



Artwork Guidelines



HELLO FELLOW BOARD GAME FANS!

Boda Games is a company that supports board game designers, publishers and anyone else involved in the exciting process of making board games. Having published countless numbers of games, we are aware of the difficulties in going from an idea, a concept for a game to a set of files and artwork ready to be printed.

The purpose of these artwork guidelines is to present you a definitive guide to preparing any and all files for your soon to be printed game. As part of our ongoing effort to make things easier for you, the designers and publishers, we have put together all our knowledge of printing games and bundled it in these artwork guidelines.

As you read through this guide, you will learn how to expertly navigate common mistakes and save yourself a lot of time and needless effort in getting your game ready for printing. We did our best to explain everything as clearly and easily as we could, so after this is done you will be an expert on things such as bleed, margins, color profiles and more. Playing cards, boxes, punchboards, dice, we cover all these and more in this extensive guide. But if there is information you can't find in here, we are more than happy to go over it with you personally to make sure everything is clear and that file preparation won't be a hindrance in your mission to publish your game.

From the table of contents you can quickly jump to a specific topic you are interested in, or you can scroll through the entire guide. Each theme is separated into different chapters to make sure it is easy to navigate. Also make sure to check out our template generator, which is referenced in this guide, at www.bodagames.com/templates.

Having said that, we sincerely hope that this guide will be a useful resource to everyone out there with the ambition to create board games. Boda Games is excited to work with everyone and bring more of our much beloved board games into the world!

The Boda Games team



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File preparation



The following are some general things that apply to most of the files that you will need to prepare. All the files need to be in the correct color modes. The resolution should be high enough (minimum 300 ppi). Make sure you use the latest and updated software. Check that everything is labeled and named accordingly.

1~ Files saved in PDF format



All files should be submitted as PDFs unless specifically specified otherwise. Making PDFs is pretty easy when you use the right software. When you are saving it, pay extra attention to the following things:

- The PDF should be compatible with Adobe Acrobat Reader 7 (PDF 1.6) or newer/higher.
- The PDF should use the color profile FOGRA 39 (ISO12647-2) to make sure it is the same as what our factory is color calibrated to.
- The filename should clearly show what component it is.
- You don't need to include color bars or registration marks but trim marks are recommended.

2~ All files in CMYK color mode



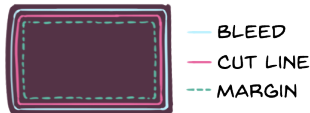
All the files need to be in CMYK color mode unless specified otherwise. Our printers use an offset printing process with CMYK plates: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Key (Black). Don't use RGB, as RGB is a digital format meant for onscreen images.

3~ Images resolution of 300ppi



Images should have a resolution of 300 ppi or 400 ppi. Using images with a resolution lower than 300 ppi can cause them to appear blurry or pixelated after printing. On the other hand, using images with a resolution higher than 400 ppi will create files that are too heavy.

4~ All files with 3mm of bleed and 3mm of margin



All files need to have 3mm of bleed and a minimum of 3 mm of margin.

Bleed and margin issues are very common, but easy to avoid if you keep this in mind from the start!

What is bleed and what is margin?

Bleed and margin are there to make sure that after printing, when the papers are being cut, there is enough artwork printed that extends to the edge of the page. A very minimal amount of movement may occur when printing with a press and when cutting the paper to the desired size. Thus, if your artwork is made to fit exactly and the press moves a millimeter, then the whole artwork moves 1 mm in a given direction. Then, when we start cutting, part of the paper won't have any artwork, and the other part will have the artwork cut off partially.

5~ Black text should be pure black



Black text needs to be in pure black (C:0% M:0% Y:0% K:100%), not rich black, and the text should be set to overprint.

If the text is not in pure black, it will be easier to notice small variations in the printing. When different color plates are used on text, small misalignments can cause the typeface to appear blurry, particularly with narrow strokes. When using a single color plate, this problem won't occur, therefore guaranteeing good looking text. Black text is generally considered the easiest to read, hence the recommendation for pure black.



