

# Inception

A solo card game by  
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V 1.5

(Changes to previous version marked in green.)

## Disclaimer

This game is an unauthorized, non-profit game that uses names and images from the original movie by Warner Brothers. Neither the designer nor anyone else is allowed to make any financial profit of it.

And now for the fun part...

## Inception

This game is inspired by the movie "Inception". I hope you remember. Cobb and his team of Extractors are offered a job to implant an idea into a person's mind by infiltrating his dreams. The target person is Fischer and the applicant is Saito who'd profit a lot from Fischers "new idea". The reward for the Extractors: a lot of money and the chance for Cobb to return home to his kids again. But to plant a thought deep enough into someone's mind you'll have to go very deep. A dream within a dream... within another dream. And if you die in a dream you'll end up in Limbo and probably go mad and never return.

Guide Cobb and his team down the different dream levels. Recruit your team members and sedate Fischer, step deeper into his dreams planting Inceptions and prepare for the final synchronized Kick that'll bring the team back home. Fight against attackers, Cobb's adversaries and Fischer's Sub-security. Cobb's wife Mal will show up and try to stop the team. And some of your members might end up in Limbo and have to be saved before they get a chance to return back into reality.

## Material:

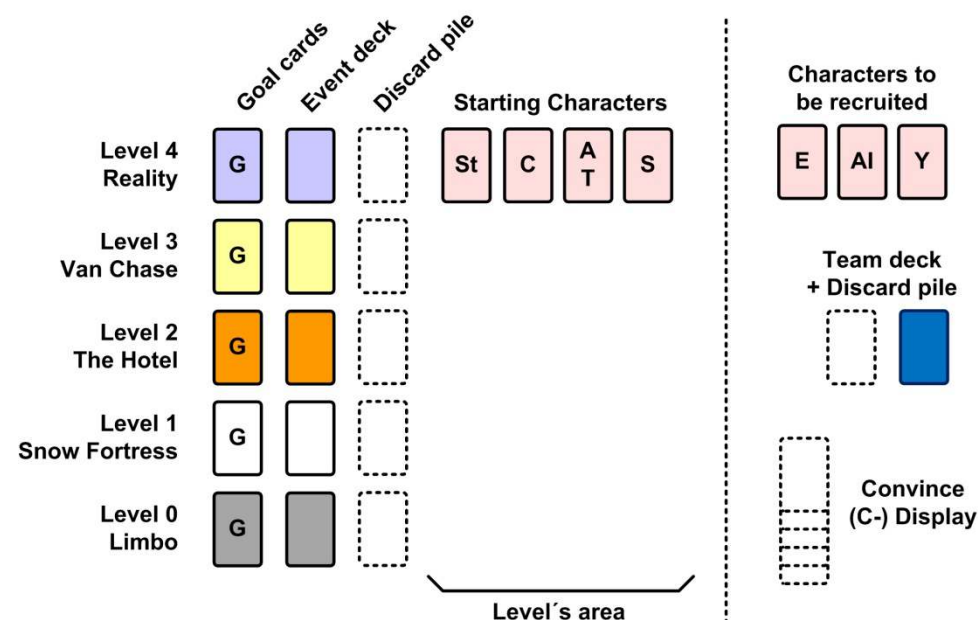
This rulebook.

106 cards:

