

# Brains!

A graveyard-building game for 2-5 players

by Peter C. Hayward and Kelly Jo

## YOUR MISSION:

You command an army of the undead! Using your zombie horde, beat your opponents to be the first to collect valuable treasures!

## COMPONENTS:

- 44 **Brains!** cards
- 5 gravestones
- Rules

## SETUP:

Each player takes a **gravestone** and places it in front of them. Return any unused gravestones to the box.

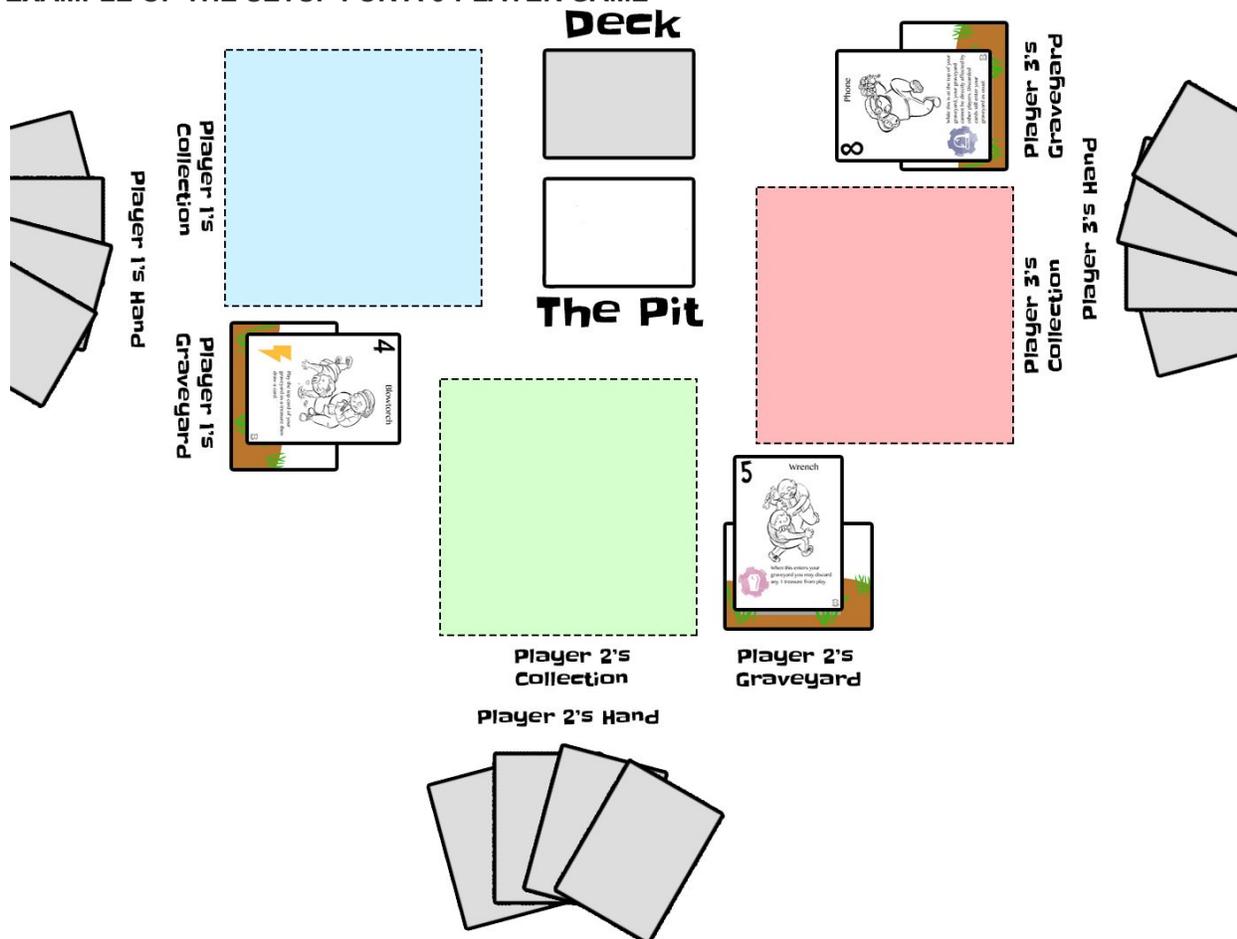
**Shuffle the cards** together to form the deck. (*Do not include any expansions for your first few games.*)

**Deal 4 cards face-down to each player**, then place the deck in the middle of the table.

Deal one card face-up to the top of each player's gravestone card. This is their **graveyard**.

