

Rust & Research

1. Overview

In Rust & Research, 2 to 6 time travellers explore the history of the University of Luxembourg's main campus of Belval, which used to be an industrial crude iron production site. Through flipping time in their favour and benefitting from character's skills, they compete over several rounds and aim to successfully piece together Belval's timeline and make its changes visible.

Duration: 60 minutes

(approx. 4 rounds of 10 to 15 minutes each)

Players: 2 to 6 of age 6 and more

Game Components

- 22 Character Cards
- 25 Ability Cards
- 6 Overview Cards (double-sided)
- 1 Time Indicator Token
- 20 Tokens (double-sided: Steel, Diploma)
- 1 Manual
- 1 *Digital Educational Booklet*



2. Aim of the Game

Rust and Research is played over several rounds. Each round, players try to gain a token from the current time layer by either eliminating other players or ending with the strongest Character Card. To win the overall game, you must collect the required number of tokens from both time layers: Past and Present.



Ways to win a round:

- Eliminate all other players by guessing their card or winning a duel.
- Win the showdown: If the deck runs out, all players reveal their cards; the highest value wins.

At the start of each round, reshuffle Character and Ability Cards into their decks. The previous round's winner starts.

3. How to Play

3.1. Setup

1. Give each player a double-sided **Overview Card**. It lists all Character Cards with their past/present effects.
2. Place the **Time Indicator** in the centre. First round always starts in the *Present*, later rounds start in the time layer that the previous round ended in. →
3. Shuffle all **Character Cards** into a deck.
4. **Deal 1** Character Card face down to each player.
5. Shuffle all **Ability Cards** into a deck.
6. **Deal 3** Ability Cards face down to each player. Each player **keeps 1**; return the rest under the deck.
7. The last player to visit a blast furnace or university campus starts.

3.2. Player Turn



1. On your turn: draw a Character Card.
2. Play 1 of your 2 cards onto the discard pile and resolve its effect – keep the other as your hand card.

Additionally you may play a single Ability Card per turn.

Then play proceeds clockwise during the *Present*; in the *Past*, counterclockwise. →

Time Flip & Time Layers:

One of the core mechanics of *Rust & Research* is the ability to travel through time, through switching time layers. The Time Indicator is used to track the current time layer. It shows one of two time layers: *Past* or *Present*.

Only the Time Traveller Card can trigger or block a time flip. A time flip has the following effects:



1. Flip the Time Indicator: This reverses **turn order**. *E.g. when it is played clockwise, it is now played counterclockwise. Abilities that are active until it is a certain player's turn still apply.*
2. You are only allowed to use the **Character** skill according to the time layer the game is currently in. *E.g. if you are in the present and you have a Goldfish/Canary Bird(1), you can only play the Goldfish. If you want to play the Canary Bird, you must wait for or cause a time flip.*
3. Determines which **tokens** can be won: Diploma in the present, Steel in the past.

3.3. End of a Round

A round ends when, either...

1. Only one player remains, or
2. The deck is empty, triggering a **showdown**: When no more Character Cards are left to draw at the start of a player's turn: All remaining players reveal their hand. The player with the highest card value wins (*unless specified otherwise by Ability Cards*). In case of a tie, all tied players receive a token from the current time layer.

After the round:

- Award tokens according to outcome.
- Discard all cards.
- Shuffle both decks for the next round.

Last round's winner starts the new round.



Player Elimination

You can be eliminated during a round by...

- Card Guessing (*Foreman/Librarian*)
- Losing a Duel (*Trade Unionist/Student Rep*)
- Certain Card Effects (*e.g. Rector*). Some cards eliminate the player who plays or discards them.

Eliminated players skip turns and can't win a token that round (except via Master Plan). Their remaining cards are discarded without effect.

If all but one player are eliminated, the remaining player receives a token of the current time layer.

3.4. Winning the Game

To win, collect the required number of tokens from both time layers.

If one or more players own the required amount at the end of a round, the game ends. They win the game.

Players	Tokens required (Past & Present)
2-3	3 of each
4-6	2 of each

4. Card Types and Descriptions

4.1. Character Cards

Each card features a figure from Belval's past or present. Cards are numbered **0-9** for strength in duels and

showdowns. Each side shows one ability for each time layer. Some cards are unique; others appear multiple times. Card counts and abilities are also listed on the Overview Card.

4.2. Character Card Overview

1 Student (2×)

Draw a card, put one of your hand cards on top of or under the deck.

The Student draws a card and then places one card from their hand on top or bottom of the deck. This allows you to refresh your options while influencing what other players might draw next.

Apprentice

Copy the previously played card.

The Apprentice is able to copy just about any other Character Card, as long as it was played just before. If an Apprentice is played after another apprentice, it copies the effect that the first one copied.

2 Goldfish (2×)

If you survive until your next turn, steal a token from another player.

The Goldfish allows for a unique act of thievery, where you can steal a token from another player, as long as you survive until your next turn. This token can be from either time layer. If none are available, this card has no effect.

Canary Bird

If you survive until your next turn, take a token from the supply.

The Canary Bird allows you to gain tokens without winning a round. If you survive until your next turn, you take a token from the supply of tokens of the current time layer.

Important: Each player can only gain a one token per round through playing this card!