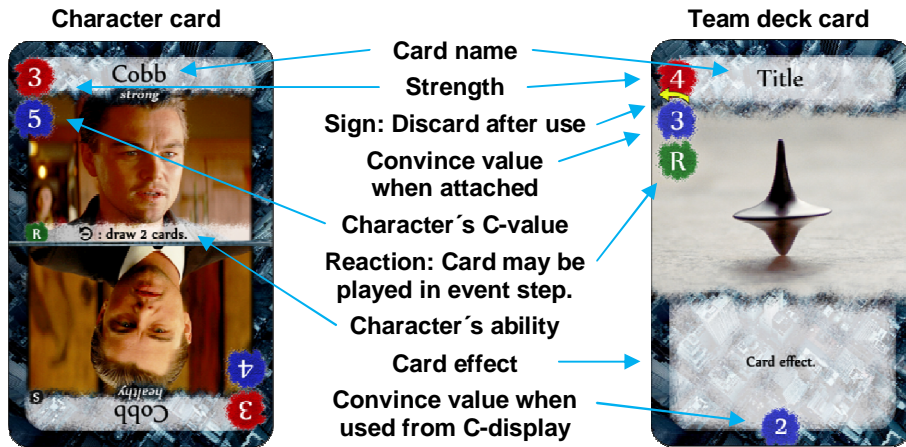
- Level 4 deck: 12 cards + 1 goal card (The text on 3 cards was changed for V 1.5)
- Level 3 deck: 10 cards + 1 goal card
- Level 2 deck: 10 cards + 1 goal card
- Level 1 deck: 13 cards + 1 goal card
- Level 0 deck: 9 cards + 1 goal card
- Team deck: 37 cards + 1 additional card for easier game.
- Character cards: 6 + 1 Stewardess / Victory card
- 1 Status card
- 1 Help Card (Turn order / Calculations)

## Setup

- Separate the cards: Level decks 0 to 4, the Team deck and the character cards.
- Place the level 4 **goal card** in the upper left corner of your playing area.  
*Note: The goal cards are just informative cards. They are no active play cards. Experienced players may leave them away.*
- Shuffle the remaining **level 4** cards and place them as a face-down **draw deck** beside the goal card. Leave place for a level 4 **discard pile**.
- Repeat these steps with **levels 3 to 0** placing level 3 under level 4, level 2 under level 3 and so on.
- Find the card "**Rest**" in the Team deck. For a starter game (easier) leave it in there. See "Difficulty levels".
- The **Status card** (Spinning top) is used as a reminder for stat increases during the game.
- The **Help card** shows the turn order and calculation procedures.
- Shuffle the **team cards** and form a face-down team **draw deck**. Leave place for a team **discard pile**.
- Leave place for the **Convince display** (C-display, max. 5 cards).
- Place the **Stewardess** and the **characters Cobb, Saito** and **Arthur** in the playing area of **Level 4** showing their "**healthy**" sides (Starting characters are marked with an "S").
- Place the remaining characters **Ariadne, Eames** and **Yusuf** in reach but **outside** of the playing area.
- **Draw 3 cards** from the team deck to your hand.



## Card anatomy

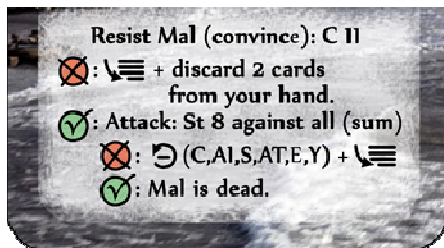


## Icons

- 5** Strength: Shows your physical strength.
- 3** Convince (C)-value: Shows you ability to convince people.
- R** Reaction: Card may be played during the event step.
- Discard after use. Card must be discarded after a successful fight.
- Success: An evaded attack or convinced successfully. Sign reads: "On success do the following:"
- Failure: Failed to evade attack. Failed to convince. Sign reads: "On failure do the following:"
- Place the card face-down under the deck it was drawn from.
- Turn character card to next higher health state.
- Turn character card to next lower health state.

**Important:** If no sign tells you what to do with a card after an event: discard the card.

## Example how to read and resolve an event card:



Read the card from the top to the bottom. Try to **convince** Mal with a **C-value** of 11 or higher. If you **fail** discard 2 cards from your hand and place the event card **under the pile** it was drawn from. If you **succeed** she **attacks** all characters in the current level with strength 8. If you **fail** to evade the attack the next character card in the priority list is **rotated** to

the next **lower health state** and the event card is **put back** under the pile it was drawn from. If you **evade** the attack Mal is dead. **Discard** the event card.

## How to play

Inception is played in **turns**. Each **turn** is divided in 6 easy **steps**. Turns are repeated until the player either wins or loses the game.

