (CC BY-SA; see page 2).

① Setup

(Example: 3 players)



Players	2	3	4	5	6
Topic cards	2	2	2	3	3
Flag cards per player	6	4	4	4	4
Max. flag cards per row (★ advanced rules only)	8	8	10	9	10

1 Choose the topic cards together

- Choose the number of cards shown in the table above.
- Place them in a column on the left.

🔰 Start with the Normal topics.

2 Shuffle and deal the flag cards

- Deal each player the number of cards shown in the table above.
- Keep them flag side up in front of you.

⚠️ Don't look at the number side!

3 Build the shared rows

A row is a shared line of flag cards laid out to the right of each topic card.

- Take 2 of the leftover flag cards. Lay them to the right of the first topic card, number side up, in order of that topic's number from left (smallest) to right.
- Do the same for every other topic card.

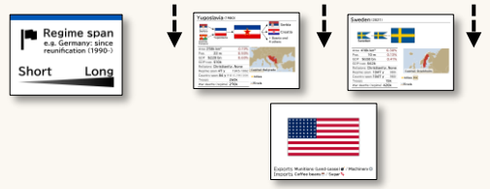
Leftover flag cards are not used, so set them aside (★ advanced rules use them).

② How to Play

Pick a starting player, then play clockwise.
Each turn, just place one of your flag cards in a row!
For that card, follow the steps below.

■ Choose one of your cards and place it near the spot in a row where you think it fits.

- Any row is fine.
- Between two cards, or at either end of the row.



■ Say the country and why it goes there!

💬 "I think this is the US. It's lasted about 200 years, so maybe here?"
🔰 Wrong is fine. Just take a guess!
Others may comment, too. The placing player decides.

■ Flip the card to check!

Read the card's number for that topic. If the row still runs from smallest to largest with your card in it, you're correct. Equal values: either side.
⭕ Correct: slide the row's cards apart and insert yours there.
❌ Wrong: leave it number side up and put it in your Mistake pile beside you.
💡 If a card shows "N+", treat N as the number.

■ Play passes clockwise to the next player

③ Game End

- The game ends when everyone's flag cards are gone.
- **Count your Mistake pile. Fewest cards wins!**
- If two or more players have the fewest, they all tie.

★ Advanced Rules

Play as above, with these changes.

① Setup

After building the rows, stack the leftover flag cards flag side up. This is the draw pile. Leave space next to it for a discard pile.
⚠️ Mistake piles are not used.



② How to Play

Row limit: Each row can hold up to the number shown in the table ("Max. flag cards per row").
Wrong answer: Put the card on the discard pile, number side up. Then take the top card of the draw pile and add it to your cards.

③ Game End

The first player to run out of cards wins!

Data Notes

Some export/import data include TOFLIT18 data (ODbL). Some flag images on the cards are works by Wikimedia Commons contributors, used unmodified under CC BY-SA 2.5 / 3.0 / 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/ and the other versions). Author names, per-file licenses, the full source list: https://mikeron-games.com/en/games/flag_museum/credits/

The cards show not only flags but also how big each country was, in numbers and on a map. This page explains how those numbers were made. You do not need it to play. Read it when you wonder, “Where does this number come from?” We try to be accurate, but we cannot guarantee that every number is correct.

■ What’s on the cards

- 155 cards: 104 countries of today and 51 countries of the past.
- Country names follow the names used in geography and world-history textbooks.
- The year next to the country name is the card year. The numbers and the map on a card are for that year.
- Countries of today use 2021 (World Bank data). Area, population and GDP are 2021 values; troops are 2020 values. Ranks use the same years.
- Countries of the past use the year when the country was largest, or a year with good data. The same country may have several cards (Britain: 1750, 1920, 2021).
- An asterisk (*) after a name means it is not an independent country (Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, Greenland, Catalonia, the EU).
- In the flag lineage, flags marked * (Ireland*, Dutch Cape Colony*) show where a design came from. They are not national flags.
- Some cards overlap in territory, for example the Empire of Japan (1942) and Manchukuo (1942).