The player who most recently ate takes the first turn and play continues clockwise.

## EXAMPLE OF THE SETUP FOR A 3-PLAYER GAME



## GAMEPLAY BASICS:

The first player with **21 or more points** (17 or more points in a 5-player game) at the start of their turn **is the winner!**

On their turn, players must do **one** of the following:

- **DRAW** 2 cards from the deck
- **PLAY** a card from their hand, either:
  - for its **Action**, into the pit
  - as a **Treasure**, face-up into their collection
- **BURY** the top card of the deck, face-up into their graveyard

## GRAVEYARD:

**Some card actions will “bury” cards. When a card is buried, move it to the top of its owner’s graveyard.** When a card is buried from your hand or your collection, it moves to the top of **your** graveyard (unless otherwise specified).

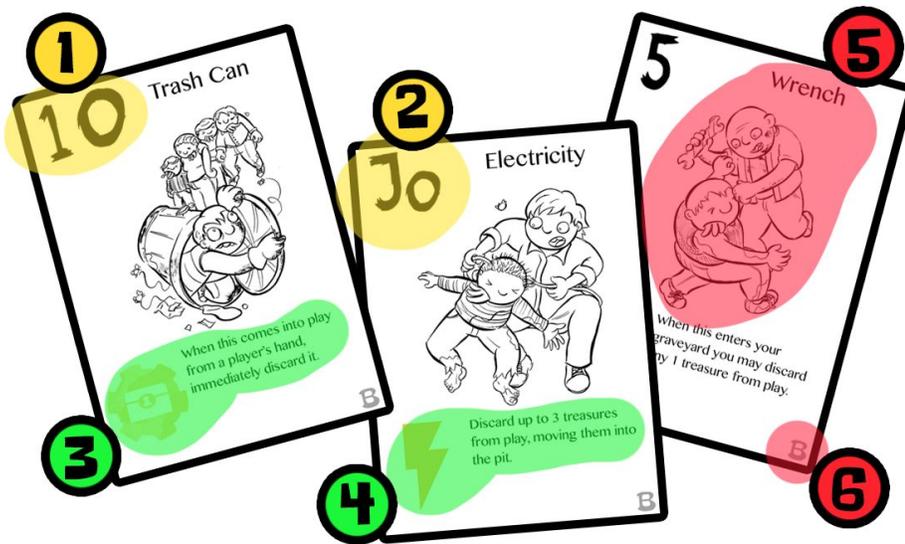
Some cards have an immediate ability when they are buried, or an ongoing effect when they are at the top of your graveyard. **You may not play cards directly to the graveyard.**

Cards in your graveyard do **not** count towards your point total, unless a card’s effect says otherwise.

## THE PIT:

**Whenever you play a card for its action, it moves to the top of the pit** - a face-up pile beside the deck.

## CARDS:



**1: The card’s point value.** This adds to your point total while the card is in your collection.

**2: Cards without a number** (Joker, King, Queen, Jack, Ace) have no point value. They cannot be played as **treasures**.

**3: The card’s effect.** Cards with gear icons have **ongoing effects**. Their text tells you when they apply. They may only be played as **treasures**.

**4: Cards with lightning bolts** are **action** cards. Their action only applies when they are played into the **pit**.

**5: The card’s title and art.** This has no in-game significance.

**6: The game’s set.** For your first few games, play only with the cards marked “B”.

## GAMEPLAY:

Each turn, you must either **Draw**, **Play**, or **Bury**.

### DRAW THE TOP 2 CARDS FROM THE DECK

Add them to your hand. There is no hand limit. If the deck is empty when a player needs to draw, everyone moves the bottom card of their graveyard into the pit. Then, shuffle the pit to form a new deck.

