GENERATIONS — Rulebook for the physical game

Live a life. Make choices. Leave something behind.

Each game is one generation. You are born, grow up, work, love, vote, age, and die — and what your generation does to society is what the next generation inherits. Highest score wins the generation; the society you leave behind decides how the next one plays.

Components

Component	What it is
Board	The life path, ages 0–100, with three birth tracks, trade squares, election squares, and Later Life spaces. A separate Society Mat holds the president and investment markers.
Choice decks ×3	Knowledge (K), Income (I), Health (H) cards. Each card: a Choice, a Qualification, a Result.
President deck	Candidates. Each shows a Social Investment Change and Policy Implications.
Personal Card (one per player)	Three 1–10 stat tracks (Education, Income, Health), a protective-achievement slot on each, and a circle per achievement.

Generations Ledger	Score pad: one row per generation, plus a scoring block.
Reference cards	Squares, Investment bands, Later Life, Trades, Elections, and Editions (the mark legend and the family-legacy rule).
Tokens	1 pawn per player · 3 stat cubes per player · 4 investment markers · 2 president term markers · 8 yellow goal cubes and 96 black achievement cubes for four players. White cubes track stats, investments and the current term.
Dice	Two six-sided dice.
Packing	Plain large box, six resealable bags and one pencil.

Setup

1. **Board and society.** Put the board out. Set the four **investment markers** (Services, Economy, Health, Defense) on the panel. A brand-new society starts each at **1**. *Session-zero option:* players take turns placing 8 investment points before the first game — it teaches the system and gives everyone a stake.
2. **Personal Cards.** Each player takes one, with a cube at **0** on each stat track (off the left end), and a pawn.
3. **Decks.** Shuffle the three choice decks; put them beside the board. **President deck by edition.** Each president card carries small marks along its bottom edge. Look up your edition on the Editions

reference card and keep only the presidents carrying one of its marks; set the rest aside face down. Tables are free to mix and match marks. A reform event may later tell you to add the set-aside cards with a given mark — shuffle them in; the world just changed.

4. **A later generation** starts from the last filled row of the Ledger: the investment markers where they ended, the sitting president in the slot with their term marker(s), and any inheritances owed to heirs.
5. **Birth.** Each player rolls one die and puts their pawn on the birth track it points to: **1–2 Working Class · 3–4 Middle · 5–6 Privileged**. Oldest player goes first. *Family legacy:* if you played the **previous** game, adjust your roll by your last character's ending tier — **Rich +2, Middle 0, Poor –2** (stay within 1–6). Anyone who was not at the last game rolls plain. Society's legacy carries for everyone; a family's carries only while the family is at the table.

Your turn

1. **Ongoing events.** If a society event is active, apply its per-turn effect to yourself.
2. **Inheritance.** If you are an heir and you have reached the age written in the Ledger, take the inheritance now.
3. **Roll one die and move.** Every square is a year of your life.

4. **Resolve the square you land on** (below).
5. **Later Life.** After resolving your card, lose the Health printed on your landing space.
6. **Life completion.** After age 18, if your Health is 0 at the end of your turn, your life is complete.

You may never have more than 10 or less than 0 in a stat. If a change would push you past a printed limit (a band rule, a president's policy, a protective achievement), stop at the limit.

Squares

Square	What happens
Childhood (K+1, I–1 …)	Apply the printed change. No cards, no dying: Health can't drop below 1 before 18.
ADULT (18)	Stop here exactly — extra pips are lost. Give your character a name (optional; it grants no bonus) and **declare 2 life goals** (achievements you intend to earn). Write both goals on the Ledger and put a yellow marker on each goal. The first player to reach 18 triggers the first election after choosing goals. Then continue next turn.
Book / **coin** / **heart**	Draw the top card of that deck. If you **qualify**, you may accept it or decline. Declined cards go to the bottom of the deck. Some cards are **mandatory** — they resolve whether you like it or not. If you don't qualify, put it on the bottom and draw the next one (once).
TRADE · ↔	Exchange the printed amounts in either direction, or pass. K = Education, I = Income, H = Health. “Any 1 ↔ 1” means give 1 of a stat to gain 1 of a different stat.