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Dielines

Dieline files need to be submitted separately from the artwork, because the department that makes the dieline mold is separated from the printing department. For the dieline files, this can either be in individual dielines PDF files or as a spot layer file. Make sure the files or layers are named accurately, so it is clear which ones belong together.

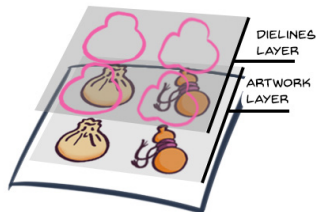


PUNCHBOARD_ARTWORK.PDF



PUNCHBOARD_DIELINES.PDF

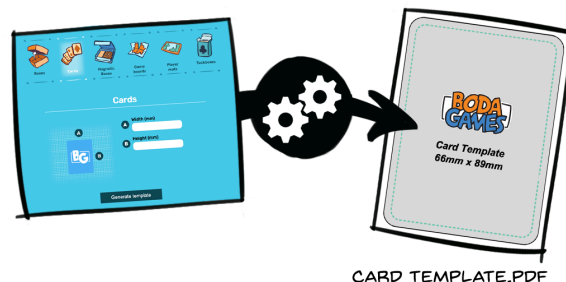
Option #1: separate files



PUNCHBOARD.PDF

Option #2: same file, separate layers

Template generator



One way to make sure your files are ready for printing is to use the right templates for your artwork. Boda Games has a great tool for that, with our very own template generator. Find it by clicking the button below or going to bodagames.com/templates/. There you can put in your custom sizes and generate templates for two piece game boxes, tuckboxes, cards, game boards and more.

Transform texts to outlines

In case you are not able to export a PDF for the artwork files, then you can also send us the editable files directly. Please mention it specifically when you are sending it over, so that our graphics department knows how to handle the files. For the text in the files, please convert all the text to outlines before sending it to us. Alternatively, send us a link to or the font file(s) along with the artwork files. If the text is not converted to outlines, then sometimes small changes can occur when it is being prepared for printing.

Recommended software

Adobe's Creative Suite software (particularly Photoshop, Illustrator and Indesign) are often used when creating print files. Using the right software for the right task can make file preparation proceed faster and easier.



Use InDesign for the final layout of the files and to generate the PDF for printing.



Illustrator is the most suitable option for creating vector illustrations.



Photoshop works the best when creating raster illustrations.



We strongly advise you to not use Photoshop for the creation of your final PDFs. Please use Adobe InDesign (preferred) or Adobe Illustrator instead. If you must use Photoshop, please plan for additional time for prepress checks and revisions.

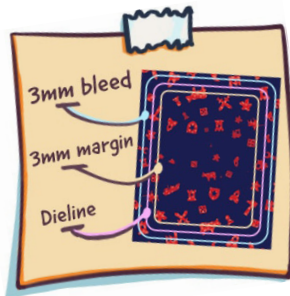




Cards

Cards are of the most common components in a game and likely part of your design as well. How to prepare your card files the right way? First of all, follow these 3 ground rules:

Keep all important artwork and texts from the cards within the margin line. Make sure that there is enough background artwork that extends all the way up to the bleed line (or even better, beyond the bleed line!).



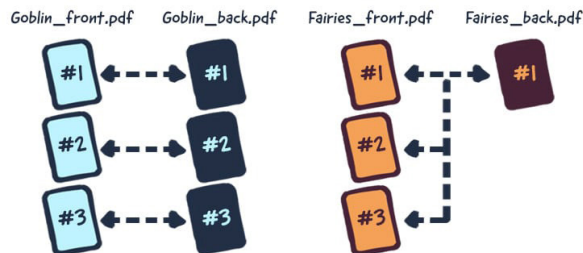
Leave a minimum of 3mm bleed as well as 3mm margin on each card.

File format

Card files should be submitted in a PDF file format. All the cards go into a single PDF file, where each individual card becomes a page. So if you have a standard 54 card deck game, you'll end up making a 54 page long PDF file.

