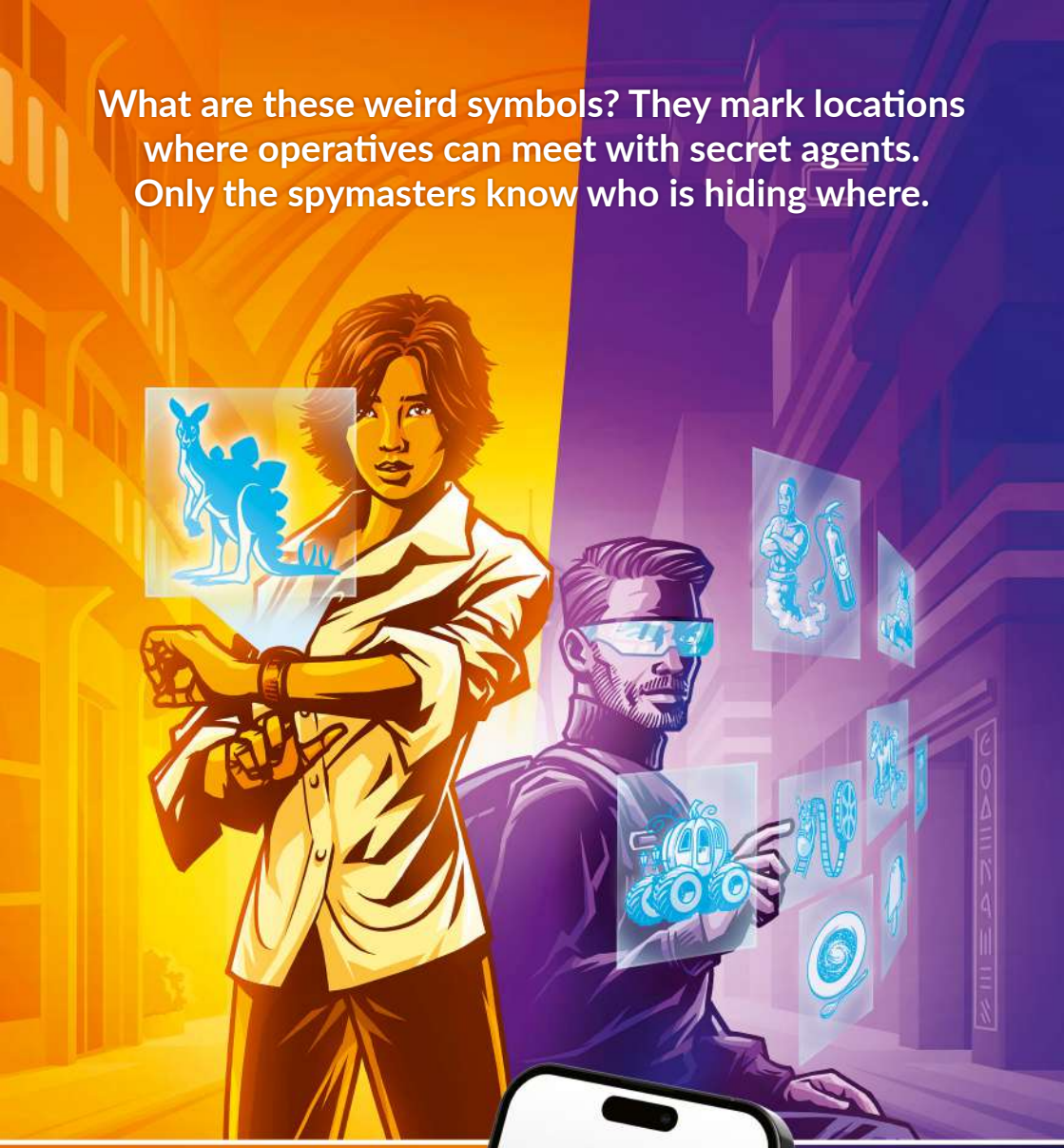
What are these weird symbols? They mark locations where operatives can meet with secret agents. Only the spymasters know who is hiding where.



YOU CAN LEARN TO PLAY FROM THE VIDEO!

www.cge.as/cnp-htp

www.codenamesgame.com

SETUP

SPLIT INTO 2 TEAMS.

Organize players into 2 teams of roughly the same size, with at least two players on each team.

CHOOSE SPYMASTERS AND OPERATIVES.

Each team chooses 1 player to be their spymaster. The rest are operatives. The orange and purple spymasters sit on the same side of the table, opposite their own operatives.

LAY OUT 20 RANDOM PICTURES.

Mix up the picture cards, choose 20 at random, and lay them out in a 5×4 grid. All cards should be oriented the same way. Choose the orientation that best fits your group of players.

SPYMASTERS DRAW A RANDOM KEY CARD.

Each game has one key that shows which pictures belong to which team. The spymasters choose the key randomly and slide it into the stand between them, oriented the same as the 5×4 grid of pictures.

SPYMASTERS TAKE THE TILES.

Put the 7 orange tiles in front of the orange spymaster and the 7 purple tiles in front of the purple spymaster. The 4 bystanders and 1 assassin go in between.