VOTE	An election happens before the next player's turn (see *Elections*). One election per VOTE square per generation, no matter who crosses it first.
Later Life · deck icon and –♥	Resolve the card, then lose the Health shown. Only your landing space costs Health.
100 — Survivor	Take **+10** and bank **bonus years equal to your Health**. Your life is complete.

Following and joining paths

The three START spaces line up on the right: roll **1–2**, **3–4**, or **5–6** to select your birth track. Book, coin, and heart icons identify Knowledge, Income, and Health decks; the matching colors are a second cue.

Where paths join, the open shape with one age number is **one shared space**. The birth tracks join at **12**, and the adult branch rejoins at **29**. If your move ends there, resolve that shared space once. If you have movement left, continue counting along the main path. Joining does not add a step, skip a step, or force a stop.

At the adult fork, a landing on **21** lets you choose the lower branch for your next move, or remain on the main path. Resolve the Health card on 21. Passing 21 without landing keeps you on the main path. The lower branch uses the printed stat changes on 22–28 and rejoins the shared space at 29. No extra achievement is awarded merely for choosing a branch.

Cards

A card reads top to bottom:

- **Choice** — what you're deciding to do, and what it costs (stats, a dice gamble, or time: *advance 10 spaces* means the years pass, and the squares you skip are opportunities lost).
- **Qualification** — who may take it. Personal (stats, achievements, an age window) and/or society (an investment **band**: "Economy low", "Services mid or high").
- **Result** — what you get: stat changes, achievements (cover the circle on your card), sometimes effects on other players ("All rich players: –1 Income").

Use black markers for earned achievements. When you earn a declared goal, replace its yellow marker with a black marker; the written goal record preserves the extra scoring bonus. Return removed markers to the supply.

Dice gambles. "Roll two dice. At or under Economy investment wins." — the target is the number the Economy marker sits on. Win → the Win line. Lose → the Lose line.

Protective achievements. Tenure, Wealthy, and Health Insurance sit at the top of a track. While you hold one, that stat can't fall below its floor (Tenure: Education 6, Wealthy: Income 8, Health Insurance: Health 1) — from cards, policies, or events. They do **not** protect against death written on a card ("you die"), and Health Insurance stops working from age **76**, the start of Later Life.

Social investments and their bands

Each sector runs 0–12 in three bands. **The band a marker sits in is a standing rule for everyone**, printed under the track:

Band	Services	Economy	Health	Defense
Low 0–4	Education max 8	Income max 8	Health max 8	Wars hit harder (see Events)
Mid 5–8	—	—	—	—
High 9–12	Education min 3 · Income max 9	Income min 3 · Income max 9	Health min 3 · Income max 9	Income max 9

A "max" stops you gaining past it. A "min" lifts anyone below it up to it the next time their stat changes. High bands are paid for by taxes: nobody's Income goes above 9.

Elections

VOTE spaces are at **18, 38, 58, 78, and 98**. The first player to reach or pass each triggers one election for the whole table that generation. Finish the turn first, including goals at 18 and any card and Later Life loss. Everyone still living votes. Later players passing the same VOTE space do not trigger another election.

Term limit. A president may serve **two terms** in total (mark them with the term circles). Record each president's total terms on the back of the Ledger, including earlier generations. A termed-out president can't run again. Keep their card aside. After one term, a former president can return to the eligible candidate deck when they leave office. If too few eligible candidates remain, use all eligible candidates; a sole candidate takes office without a contest.

Primary. - If the president can run again: draw **2** candidates. The primary picks **one** challenger. - If the seat is open: draw **3**. The primary picks **two**. - Primary votes are **weighted by Income** — each living player casts votes equal to their Income (minimum 1). *Table-talk version:* the Rich players (Income 8+) may simply agree which candidate to eliminate; if they can't agree, count weighted votes.