## Turn steps:

- 1, Draw two cards
- 2, Play cards
- 3, Discard hand down to 5 cards
- 4, Check for level goals
- 5, Draw and resolve event card
- 6, Check for level goals

## The steps in detail:

### 1, Draw two cards

Draw two cards from the team deck and add them to your hand.

If the team deck runs out of cards shuffle the discard pile and place it face-down as a new draw pile.

### 2, Play cards

You may play **as many** cards **from your hand** as you wish. Play and resolve them one after another. These are the different possibilities to play cards:

- a) **Flashback** cards (red border) **must** be played **first** and **immediately** when drawn! They must be attached to **Cobb**. If Cobb is inactive add it to your hand, otherwise tuck them under the **Cobb** character card so that you can see the values on the left side. **It stays there** unless removed by another card's effect or if Cobb becomes inactive. **Flashback cards must** always be attached to Cobb (if active) **immediately** when they're drawn, even if drawn through a character's **ability** or a card's **effect**.
- b) **Weapon** cards may be attached to any **active** character on any level. **Weapon** cards show a **strength** value in the upper left corner. **Only 1 weapon** may be attached to a single character. Tuck it under the character card so that you can see its **strength** value. **Attached weapons may be discarded** any time during the "**Play cards**" step.
- c) Discard a card from your hand to use its **effect**. Simply resolve its effect and place the card on the team discard pile.
- d) Place cards from your hand into the **Convince display**. As long as there are **less than 3 cards** in the **Convince display** you may add cards from your hand. If there are already 3 or more cards you must not add any more in this step. *Note: This doesn't limit the number of cards in the C-display to 3. There are other ways to add more cards through card effects.* Place the cards in the **C- display** in such a way that you can see the **C-values** on the bottom of the cards. The card's **effects** are **not** resolved and lost for the moment. **Cards from the C-display may only be removed** through other card's **effects** or when **convincing** (see: "Convince" section).

### 3, Discard hand down to 5 cards

If you now have more than 5 cards in your hand discard cards to the team discard pile until there are only 5 cards left in your hand.

### 4, Check for level goals

Consult the level's **goal card** to see if you achieved the level's goals. If you did, follow the instructions on the card. Characters moved from one level to the next keep all their attached cards. *You don't have to achieve level goals in the order they're listed on the goal card.*

### 5, Draw and resolve event card

Draw the top **event card** of the **lowest level** you currently have **active characters** in. *Characters on their lowest health state* (usually in Limbo) *are inactive and therefore ignored.* If you have **active characters** in more than one level you always draw a card from the **lowest** level. Once a level's goal is achieved and characters are moved to the next level you will never draw cards from a previous level.

**Resolve** the event card's text. Unless otherwise stated event cards always **affect** the characters on the **level they were drawn from**. Event cards starting with "**-> on Level X**" affect the indicated level.

Possible events are:

- 1) **Attack.** This is a physical attack on one of your characters. See "Resolving attacks".
- 2) **Convince:** Your characters use their persuasive skills to convince an opponent. See "Convince".
- 3) **Other events:** Follow the description on the event card.

***Important:** If no sign tells you what to do with a card after an event: discard the card.*

### 6, Check for level goals

Consult the level's **goal card** to see if you achieved the level's goals. If you did, follow the instructions on the card. Characters moved from one level to the next keep all their attached cards. *You don't have to achieve level goals in the order they're listed on the goal card.*

If the game hasn't ended yet start a new turn beginning with step 1.

### Resolving attacks

When an event card reads "**Attack**" one of your characters face a physical attack. First check the **priority list** on the card to see **who** is being attacked. A priority list may look like this (AT,E,Y,Al,C,S), meaning that the first possible target is Arthur (AT) followed by Eames (E), Yusuf (Y), Ariadne (Al), Cobb (C) and Saito (S).