■ About the flags

The flags follow Nozomi Kariyasu’s illustrated books on the history of flags and coats of arms (『世界の国旗・国章歴史大図鑑』,『旗章の世界史 大図鑑』). For times before national flags existed, such as Ming (1600), the flag has a dotted frame, and an emperor’s banner or a military banner may be shown instead. Flags keep their official proportions and are sized so that the rectangular part has the same area on every card (the back as well).

Source: Wikimedia Commons (per-file authors and licenses are on the official website). Some flags have been adjusted in color or shape to match the illustrations in the books.

■ Exports and imports

The top 2 items by value in trade statistics from around the card year (countries of today: the 2019–2021 average; countries of the past: the statistics nearest that year). “no data” means the sources have no information.

Sources: The Atlas of Economic Complexity (1962–); The Statesman’s Year-Book (1864–1961); TOFLIT18 (18th-century France); Findlay & O’Rourke, Power and Plenty; national yearbooks and research books (earlier years, and years without a yearbook). Icons: Twemoji (CC BY 4.0).

■ Flag lineage

- Left: the earlier countries. Center: the flag in the card year. Right: the later countries.
- A plain line means the same regime continued. An arrow means the regime changed.
- When there are several earlier or later countries, the main country comes first, then the others in order of population. Countries that still exist have no later countries drawn.
- To keep the picture simple, two countries that both have cards may be connected directly, even if a short-lived country came between them.

Sources: Kariyasu’s books, Cliopatria (territorial overlap), Wikidata (records of earlier and later countries).

■ Area, Pop., GDP, GDP/cap.

- Values for the card year. (Nth) is the world rank; % is the share of the world total. GDP/cap. is GDP divided by population.
- Empires include their colonies. Britain (1920), the Empire of Japan and others include colonies, protectorates and annexed land. Land occupied only during a war is not included.
- GDP (gross domestic product) is the total value of the goods and services a country makes in one year. It shows the size of the economy.
- GDP is compared at purchasing power parity (a rate that corrects for price differences between countries), not at market exchange rates, and is shown in international dollars. For countries of the past, we first find the share of world GDP, then multiply by world GDP in the same unit (international dollars at about 2011 prices). These are estimates by researchers and can have large errors.

For countries of the past, population and GDP start from the Maddison Project values for countries of today. We divide the territory ruled (the red area on the map) by today’s borders, estimate each part with the HYDE population grid, and add the parts together. Colonies are added using population from Our World in Data and regional GDP per person from Maddison. Area is measured from Cliopatria borders (countries of the past) or is World Bank land area (countries of today).

Sources: World Bank WDI (countries of today); Maddison Project Database 2023, HYDE 3.3, Our World in Data, Maddison 2010 (population and GDP of countries of the past); Cliopatria (area of countries of the past); research books (countries missing from the databases). Countries without PPP data (Taiwan, Venezuela, Monaco, Vatican City) are estimates.

■ Religions

Grouped broadly (for example, all denominations are “Christianity”), up to 4, in order of the number of followers. If they do not fit on one line of the table, the smallest ones are dropped. The data may be a few years off the card year.

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Wikipedia (English), national censuses, World Religion Database.

■ Regime span

A regime is a period in which the basic political system of a country continues without a break. The span is counted from the year the regime began to the year it ended (or to 2027 if it still exists). It does not stop at the card year. So Britain (1750) shows 320 years, from 1707 to 2027.

Only ① and ② start a new regime. Everything else (dictatorship, democratization, a new constitution, etc.) is a continuation.

① The country disappears, is founded again, merges with another country as equals, or a part of it becomes independent (for example, Japan 1947, Germany 1990, Bangladesh 1971). A country that annexes another country, or that remains after a part leaves, continues.

② A monarchy becomes a republic or a republic becomes a monarchy, or a royal house is replaced by force. A new name under the same royal house is a continuation.

Exceptions: Nazi Germany (1933), Cuba (1959) and Libya (2011) also count as new regimes.

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Wikipedia (English), national histories.