### PLAY A CARD FROM YOUR HAND

Cards can be played in one of two different ways:



Cards with lightning bolts can be played *into the the pit* for their **action**. When you play a card this way, **ignore its points**.

If you can't complete a card's entire action, do as much  as you're able to.  
*For example, if your hand is empty, ignore any part of an action that lets you play a card.*

As soon as you have enough treasure in front of you to win (whether on your turn or another player's turn), you must shout "**Brains!**". This tells everyone that you will win at the start of your next turn.

***If you forget to do this, skip your next turn instead of winning.***



Cards with a point value (indicated by the number in the corner and the row of brains down the side) can be played face-up into your collection as **treasures**. |

When you play a card as a treasure, **ignore its action**.

Cards with a **gear icon** on them cannot be played for their action:



Cards with a treasure chest in the gear have an **ongoing effect** as long as they are in your collection.



Cards with a gravestone in the gear have an **ongoing effect** while they are **at the top of your graveyard**.



Cards with a coffin in the gear have a **one-time** effect at the time they enter your graveyard. If multiple cards with a coffin icon enter your graveyard in a single turn, they each trigger in order.

*If a card with this icon is randomly dealt into your graveyard at the start of the game, ignore its effect.*

**Cards with no point value** (*Ace, King, Queen, Jack, Joker*) may not be played as treasures. If a card with no point value ever enters your collection, **bury** it - move it to the top of your graveyard.

### BURY THE TOP CARD OF THE DECK

Take the top card of the deck, and place it face-up into your graveyard. If there is a coffin icon on the gear, this will trigger the card's effect.

#### TIP:

If an opponent is going to win next turn and you don't have any cards in hand that can stop them, **bury** the top card of the deck as your turn! The right card landing in your graveyard could be exactly what you need.

## WINNING THE GAME:

As soon as you have enough treasure in your collection to win, you must announce “Brains!” - this tells everyone that you are going to win on your next turn. If you drop below the winning number of points, let everyone know - the next time you have enough points once more, declare “Brains!” again.

At the start of the turn after you announced “Brains!”, if you still have enough points, you win!

If you would have won but did not announce “Brains!” as soon as you hit the winning number, skip your turn. You cannot win until the start of your next turn.

**CREDITS:** Created by **Peter C. Hayward**. Art and Graphic Design by **Kelly Jo**.

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## TREASURE HUNTERS:

**Brains!** can be played with other games in the **Treasure Hunters series**. Shuffle them into the **Brains!** deck, and play by the rules of **Brains!**

Whenever a card refers to the “discard pile”, it means **the pit**. Whenever a card is **discarded** from your hand or from your collection, **bury** it: move it to the top of your graveyard. When a card is protected from being **discarded**, it is also protected from being **buried**.

Cards of any type discarded from your play area are **buried**. Any cards discarded from the top of the deck are moved into **the pit**.

## SCUTTLE!:

When the term **destroyed** appears on a card, it means **buried from play**. When the term **discarded** appears on a card, it means **buried from your hand**. In either case, move the buried card to the top of your graveyard.

When a card is **protected**, it cannot be **stolen**, **buried**, **discarded**, **moved**, or **swapped**.

Whenever a card refers to cards **in front of a player**, treat it to mean **in that player’s collection**.

**Permanents** do not count as **treasures**.

When a **disease** is discarded from play or hand, it goes into **the pit**.

## NINJITSU!:

While playing with **Ninjitsu!**, you do not have to announce ‘Brains!’ the turn before you are going to win.

Follow these **Ninjitsu!** rules: as their turn, players may play a card as a **secret**, or **steal a secret**. Cards from **Brains!** cannot affect **secrets**.



## TREASURE HUNTERS EXPANSIONS:

Discarded **Weather** cards go to their own separate **Weather discard pile**. Discarded **Event** cards always go to **the pit**. When an event causes multiple players to discard cards, go in turn order, starting with the active player.

### SAMPLE GAMEPLAY:

**Kelly** plays a **Guitar**. It is worth twice as much as the top card of her **graveyard**, which is a 4.

**Peter** draws 2 cards.

**Roxy** plays a **Trash Can** as a treasure. Since he played it from his hand, it is immediately buried, and moves to the top of his **graveyard**.

