

Description

Brass is an economic game about building up eighteenth century Lancashire during the Industrial Revolution.

Goal

Get the most victory points via:

1. Build industry tiles and then use them (flip them).
 2. Build links between popular locations.
 3. Gain 1 VP per 10 money held at end of game.
-

Setup

General Setup:

1. Randomize the turn order.
2. Fill external markets.
3. Set distant market demand to the top.
4. Shuffle the demand tiles.
5. Shuffle the card deck and remove the appropriate number of cards listed below.

Each player:

1. Draws 8 cards
2. Takes 30 money from the bank
3. Arranges their industry tiles in increasing tech level stacks (Lowest level on top).
4. Places an income marker on the "10" space of the Income/VP track. (VP markers are set aside.)

Remove cards from the deck accordingly:

# of Players	Canal Era	Rail Era
3 ♀	9 Cards	6 Cards
4 ♀	6 Cards	2 Cards

Game Structure

Two eras: Canal Era then Rail Era.

Canal Era

1. Perform turns until draw deck *and* hands are exhausted.
2. Score VP for flipped tiles and canals.
3. Canals score for each gold circle in their connected locations. (Each flipped industry tile has a single gold circle and additional ones are printed on the board.)
4. Keep score with a VP marker on the Income/VP track. (VP and Income markers are kept separate.)
5. Remove all canals and level 1 tiles. Reset distant cotton market and reshuffle demand tiles.

Rail Era

1. Deal out 8 cards and remove appropriate number from draw deck.
 2. Perform turns until draw deck *and* hands are exhausted.
 3. Score VP for flipped industry tiles and track, plus 1 VP per 10 money held.
 4. Most VP wins. (Tie Break -> Income, Money, Future Player Order)
-

Turn Structure

1. Collect Income
 2. Perform 2 Actions each in turn order. All money spent during actions goes into "spent" box of player. (First player performs both of their actions, then the next player.)
 3. Redo turn order. Put players in order of spending with lowest spent first. Ties retain previous order.
 4. Empty "spent" boxes and refill hands (if possible).
-

Important Mechanisms

Flipping Industry Tiles

Each industry tile flips in different ways:

1. Cotton and Ports: Flip during a "Sell Cotton" action.
2. Iron and Coal: Flip when emptied.
3. Shipyards: Flip immediately when built.

Once a tile is flipped:

1. Immediately move your income marker up the Income/VP track.
2. Score the VP at the end of the era.

Consuming Iron

1. If iron on tiles, take from any tile for free. If you remove the last from a tile, flip and score it.
2. If no iron on tiles, take iron from external market and pay appropriate price to bank.
3. If no iron on external market, take from bank and pay 5.

Consuming Coal

Coal must be *transported* to the building site. (When building track, may be transported to either end of the link.)

1. If connected to a tile with coal on it, take coal from there for free. (Take from closest source. If equal distant, builder chooses. If last coal, flip it.)
2. If not connected to coal, but connected to any port, take coal from external market and pay price. (If empty, take from bank and pay 5.)
3. If not connected to coal or any port, cannot consume coal.

Personal Networks

A location is in your personal network if you have an industry tile there or you have a link connected to it. It is possible to have separate personal networks. They matter because:

1. You may only build new links that touch your personal networks.
2. Industry cards may only be used to build in locations that are part of your personal networks.

For all other purposes of connecting or transporting, any player's links will suffice.

Available Actions

A. Build Industry

Must play appropriate card in 1 of 3 ways:

1. Play a location card that matches the location.
2. If your personal network is already connected to the location, you may play a matching industry card.
3. You may use 2 actions to discard any 2 cards to build anywhere.

Pay money, and consume iron or coal as required. You must build top tile of industry chosen onto matching industry location.

When building iron:

1. Add supplied iron to the tile.
2. If external market is not full, move iron from tile to external market and take money from the bank equal to slots you fill.

Do the same for coal, but must be linked to any port to move to external market. If originally isolated, but later linked to a port, do not move the coal cubes to external market.

B. Sell Cotton

Discard any card.