■ Country span

The years a country has continued as a country, even across regime changes (Japan from about 540, France from 843). This also runs to the year the country disappeared (or to 2027). So for Qing (1790) or the Soviet Union (1962), the country continues today and the span runs to 2027.

- The span is broken while the country was annexed, made a protectorate or a colony, or ruled by another country’s monarch (for example, Ethiopia 1936–1941, Austria 1938–1945, Kuwait 1990–1991).
- Military occupation alone does not break it (France and the Netherlands in World War II, Germany 1945–49).

Sources: Gleditsch & Ward list of states, Cliopatria, national histories.

■ Troops

Countries of today: active troops plus paramilitary forces (border guards, etc.). Countries of the past, 1816 and later: active troops (for empires, colonial forces are added). Before 1816: numbers from military histories. “25k+” means only the lower limit (25,000 or more) is known; “0” means the country has no army. Ranks are given only for countries of today.

Sources: World Bank WDI (countries of today); Correlates of War Project, National Material Capabilities v7.0 (1816 and later; used with permission); The Statesman’s Year-Book and other yearbooks (countries missing from the databases, colonial forces); Parker, The Military Revolution, and other history books (before 1816).

■ War deaths (regime)

The approximate number of people who died in wars and civil wars fought by the regime’s government, during the whole regime span.

We count the country’s own soldiers and civilians killed in wars and civil wars in which the regime’s government was one side (in a civil war, both sides are the country’s own people). For a war of independence before the country existed, we count the deaths on the independence side as recorded in colonial-war sources. When sources give a range, we use the middle value. Some sources include deaths from disease. Violence without the government as one side (terrorism, ethnic clashes) is not counted. Only for Russia and Ukraine (2022–), the numbers come from a CSIS estimate and UN-verified counts, and run to August 2026.

Sources: Correlates of War Project (1816–1988; used with permission); UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (1989–; CC BY 4.0); Clodfelter, Warfare and Armed Conflicts; Bodart, Losses of Life in Modern Wars; Brecke’s Conflict Catalog and other books, and Wikipedia (wars missing from the databases, civilian deaths, before 1816); CSIS and OHCHR (Russia–Ukraine war).

■ Ranks and percentages

- Ranks are world ranks. Only some countries are in the game, so the ranks in a row have gaps. “last” counts from the bottom.
- Only independent countries are compared. Countries of today: the 193 UN members plus Taiwan, Vatican City and Palestine (196; for troops, the countries with World Bank data). Countries of the past: countries with data for that year in the Maddison Project (population, GDP) and Cliopatria (area), without Hong Kong and Puerto Rico.
- Cards that are not countries show “eq.” after the rank they would have.
- Percentages are rounded to 2 significant figures (for example, 9.56% → 9.6%). Under 0.01% is shown as “<0.01%”. People are shown in k (thousand), m (million) and bn (billion), rounded to 2–3 significant figures; area is rounded to 3 significant figures. Missing values are shown as “no data” (countries of today) or “unknown” (countries of the past).

■ Maps

Red is the territory the country ruled in the card year. The blue dot is the capital. 4 cards are world maps (Equal Earth projection, true areas). The others are regional maps (Lambert azimuthal equal-area, true areas and directions). The scale differs by card. Countries too small to color are shown with a red circle.

Sources: Cliopatria (countries of the past); Natural Earth and geoBoundaries (countries of today). Capitals: Chandler’s city data (Reba et al. 2016) and Wikidata.

■ Allies and Rivals

Allies: countries that had an alliance treaty with this country in the card year (a promise to defend each other or to attack together). Rivals: countries in serious conflict with this country over borders or in war. For countries of the past, relations from the years around the card year are shown (allies ±5 years, rivals ±10 years; ±1 year for past cards of countries that still exist); cards from 1950 on use the card year only. Flags are in order of GDP; if there are too many, the rest are shown as “+N”. Large alliances such as NATO and the EU are shown by name (cards from 1950 on only).

Sources: ATOP v5.1 (alliances); Diehl et al., Peace Data (rivalries). Years not covered by the databases (alliances before 1815, rivalries before 1900) are filled in from Wikipedia (Japanese and English).