General election. One living player, one vote, in the open. Ties go to the incumbent; between two challengers, roll one die: 1–3 elects the first candidate drawn; 4–6 elects the second. Dead players don't vote.

Taking office. - **Re-elected:** nothing changes. - **New president:** slide the previous card out. Apply the winner's **Social Investment Change** to the markers (clamped 0–12). Apply any **on-election** policy once, now, to everyone it targets. Their **continuous** policies stay in force for as long as they hold office — read them off the card in the slot.

Society events — physical prototype procedure. Before a primary, roll one die. On 1, and only if no event is already active, roll again on the table below. Use the highest age reached by any player in this generation as the society age. If the selected event is too early, nothing happens. Write the event and its end age on the Ledger. Before each turn, end the event if society age has reached its end age; otherwise apply its effect to the player taking the turn.

Second roll	Event	Earliest society age	Lasts	Effect while active
1–2	War	30	12 years	Lose 1 Income at the start of your turn; lose 2 instead if Defense is Low.
3–4	Depression	25	10 years	Lose 1 Income at the start of your turn. Every Income change is then reduced by a further 1, including this loss. A gain of 2 becomes 1; a loss of 1 becomes a loss of 2. Apply normal floors and caps.
5–6	Pandemic	20	8 years	Lose 1 Health at the start of your turn; apply normal protections.

Use this table for this physical prototype. Nuclear Crisis and automated historical or technology-dependent events belong to companion-app scenarios and are not drawn from this table. Carry an active event into the next generation by writing the years remaining; its new end age is that number. The event table is a tabletop procedure, not a claim that the app's event probabilities and scheduling are identical.

Trades

Land on a white **TRADE** square and you may swap: give the printed amount of one stat, take the printed amount of the other — in either direction. You must be able to pay in full. Or pass.

Later Life

From age **76**, life continues with Knowledge, Income, and Health cards. On landing, resolve the card first, then lose the Health printed on that space. Optional cards may still be declined; the aging loss is mandatory either way. A positive Health card helps before the loss (apply the usual 0–10 stat limits first).

Nothing prevents the printed aging loss: it bypasses policies, investment bands, and protective achievements. Health Insurance ends at 76; other rules still apply to ordinary card effects. At 0 Health, your life is complete. Count what you achieved and what you leave behind. A card that ends your life ends the turn immediately.

Only the space reached by your movement roll costs Health; passing spaces costs nothing. A card that advances you does not draw another card or add another aging loss: finish that card, then pay the loss from the space where you drew it, before scoring a finish. On a Later Life VOTE space, resolve its card and aging loss before holding the election.

The base board prints –1 Health at ages 76–83, –2 at 84–91, and –3 at 92–99. At 100, your life is complete and you score the Survivor bonus as usual.

Family and inheritance

When you gain **Parent**, write on the Ledger: your name, your **age now**. When you die (or finish), your heir receives **half your Income (rounded)** at the heir's age equal to **(your age at death – your age when the child was born)**. In the next generation, a player who takes on that family line collects it when they reach that age.

Scoring the generation

The generation ends when every player is dead or has finished. Score on the Ledger:

Points	For
+1	per year lived (plus Survivor bonus years)
+10	reaching 100
+1	per point of Health left
+5	per achievement
+5	extra for each achievement that was a declared goal
–5	per declared goal not achieved

Highest score wins. Then fill in the generation's row: president and term, the four investment markers, high score, average, inheritances owed. That row is the next generation's starting position.

Playing with the companion app

The board, cards, and presidents all carry codes the app understands. Open the app, choose **I have the physical board**, and enter the board ref printed on the board:

- **Narrator** — the app draws cards, checks qualifications, runs elections, and tracks the society. You move pawns and cubes.
- **Scorekeeper** — the app tracks only the president, investments, and scores; you draw real cards.

The companion app also supports scenario rules. For this physical prototype, use the printed procedures above; verify the selected app scenario before using it to adjudicate events or branching.