At the start of **Kelly's** second turn, she has **8** points in her collection. Not enough to win! She decides to **bury** the top card of the deck into her graveyard. It's a **9** - she now has **18** points!

At the start of **Peter's** second turn, he has **0** points in his collection. He also **buries** the top card of the deck for his turn. It's a **Wrench** - when it enters his graveyard, he may bury any 1 treasure from play. He chooses to bury **Kelly's Guitar**. She moves it to the top of her graveyard.

At the start of **Roxy's** second turn, he has **0** points. **Roxy** plays a **Cafeteria Worker** as an action. He draws 2 cards, then plays the top card of his graveyard as a treasure. This moves his **Trash Can** into play - since it was not played from his hand, it stays in play! He now has **10** points in his collection.

### GLOSSARY:



Cards with lightning bolts can be played into **the pit** for their **action**, which triggers immediately.



Cards with a gear icon have an **ongoing effect**, and cannot be played for their action.

**PLAYED:** Whenever a card is **played for its action**, move it face-up to the top of the pit.

**BURIED:** Whenever a card is **buried** from your hand or your collection, move it face-up to the top of your graveyard.

When multiple cards are buried at once, you choose the order in which they enter your graveyard.

When multiple players would bury cards at once, start with the current player and proceed clockwise.

When cards are buried **from play**, the current player chooses which cards are buried.

When cards are buried **from your hand**, you choose which cards to bury.

When multiple players would bury cards at once, the current player chooses the order in which they are buried.

Effects which say **“any”** card can target cards belonging to any player, even yourself.

All cards in a player's **collection** are in play.

Cards in graveyards, the deck, the pit, or players' hands are **not** in play. They do not count towards your points.

**NOTE:** Cards moving in or out of your graveyard can have an effect even when it's not your turn! Any time a card is added to your graveyard, check to see if it has a card with a coffin or gravestone in the gear. Cards leaving your graveyard might uncover a card with a gravestone icon, reactivating its effect.

(Cards with a coffin icon have no effect when they're uncovered, only when they **enter** your graveyard).

**EXTENDED VARIANT:** Instead of needing 21 or more treasure to win, players need **exactly** 21 treasure to win! (17 in a 5-player game). When playing this way, the plunger requires you to have **exactly** 13 treasure.

?

### Guitar



Play this card as a treasure. It is worth twice as much as the top card of your graveyard.

2

### Plunger



While this is at the top of your graveyard, you only need 13 or more points to win.

3

### Handsaw



While this is at the top of your graveyard, draw a card at the end of each of your turns.

4

### Blowtorch



Worth +2 points for each card in your graveyard.

5

### Wrench



When this enters your graveyard you may bury any 1 treasure from play.

6

### Jump Rope



Draw a card, bury a card from your hand, then play a card.

7

### Cleaver



Bury the top 2 cards of the deck, moving them to your graveyard in any order.

8

### Phone



Each opponent shuffles their graveyard. Then, you may move the top card from 1 opponent's graveyard to the pit.

9

### Boxing Gloves



Bury 2 cards from your hand in any order.

**10** Bag of Loot



When this enters your graveyard, move it to the bottom.

**K** Cleaner



Draw 3 cards. Bury 1 card from your hand.

**Q** Cafeteria Worker



Draw 2 cards then play the top card of your graveyard as a treasure.

**J** Bowler



Play the top 2 cards of your graveyard as treasures then bury 1 of your treasures from play.

**A** Firefighter



Move the top card of each opponent's graveyard to your graveyard in any order.

**A** Wait Staff



Play the top card of your graveyard as a treasure then bury any treasure in play.

**A** Crossing Guard



Bury any 1 treasure from play, moving it into your graveyard.

**Jo** Electricity



Discard up to 2 treasures from play, moving them into the pit.

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Play the top 2 cards of your graveyard as treasures then bury 1 of your treasures from play.

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Play this card as a treasure. It is worth twice as much as the top card of your graveyard.

# 2 Plunger



While this is at the top of your graveyard, you only need 13 or more points to win.

# 3 Handsaw



While this is at the top of your graveyard, draw a card at the end of each of your turns.

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Worth +2 points for each card in your graveyard.

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