As a card has 2 sides, for the second side you make another separate PDF file. Again, if your game has 54 cards then you make a 54 page long PDF file with all the artwork for the second side. We will match the page numbers up, so page #25 in the first PDF file, will be matched with page #25 in the second PDF file. Remember to name the PDF files accurately if you have multiple

different card decks, so that we can easily identify which files go together.



Card decks are submitted as PDF's, where 1 card = 1 page in the PDF file. Separate PDF files for the front of the cards and the back.

Card sizes

Boda Games can manufacture all the standard card sizes (e.g. poker, tarot, bridge, mini) as well as custom sizes.

Final Checklist

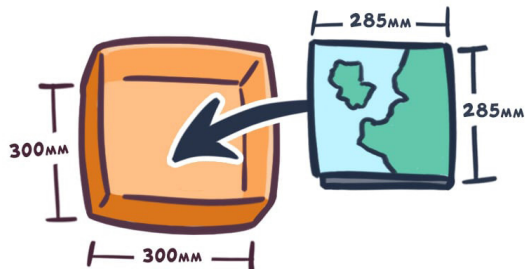
- 3mm bleed
- 3+ mm margins
- CMYK color mode
- images at 300+ppi
- black text: pure black
- PDF file format, single file

Boxes

Fitting all the components

The most important thing with a game box is to remember the main purpose of the box: to hold the items from your game. This actually sounds easier than it is in reality. Particularly when you have odd-sized and larger components, you need to account for the total volume they all take up inside the box.

As a general rule of thumb, your box should be at least 15mm bigger than the largest component in the game. 15 mm bigger in every single possible direction.

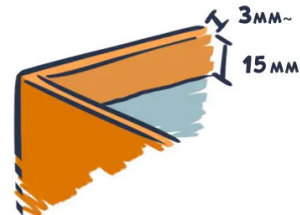


Your Boda Games account manager will send you the required templates once we know all the sizes, or you can use our template generator to make a template sized to your exact specifications. This way you can adjust the artwork to perfectly fit with the box size wise. If you are unsure about box sizing, please consult your account manager and they will help you calculate it accordingly.

Bleed

For game boxes, the printed sheets also wrap around the sides of the box. Similar to game boards, this hides the raw cardboard material.

Therefore, they need to have 18mm of bleed on every side. 15 millimeters of bleed is reserved for the wrap around part. Then the remaining 3mm is the standard bleed.



Dieline files need to be submitted separately from the artwork. Because the department that makes the dieline mold is separated from the printing department. For the dieline files, this can either be in individual dielines PDF files or as a spot layer file.

Final Checklist

- 18mm bleed
- 15mm bigger than biggest component
- CMYK color mode
- images at 300+ppi
- black text: pure black

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Box Markings

A board game or a card game needs to have the right markings on the outside of the box. Some of these markings are mandated by law, such as health related matters. Other markings are for stores and retailers their benefit. And some of these markings are for potential buyers of your game! What's important to remember is, all markings serve a purpose.

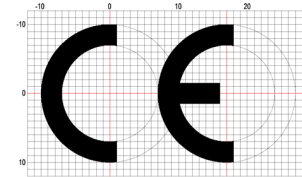


Age label

All games need a recommended age label. Games with age labels below the age of 13+ for the United States and 14+ for Europe require additional testing. Games meant to be sold worldwide would do best to follow the European standard of 14+ labels. A game without an age label will not be allowed to pass through customs when shipped from the factory in China to your country.

Country of origin markings

Country of origin: A game needs to state the country of origin (COO) on the box. The country of origin is the country where we manufacture the board game, so if you are manufacturing with Boda Games then that would be China.



CE Marking: For products going to the European Union, a CE marking is also required. The letters "CE" are an abbreviation of the French phrase "Conformité Européenne" which literally means "European Conformity." the CE mark means that the product is manufactured according to CE standards. Boda Games their products are made in accordance with the CE standard.