**Targets not present on the affected level are skipped and not attacked.**

Check the target character's **strength** shown in the upper left corner of the character card. Add the **strength** of cards **attached** to it (Weapons, Flashbacks). You may boost your

strength by playing **reaction** cards (R) that influence attacks from your hand to the team discard pile, or use character's **abilities** that allow you to modify the outcome. In addition you may **discard** any number of **cards** from your **hand** without using their effects. For each card discarded that way **add 1** to the character's strength.

If the **total strength** is **equal** or **higher** than the strength value of the attacker (shown as "ST" on the event card) you **successfully** evade the attack. Follow the card's instructions to see what happens.

Otherwise you **failed** to evade the attack. Usually your character will be turned to the next lower Health state and additional effects may apply as described on the event card.

If no sign tells you what to do with a card after an event: discard the card.

*You may decide not to fight against an attack and lose automatically.* The outcome is mostly the same but you wouldn't have to use the weapon attached to the character. In case of a Grenade this means that the card will not be discarded.

### Convince

If an event cards tell you to **convince** someone your characters have to use their **collective** persuasive power to talk into someone's mind (e.g. for an Inception). **All** characters of the **affected** level may join in to convince. **Add** their **C-values** (blue sign in upper left corner) and any **modifiers** of attached **Flashback** cards.

***Important:** C-values on the bottom of attached cards are not added!*

You may **discard** any number of **cards** from your **C-display**. **Add** their **C-value** (bottom) to your total **C-value**. You might boost the C-value by playing **reaction** cards (R) from your hand or using character's **abilities**.

If the total **C-value** is **equal** or **higher** than the C-value of the event card (shown as "C") you **successfully convince** your opponent. Follow the card's instructions to see what happens. Otherwise you failed to convince. Check the card's description to see what happens. If no sign tells you what to do with a card after an event: discard the card.

### Event cards with changing values

Some Event cards will tell you that their value (C or St) will increase by 1 if you fail to successfully resolve the event. Use the Status card to keep track of these changes.

### Recruiting on Level 4

*There are 3 characters you have to recruit (convince) on level 4. For each character you have two attempts. If you fail a first attempt turn the corresponding character card sideways (90°) to remember you failed the first att empt. If you fail the second attempt turn the character card to its "weak" side. When the recruit card shows up a third time the character joins the team automatically, but it will join "weak".*

### Difficulty levels:

**Easy game:** Don't use the stat increases and include the card "Rest".

**Medium game:** Use stat increases and the card "Rest".

**Hard game:** Use stat increases and don't include the card "Rest".

**Challenge:** Play a hard game but try to stick to the movie. This means that for the final Kick Yusuf must be on **level 3**, Arthur on **level 2** and Eames on **level 1**.

## Victory

You win the game if:


- Fischer's Final Inception on Level 1 was successful, and
- Cobb and Saito are still active at the end of the game  
(*Note: Some inactive characters can be reactivated in the "Limbo"*), and
- Mal is dead, and
- a successful synchronized Kick was performed at the end to bring back the remaining characters to reality.

## Defeat

You lose the game if one of the following happens:




- Your 4<sup>th</sup> character becomes inactive, or
- Cobb or Saito is inactive at the end of the game, or
- The second attempt to incept Fischer on Level 1 failed.

## Things to remember / Good to know

- Your total strength against attacks calculates like this:
  - o Attacked characters strength +
  - o strength value of all cards attached to this character +
  - o strength gained by playing reaction cards +
  - o 1 point of strength for each additional card you discard from your hand.
- Your total Convince value calculates like this:
  - o Sum of the C-values of all characters in affected level +
  - o C-value (upper left) of Flashback cards attached to these characters +
  - o C-points gained by playing reaction cards +
  - o C-points gained by using characters abilities +
  - o Sum of the C-values (bottom center) of cards discarded from the C-display.
- Always thoroughly check what happens to an event card after it's been resolved. While some may be discarded others are returned to the bottom of the draw deck.
- Attached weapon cards may be discarded anytime in the "Play cards" phase.
- Characters moved from one level to the next keep their attached cards.
- Cards in the C-display may only be discarded through a card effect or when convincing.
- While you can only play a card into the C-display when it has less than 3 cards, it can be expanded to up to 5 cards through other card's effects.
-  Cards with this symbol must only be discarded when you actually use them in a fight. If you decide not to fight because you already know you'll lose, the card may stay attached to the character.
- Flashback cards must be attached to Cobb immediately when they're drawn, even if drawn through a character's **ability** or a card's **effect**.
- "Cobb's kids": Discard this card *after* you resolved its effect.
- The card "Move 1 attached card from any Level to the C-display" may be used on *any* attached card.
- Eames ability can only be used in the "Play cards" phase.