3 Guest Lecturer (2×)

Draw an Ability Card.

The Guest Lecturer allows you to acquire an additional Ability Card. If the timing allows it, you may play it immediately. *Remember: You may only play a single Ability Card per turn!*

Miner

Choose a player. They discard their ability card and then draw a new ability card.

The chosen players' ability card – revealed or not – is discarded without effect. They draw an ability card as replacement.

4 Data Scientist (2×)

Other players cannot target you until your next turn.

If all players are being protected by this effect, you must target yourself when applicable, otherwise the effect is ignored.

Chef de Gare

Choose a player. That player is the target for all other player's actions until your next turn.

The Chef de Gare is a way to keep yourself out of harm's way, while also making another player the target until it is your turn again.

The designated player can still choose another player as the target for their own card.

5 Student Representative (2×)

Call a duel. The higher number wins.

Both players reveal cards only to each other. The losing player is eliminated for this round and discards their card. If the values are tied, both players remain in the round.

Trade Unionist

Call a duel. The weaker number wins.

Duel procedure as above.

6 Doctoral Researcher (2×)

Look at another player's hand.

Secretly view another player's hand.

Furnaceman

Look at another player's hand.

Secretly view another player's hand.

7 Librarian (3×)

Guess another player's hand. If you are right, they are eliminated.

Guess another player's card number (1-9). If correct, they discard it and are eliminated.

Foreman

Guess another player's hand. If you are right, they are eliminated.

Guess another player's card number (1-9). If correct, they discard it and are eliminated.

8 Professor (2×)

Choose another player: Swap your hands.

Select any player (except yourself). That player trades their hand with yours.

Engineer

Choose a player to discard their hand and draw a new card.

Select any player (including yourself). That player discards their hand (without triggering its effect) and draws a new hand.

9 Rector (1×)

If you play or discard this card, you are eliminated.

If you play or discard the Rector for any reason, you are immediately eliminated from the round. While it is the strongest card in the game, its drawback can make it risky.

Steel Company Director

If someone makes you discard this card, they are eliminated.

Cannot be played during a regular turn. Strong in duels or showdowns, and dangerous to target. If guessed correctly by a Foreman/Librarian, both players are eliminated. If this happens to the last two players, no one wins the round.

3/5 Time Traveller (4×)

Flips time when played. When another player plays a time traveller, you may discard immediately to block time flip.

The Time Traveller has the same effect in both time layers: when played, it flips the time from *Past* to *Present* or vice versa (see *Infobox Time Flip* on page 2). This is the only way to change the time layer during a round.

Unlike other Character Cards, a Time Traveller can be played reactively, when someone else plays a Time Traveller. In this case, the time flip is blocked and the layer stays the same. Both discard their time traveller card, and the player who blocked the time flip draws a replacement card. Play continues as normal.

Note: This is the only card that can be played outside your own turn, and only in reaction to another Time Traveller!

4.3. Ability Cards

Ability Cards represent events important to Belval.

They have a one-time use and can only be played when the indicated timing applies (shown on card).

You still play a Character Card during the same turn.

Only one Ability Card can be played per player's turn.



4.4. Ability Card Overview

Amount	Title	Timing & Effect
1×	Crisis Division	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. All players' hands are shuffled back into the deck, then everyone draws a new card.
2×	Deadline	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. Choose a player. If they do not win a token by the end of this round, you can take one from the pile, even if eliminated.
1×	Electric Arc Furnace	Reveal at the start of your turn, after you draw. Swap one of your hand cards with any card from the discard pile (do not reveal to other players).
1×	Exchange Program	Reveal when a duel is called, before comparing cards. Swap your card blindly with another player's card before comparing cards.
2×	Group Assignment	Reveal when you or another player are targeted by a Character or Ability Card. Block that player's action and redirect it to another player.
1×	Hidden Reserves	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. For the rest of the round, you draw from the bottom of the deck.
1×	Industrial Remains	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. If you win a token at the end of the round, you can choose which type.

2×	Innovation Drive	Reveal when a duel is called or when the showdown begins: Add or subtract 1 from the card you are playing.
2×	Master Plan	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. Choose a player. If they win the round, you also get a token, even if eliminated.
2×	Modernization	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. If you win the round, take two tokens instead of one.
1×	Papal Blessing	Reveal at any point when you would be eliminated, except during the showdown. You survive instead.
2×	Proximity Suit	Reveal when targeted by another player with a Character card or Ability card. The card has no effect.
1×	Research Award	Reveal when the showdown begins. Make your final card's strength 10.
1×	Research Patent	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. Draw 2 cards instead of one and put one under the deck.
1×	Sale of Blast Furnace C	Reveal at the start of your turn, after you draw. If you win a token this round, you can choose to keep it or force another player to lose one token of your choosing.
1×	Thinkering	Reveal at the start of your turn, after you draw. Play twice in a row (you draw again after playing for the first time).
1×	Trente Glorieuses	Reveal at the start of your turn, after you draw. Instead of the showdown at the end of the round, all survivors get a token.
1×	Tripartite	Reveal when the showdown begins. Among the remaining players, the lowest and the highest number get a token.
1×	Workers' demonstration	Reveal at the start of your turn, before you draw. Shuffle all players' cards and redistribute them randomly.



5. Credits

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