UPC/EAN13

It is best to put a UPC barcode on the game box, as distributors and retail stores require a barcode to track your product in their inventory. Make sure there is enough space on the box to print the barcode at full size and avoid scanning issues.



The barcode should be printed in Pure Black color.



Choking hazard marking

If your board game is intended to be played by children 12 years or younger and contains small parts (meeples, dice, miniatures, etc.), you need to put a choking hazard label on it.



WARNING:

CHOKING HAZARD — Small parts not for children under 3 years or any individuals who have a tendency to place inedible objects in their mouths.



DISCLAIMER: This guide is a general guide for box markings. Please always check local guidelines and regulations for the latest updates and changes in regulations. Please make sure that your game actually adheres to all the standards for which you include marking on your game box.



Other Markings



Then some other markings commonly found: detailed address of publisher (required for European Union), Phone Number, E-mail address , Website...

Some other markings you might want to consider putting on your game box: Importer, Distributor, Licenses (where applicable), poison hazard, not for under the age of 3 marking, your company logo (remember to add TM or ® when applicable!), name of the game designer and/or artist, number of players, average play time, color blind friendliness, etc.



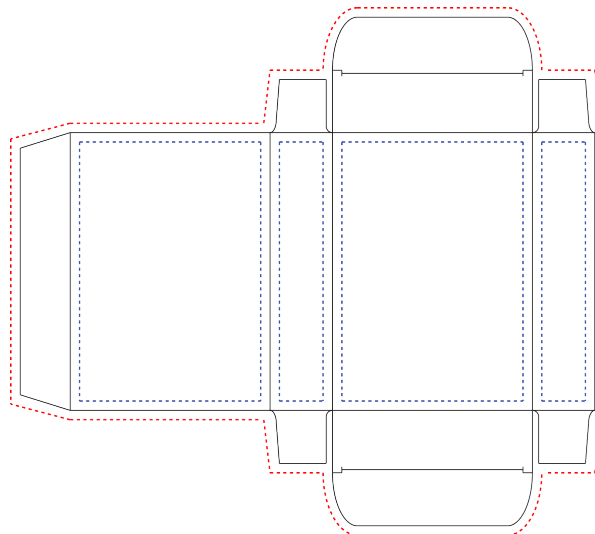


Tuckboxes

If your game consists of only cards, or if you need a smaller box within the main gamebox to hold pieces or components, the best container may be a lighter, one-piece tuck box. Just like the two piece box, you can generate custom templates for a tuck box with the Boda Template Generator.

All tuck box files must have 3mm of bleed and 3mm of margin.

If the tuckbox is the outermost package of the game, meaning it will be displayed in stores, then keep in mind that the same rules for box and safety markings apply to it as if it were a two piece game box. For more information on box and safety markings, please check pages 8-9.



Final Checklist

- 3mm bleed
- 3+ mm margins
- CMYK color mode
- images at 300+ppi
- black text: pure black

Gameboards

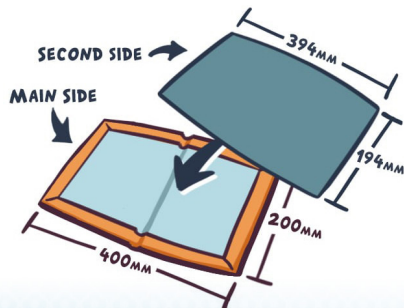
Margins and bleed

A game board wraps around the edges to protect the cut edges of the board and to cover up the raw cardboard.



In order to allow it to wrap around it properly, it needs a minimum of 18mm of total bleed. This is for a single sided game board.

However, adding a second side to a game board is a very cost effective way to give more depth and experience to your game, and therefore something commonly found in a lot of games. For a double sided board, we put the second side on top of the overwrap from the 1st side.



As such, it needs to be 3mm shorter on all sides from the top side. This is in addition to the standard 3mm bleed.

