

Bot-Builders

Ages 8-12 + parents · 2-4 players · about 20 minutes · no betting, no screens

OBJECTIVE

Build the most complete robot on your face-up bench: one Sense, one Think, one Act, one Power, plus a Mission. When someone shouts BOT!, everyone else gets one last turn (install or discard only – no Glitches), then all benches are revealed at once. Highest score wins.

MATERIALS

48 cards: 8 Sense, 8 Think, 8 Act, 8 Power, 8 Missions, 8 Glitches. A kitchen table. No money.

SETUP

- 1 Shuffle the deck and deal 4 cards to each player. Hands stay secret.
- 2 Put the rest face-down as the draw pile. Flip the top card to start a discard pile.
- 3 Each player has an empty bench in front of them – the robot they are building. Benches are face-up.

YOUR TURN

- 1 Draw one card: the top of the draw pile, or the top of the discard pile.
- 2 Then do exactly one: INSTALL a part or Mission on your bench, GLITCH one opponent, or DISCARD one card.
- 3 Hand limit 5. If you have 6 or more after that, discard down to 5.

INSTALL RULES

- 1 One slot per category. At most one Sense, one Think, one Act, one Power, and one Mission.
- 2 A second card in a filled slot replaces the old one. The old card goes to the discard.
- 3 You cannot install a Glitch on your own bench.

GLITCHES

- 1 Read the card aloud. The target does what it says, then the Glitch is discarded.
- 2 If the named slot is empty, the Glitch fizzles – no extra effect.
- 3 You may not Glitch yourself.
- 4 After someone shouts BOT!, last turns may not play Glitches.

ENDING THE ROUND

- 1 A bench is a Full Bot when it has Sense + Think + Act + Power + a Mission.
- 2 When you complete a Full Bot, you may shout BOT! Everyone else gets one last turn, then stop. Those last turns may install or discard only – no Glitches.
- 3 The round also ends when a player would draw and the draw pile is empty. Finish that turn, then stop.
- 4 Everyone reveals their bench at the same time and adds up the score.

HOW TO SCORE

- 1 +1 for each installed part (Sense, Think, Act, Power).
- 2 +4 four-loop bonus if you have all four categories.
- 3 +2 if you installed a Mission.
- 4 +3 mission match: both of the Mission's preferred categories are installed.
- 5 +3 Full Bot bonus (four-loop + Mission). Perfect score is 16.
- 6 Ties: Full Bot beats incomplete, then four-loop, then the younger player.
- 7 Example: Camera + If/Then board + Drive wheels + Battery pack + Rescue rover (prefers Sense+Act) = 16.

WHAT THE CARDS TEACH

- 1 Sense Perceptor – how the bot notices the world
- 2 Think Processor – how the bot decides
- 3 Actuator – how the bot moves or speaks
- 4 Power Energy – what keeps the loop running
- 5 Mission Why this bot exists. Match its two preferred categories for bonus points.
- 6 Glitch A real-world setback. Fix the loop and keep building.

VARIANTS

- 1 2 players – same rules. Glitches always hit the other person.
- 2 Solo – after each of your turns, flip the top card onto a dummy bench. Dummy installs it if the slot is empty; otherwise discards it. Dummy never Glitches. You win if you score 10 or more.
- 3 Classroom – teams of 2 share a bench. After scoring, each team says one sentence: "My bot senses with __, thinks with __, acts with __, powered by __, because __."

PRINT TONIGHT

Avery 5388 at Actual Size / 100% (never Fit to page). Rules on plain paper, duplex. Tear cards on the perforation.

32 part cards (12 sheets) + 16 mission/glitch cards (6 sheets).