Choose one of your unflipped cotton mills. Do one of the following:

1. Choose an unflipped port that is connected to your mill. Flip both tiles. The owners get the listed income increases. (It does not have to be your port.)
2. If your mill is connected to any kind of port and the distant market isn't bottomed out, you may instead attempt to sell to the distant market. Flip a market tile and lower the demand. If it bottoms out, your action ends and your mill does not flip. If demand remains, then flip your mill and gain additional income equal to the remaining demand.

You may repeat the above choice for as many unflipped mills as you have in this single action. However, if you choose the distant market and the demand bottoms out, your action must immediately end.

C. Take a Loan

Discard any card. Take 10, 20 or 30 from the bank. For each 10 you take, drop one income *band*.

D. Develop

Discard any card. Develop up to twice. Each time, consume an iron and then remove the top tile from one of your industry stacks. You may choose different stacks in the same action.

E. Build Link

Discard any card. In general:

- The link must be connected to your personal network.
- Only one player may ever build on a given link.

Canal era:

- May only build on blue links.
- May only build a single canal per action.
- Pay 3 to the bank.

Rail era:

- May only build on brown links.
 - May build 1 or 2 tracks in a single action.
 - For one track, pay 5 to the bank and consume a coal.
 - For two tracks, pay 15 to the bank and consume two coals. (Need not be built on consecutive links.)
-

Exceptions

General

1. Remember to remove appropriate number of cards from draw deck during each era.
2. External ports printed on map allow access to distant and external markets, as do flipped or un-flipped port tiles.
3. If you have no tiles on the map, an industry card will let you build the appropriate tile anywhere on the map.
4. You can replace your own industry if you build over it with a higher tech level.
5. You can replace opponent's coal or iron industry with a higher tech level *if* appropriate external market has bottomed out (And none on the board for coal).
6. If building a port in Lancaster or Preston, you may not choose to lock out the cotton location if the dedicated port location is available.
7. If you cannot pay your negative income, you may remove industry tiles from the map and recoup half of their cost rounded down. After which you must still pay your debt.

Canal Era

1. First turn During Canal era, only take 1 action.
2. During Canal phase, each player may only have one industry per location.

Rail Era

1. You may not build tech level 1 industries during the Rail Era. (You must develop through them.)
2. You may not take a loan during the Rail Era after the draw deck is exhausted.

Shipyards

1. Shipyards immediately flip when built.
2. Level 0 shipyards may not be built (You must develop through them).
3. Level 1 shipyards may only be built during the Canal Era.
4. Level 2 shipyards may only be built during the Rail Era.

If you build in Liverpool, your personal network is connected to Birkenhead, but there must be track built into Birkenhead to transport coal there.

Beginner Strategy

Canal Era

The easiest starting actions are to build a cotton mill, connect it to any port and ship it. This gets your income into the positive quickly and is easiest to understand for a new player. Other openings are perfectly viable. It's quite possible to open the game developing heavily and taking some large loans.

Rail Era

Try to have some coal sitting on the board at the beginning of the Rail Era. This would require you to build a tech level 2 or higher coal mine near the end of the Canal Era. All tracks require coal, so there is going to be a high demand for coal at the beginning of the Rail Era.

Supply and Demand

Try to build whatever is in short supply. If there are many unflipped cotton mills, build some ports. If there are many unflipped ports, build some cotton mills. If the external coal market is low, build some coal. If the external iron market is low, build some iron. If you concentrate on building what is in demand, then you will be able to flip those industries quicker and score income and VP faster.

Shipyards

Shipyards only supply large amounts of VP. They can be worth the effort, but be aware that you need to develop through the lower tech levels and be able to reach the limited locations available to shipyards.

Links

Don't underestimate the VPs gained from links. A link between two heavily built locations can generate 5-7 VP on it's own.

Loans

Loans are a perfectly viable source of money. Since lower income bands are smaller, earlier loans are generally cheaper. Additionally, you should generally take the full 30 since it's the most efficient use of your action. At least one loan will generally be necessary over the course of the game. It's also viable to take many loans over the course of the game.

Credits

Martin Wallace and his staff for a great game.
BGG Community for their editorial assistance.
My wife for letting me spend \$60 on a game.

Version 2.0 – May 5th, 2010

Questions or comments:
Isamoor@gmail.com