Cutting and folding



When the game board gets cut, the way of cutting depends on the preferred folding direction when closing the game board. If the board only has print on one side, you can cut it so that it closes with the artwork facing inwards or outwards. This will leave some part of the raw material exposed. The paper connects the two cardboard pieces on the top or bottom side of the game board. Depending on preferences, If you prefer not to expose the raw cardboard area from the cut then that is possible. Then the paper will connect on both sides of the board.



There are a lot of ways to fold a game board. These are the most common ways to fold a game board.



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IF YOU NEED A CUSTOM TEMPLATE FOR YOUR GAME BOARD, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGER. WE WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU GET ONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Final Checklist



- 18mm bleed for front side
- Double sided board is 3 mm smaller in each direction, 3mm bleed
- Decide cut and folding direction

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Playing boards

Playing boards can be a useful and fun addition to any game. They are often used if the game requires individual player boards with specific information or to keep track of resources or scores. Playing boards share many similarities with the larger game boards but also a few key differences. Boda Games has a number of existing molds for the commonly used player board formats, but keep in mind that for odd sizes it will require a new mold to be made. Please contact your Boda Games account manager for more information on the sizes we have available.

For the smaller player boards, you either choose to have the edges wrapped similarly to the big game boards, or to cut them from the cardboard directly leaving the raw cardboard visible on the sides.

WRAPPED ARTWORK



18MM BLEED

CUT ARTWORK



3MM BLEED

When cutting directly, the required bleed and margin is 3mm of bleed and 3mm of margin.

For the wrapped option, the same conditions apply as described above. Of course, these smaller boards can still have one or two folds. This can be convenient if you need to fit the player boards in a small size box or if you want them to be able to stand up straight on the table so that other players cannot see the content.

Final Checklist

- 3mm bleed
- 3+ mm margins
- CMYK color mode
- images at 300+ppi
- black text: pure black

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Punchboards

No game is complete without punchboards. As such, punchboards play a central role most modern board games. They make up a wide array of components in a game and can be used for almost any purpose. The game board, the tokens, the player boards and anything else that you can think of, can be made with punchboards.

General requirements

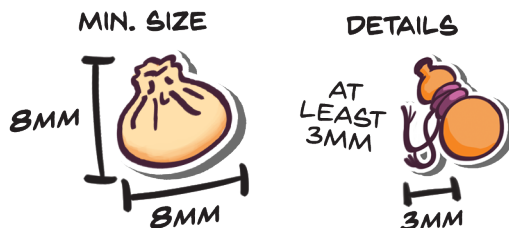
In order for a punchboard to be able to fit inside the game box, **it should be at least 15mm smaller than the top part of the game box in both width and height.**

when seen from the top. This is due to the way that you punch the shape of the token into the cardboard, allowing players to push them out without tearing the paper.

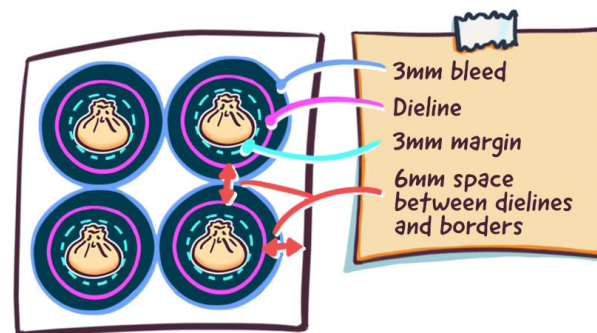
When you have multiple sheets of tokens or other items that use the same die-cut, make sure to label each of them accordingly. This helps make sure that there are no mix ups during production and packing. You can put the label anywhere on the outside of the board. Later during production we will cut it off and throw it away.

Bleed and Margin

Each item on the punchboard needs to have enough bleed and margin in all directions for a perfect result.