## Addendum

### Character's health states.

Characters have **4** different **health states**: **strong**, **healthy**, **weak** and **inactive**. Always use the **stats** and **abilities** of the character's **current** state. If you are asked to  a character turn his card to the next **lower** state (from strong to healthy, from healthy to weak or from weak to inactive). If you are asked to  a character turn his card to the next **higher** state (from weak to healthy, from healthy to strong). **Inactive** characters may **never** be turned to **weak** through .

A character turned to its **inactive** side immediately **loses** all **attached cards** and is placed in **level 0**, the Limbo.

**Note: Saito will be "Lost in Limbo".**

### Character's abilities

Most characters have a special **ability** on their "strong" or "weak" side. Abilities may only be used when the character is in the corresponding state. Unless otherwise stated character's abilities may be used **anytime**, *even in the middle of the process of adding Strength or C-Values*.

A short description of the character's abilities:

- **Cobb** (when "strong"): Turn Cobbs character card to "healthy". Draw two cards from the Team deck.
- **Arthur** (when "strong"): Turn Arthur's character card to "healthy" to ignore the **priority** of the current attack. Choose any other character on the **attacked** level as target.
- **Yusuf** (when "strong"): Turn Yusuf's character card to "healthy". Turn 1 other character one Health state up.
- **Ariadne** (when "strong"): Turn Ariadne's character card to "**weak**". Add 2 to the total C-Value when convincing.
- **Eames** (when "weak"): Discard an attached weapon with strength 2 or higher to turn Eames character to "healthy". *This ability may **only** be used in the "Play cards" step and only if Eames has a **weapon** attached.*

## The level's goals

Your mission is to put together your **team** and lead it through Fischer's dream levels, planting **Inceptions** into his mind and prepare the final **Kick** to return back into reality. You'll also have to fight **Mal** in the **Limbo** and hopefully find and convince **Saito** to return with you.

### Level 4 – Reality

Here you have to **recruit Ariadne**, **Yusuf** and **Eames** to join your team. You also have to succeed in a collective attempt to **sedate Fischer**. The **Stewardess** will stay on this Level. She'll wake up the Team when you successfully achieved the goals of Level 0.

### Level 3 – Van Chase

Find **Fischer** and convince him for a successful **Inception**. You'll also need a **Kick** card and someone who stays in this level's area to perform the final Kick at the end of the game. Saito might get seriously wounded on this level.

### Level 2 – The Hotel

Find **Fischer** and convince him for a successful second **Inception**. You'll also need a **Kick** card and someone who stays in this level's area to perform the final Kick at the end of the game. Be careful, there might also be attacks on **previous** levels while you focus on this one.

### Level 1 – Snow Fortress

Find **Fischer** and convince him for the final **Inception**. **Watch out!** If you **fail** this Inception you will get a second chance. But if you fail the second one, too, you'll **lose** the game. There is a high risk of **Saito dying** because of his wounds. Well, you have to dive into **Limbo** anyway to face **Mal**. Maybe you can find and convince Saito to return back to reality with you. You'll also need a **Kick** card and someone who stays in this level's area to perform the final Kick at the end of the game.

### Level 0 – Limbo

There won't be much physical violence here but watch the other levels! If **Saito** is lost here try to find and **convince** him to return to the team and keep his promise. You'll also have to resist **Mal**. She wants to make you believe that the Limbo is the real world. The only way out seems to be to **kill Mal**. You'll also get the chance to send back one (and only one!) of your characters to one of the other levels. You might need it there to activate the final **Kick**.

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