For tokens, generally **the smallest a token can be is 8mm x 8mm**, although it depends on the shape of the token. For uniquely shaped tokens, as a rule of thumb, **individual edges / protruding shapes of the token need to be at least 3mm long.** If not, then it will not be possible to ensure an accurate cut from the molds and a consistent shape on each token. Furthermore, keep in mind that tokens will be slightly rounded at the edges



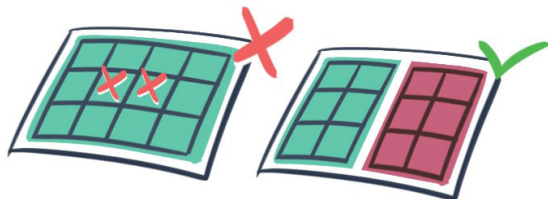
Dielines spacing: For a punchboard, you should leave a minimum of **6mm between any diecut lines.** This can be dielines between different tokens, or 6mm spacing

between a token and the dieline of the board itself. Then, each token should have **3mm of bleed outside the adhering dieline, and 3mm of margin between the dieline and the artwork.**

Board sizing: Besides the individual tokens, the entire board as a whole also needs to have 3mm bleed and 3mm margin. The dieline should have the same size as discussed and specified in the quotation.

Shared dielines

One space-saving alternative is to create shared dielines. There are some limitations to what kind of shapes can use shared dielines. Straight lines, square shapes, rectangular shapes and such work well with shared dielines. But complicated shapes (rounded, very pointed) are usually not very suitable. If you are considering using shared dielines, please consult your account manager about the feasibility.

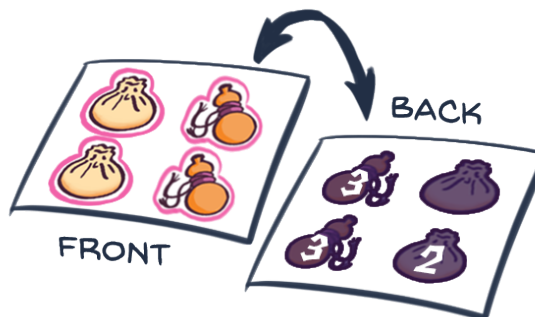


Further requirements for shared dielines: two items that are sharing a dieline have the same artwork content in their margins. Also, that the token needs to have a minimum of 1 touching point with the physical punchboard. This means you cannot have a token that shares

dielines on all 4 sides (in the case of a square token); 1 side must be attached to the “main” punchboard.

Punchboards files preparation

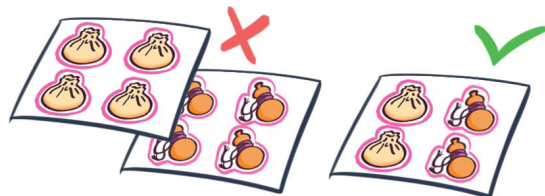
For dieline files, please take care to make separate files for each dieline. You can either save them as separate PDF files, or as individual spot layers in the art file. However, don't include them in the regular art file layers.



When creating a layout for the punchboard, keep in mind the following: **The backside needs to be an exact mirrored shape of the frontside.** Of course the artwork can be different. But the placement of the tokens and the layout will remain the same and therefore needs to be mirrored.

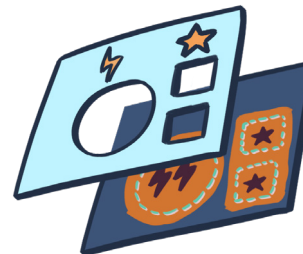


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Due to the cost incurred for each individual diecut, in some cases it is better to design the punchboard in such a way that you only need 1 diecut mold. This helps save on the molding costs. For example, say you need 12 round tokens and 24 square tokens. You are better off making 1 punchboard with 4 round tokens and 8 square tokens and printing 3 punchboards. Instead of making 1 punchboard with only round tokens and 1 with only square tokens.

Double layered punchboards



With double layered punchboards you can print different artwork on each layer as well as make cutouts and holes as much as you like on any of the layers. However, when putting artwork below a cutout portion, take extra care and make sure that the artwork will fit within the cutout.

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Final Checklist

- 3mm bleed on all punchboards
- 3mm margins and 3mm bleed
- CMYK color mode
- images at 300+ppi
- black text: pure black
- dielines in a different file

Dice

Normally dice are made out of acrylic or resin. For further information on the difference between these two, please check the article explaining it on the Boda Games website.



LASER
ENGRAVED

MOLDED

SILK
SCREEN

The dice can be made by laser engraving, molding or silk screen. Dice can have rounded corners or square corners, so keep that in mind when designing the artwork to make sure there is enough bleed margin from the edges. For further information on the differences between these types of production, please check the article explaining it on the Boda Games website.

Molded & Engraved dice

All the lines in the design need to be at least 0.6mm or thicker. Leave 2 mm margin around all the edges of the design. Only one color can be applied per die face, but you can do different colors for different die faces. Please specify the colors of each of the die faces in pantone. Please specify whether you want rounded or square corners on the dice.



Very thin lines don't work very well. Nor do a lot of different elements grouped together too closely.

The files should be in a vector format. Different dice designs need to go into different files and labeled accordingly.

Silk screen dice

Silk screen dice can have multiple colors on a single die face. The file can be in CMYK colors.

Final Checklist

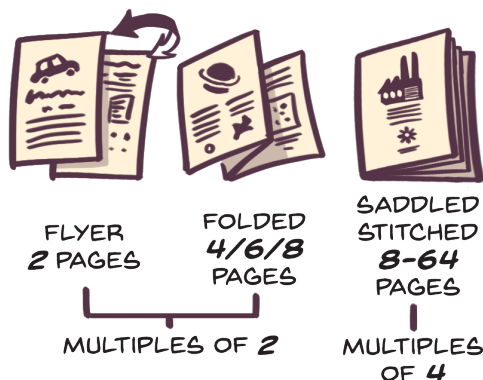
- 2 mm margin around edges
- Design with lines 0.6mm or thicker
- Pantone colors (molded, engraved dice)
- Files in vector format

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Paper components

Rulebooks are normally folded in the middle and stapled, this is commonly referred to as saddle stitched and used when there are more than 6 pages of content. A flyer or paper booklet can be folded in different ways depending on your preference. A single flyer can be printed on both sides, holding a max of 2 pages of content.



Rulebooks:

The amount of pages in a rulebook have to be a multiple of 4, as each sheet will have front and back printing and be folded vertically in the center of the page.

The bleed for rulebooks must be 3mm.

The margins of a saddle stitched rulebook depend on the amount of pages. Up to 28 pages the margins are 3mm, and from 32 pages until 64 pages the margin

must be increased to 6mm. Keep in mind that these are minimum numbers, and content very close to the edge of the page near the center might be difficult to read. Therefore, we recommend increasing the margin, especially as the amount of pages gets higher.

If your rulebook exceeds 64 pages, saddle stitched might not be the best solution. Please ask your account manager about the different alternatives available for binding the pages.

Files should be submitted as a multi-page PDF, where each page of the PDF represents 1 page of the booklet. Boda Games graphics department will do the layout in terms of putting them on the left and right side of the pages.

Flyers & sheets:

3mm bleed and 3mm margins.

Files should be submitted as a multi-page PDF, where each page of the PDF represents 1 page of the booklet. Boda Games graphics department will do the layout.

Final Checklist

- CMYK color mode
- images at 300+ppi
- black text: pure black

Stickers



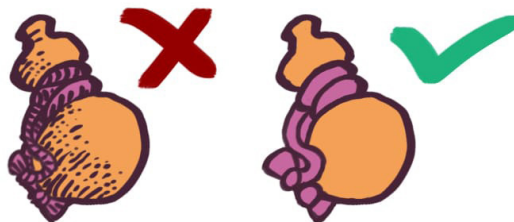
Stickers can be used to bring wooden and plastic components to life by having players stick them onto the components. But they can also be a part of the gameplay, especially with legacy games, where you use them as the game progresses. Stickers on the box can also help when doing special editions or multi-language versions. Stickers can be put into the box as sticker sheets or pre-applied to relevant components by the Boda Games factory.

Sticker sheets: sticker sheets can be cut to size in order to fit into the box perfectly. A sticker sheet has 2 layers, where the top layer (the actual sticker featuring the artwork) will get cut to size and the bottom layer will be intact to allow the stickers to be peeled off easily.

Layout: the design of a sticker sheet is similar to a punchboard.

Pin Badges

When designing a pin-badge, keep in mind that there is a limit to how detailed it can be. The fewer lines and “parts” you use, the more effective the design tends to get. Although there is no fixed size for a pin-badge, most of them are between 2-5 centimeters in diameter, meaning they are pretty small.




Therefore, bright and bold colors tend to work best. Every part of the pin design can only have 1 color. So shading or gradual colors should be avoided when designing the pin. Because each part of the pin is separated by a thin silver line, having offsetting colors next to each other works very well.

The file itself can be a pdf or a single layer photoshop file. When making the artwork, you don’t have to “draw” the separation lines, we will do that for you at the factory when converting the artwork into the actual pin design.







Template generator




Template Generator




Go back to bodagames.com




Boxes




Cards




Magnetic Boxes



Game boards




Player mats



Tuckboxes

Boxes



A Width (mm)

B Height (mm)

C Length (mm)

Generate template

Coming soon...



CONSULTATION

DO YOU HAVE A GREAT IDEA FOR A GAME, BUT NOT SURE WHAT COMPONENTS WILL BE THE RIGHT FIT? LET US HELP YOU WITH THAT! THANKS TO THE MANY PROJECTS WE HAVE WORKED ON, WE CAN SUGGEST DIFFERENT COMPONENTS AND MANUFACTURING METHODS THAT FIT WELL WITH YOUR CONCEPT, IDEAS AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, YOUR BUDGET.



SHIPPING & FULFILLMENT

SO YOU'VE GOT THE FILES READY, THE GAME IS SENT OFF TO THE PRINTER, WHAT'S NEXT? SHIPPING! INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING CAN BE A REAL HEADACHE TO FIGURE OUT ON YOUR OWN. IF YOU NEED HELP WITH ARRANGING SHIPPING OR FULFILLMENT FOR YOUR GAME, GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGER AND WE WILL GLADLY HELP YOU FIGURE IT ALL, TO MAKE SURE THE GAMES GET DELIVERED SAFE AND SOUND.

BODA GAMES SERVICES

BODA GAMES DOES MORE THAN JUST MANUFACTURING GAMES! WE CAN ALSO HELP YOU WITH..



KICKSTARTER

RUNNING A KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN IS FUN, BUT A LOT MORE WORK THAN JUST COMING UP WITH A COOL GAME.

WE'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN A LOT OF KICKSTARTER PROJECTS SO WE'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE DIFFERENT AND SPECIFIC DEMANDS THAT A KICKSTARTER PROJECT REQUIRES. STRETCH GOALS? ITEMIZED QUOTATIONS? LIGHTNING SPEED REPLIES TO ANY QUESTIONS THAT ARISE DURING THE CAMPAIGN? BODA GAMES HAS YOU COVERED. GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGER FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW BODA GAMES CAN HELP SUPPORT YOUR KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN.



FACTORY TOUR

WHERE DO GAMES COME FROM? FROM THE BODA GAMES FACTORY! EVER WONDERED WHAT A BOARD GAME FACTORY LOOKS LIKE? WANT TO SEE HOW YOUR GAME GETS MADE FOR YOURSELF? WE ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU TO OUR FACTORY. ENJOY A TOUR AROUND OUR FACILITIES AND LEARN ALL THE DETAILS THAT GO INTO MAKING A BOARD GAME. OUR FACTORY IS LOCATED IN WENZHOU, A CITY IN THE ZHEJIANG PROVINCE IN THE SOUTH OF CHINA.