GIVE THE DOUBLE AGENT TO THE STARTING TEAM.

The triangles on the top and bottom of the key card show which team starts.

The starting team has 1 additional picture to guess, so they get the double agent tile. **Flip it to their color** and add it to their tiles.

20 picture cards
(from a deck of 140)

PURPLE OPERATIVES

1 key card
(from a deck of 60)

1 assassin

7 purple agents

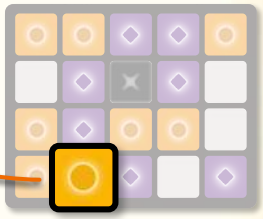
PURPLE
SPYMASTER

TOP SECRET

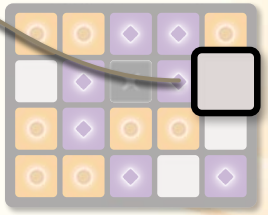
ONLY SPYMASTERS SEE THE KEY!

The key card shows the secret identities of the 20 pictures.

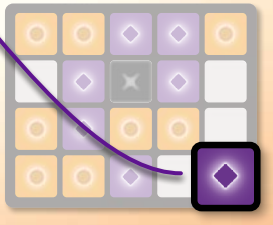
The ape with a helmet is orange.



The sphinx is an innocent bystander.



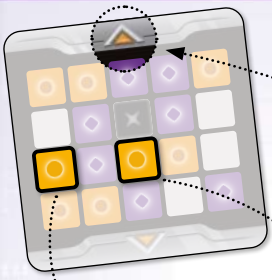
The ladybeetle is purple.



The singing parrot is the assassin.

HOW TO PLAY

Teams take turns, beginning with the team indicated by the triangles on the key card. Keep taking turns until one team wins.



In this example, orange goes first.

ON YOUR TURN

THE SPYMASTER GIVES ONE CLUE.

If you are the spymaster, you start by trying to find a clue for one or more pictures in your team's color. More is better.

Your clue must be **1 word and 1 number:**

The **word** must be related to the pictures you want to give a clue for.

The **number** tells how many pictures your clue relates to.

A good clue for the evolving apemen and Stegaroo might be *evolution: 2*.

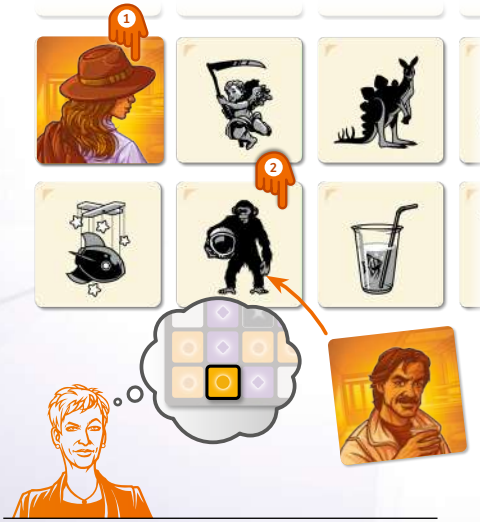
THE OPERATIVES MAY MAKE MULTIPLE GUESSES.

The operatives should take a moment to discuss the clue. (Or, take a moment to think, if you are the only operative.) Then, one of the operatives must **make a guess by touching one of the cards**.

The spymaster covers the picture with a tile matching the color shown on the key.

If you guess a picture in your own color, you may guess again. (You get another guess, not another clue.)

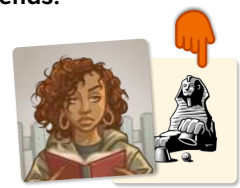
In our example, the operatives' first guess is correct, so they may guess again. They then guess the ape with a helmet instead of Stegaroo. The key says that card is also orange. The spymaster must act as though it was the second picture intended by the clue.



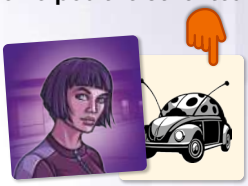
A WRONG GUESS ENDS YOUR TURN.

Three things can go wrong:

If you guess an innocent bystander, **your turn ends.**



If you guess the other team's picture, **your turn ends, and you have helped the other team!**



If you guess the assassin, you immediately **lose the game!**

IF YOU KEEP GUESSING RIGHT, YOU CAN GUESS UNTIL ...

YOU CHOOSE TO END YOUR TURN.

If your turn does not end with a wrong guess, you can end it voluntarily. For example, if you are given the clue *glass: 3*, you want to find 3 pictures related to *glass* and then end your turn.

Or, if you find only 2 good pictures for *glass* and guessing a third seems too risky, you can end your turn after 2 – or even 1. You are required to make at least 1 guess.

OR

YOU USE THE "PLUS ONE" RULE.

As long as the operatives keep guessing pictures of their own color, they are allowed to guess **one more card** than the number specified by the clue. So for *glass: 3*, the operatives can make up to 4 guesses.

You do not need this extra guess on your first turn. Later, however, you may need to use the "plus one" rule to guess a picture you missed from a previous turn's clue.

WHEN YOUR TURN ENDS, IT IS THE OTHER TEAM'S TURN.

WINNING

Keep taking turns until one team wins.

- **When your team has no pictures left to guess, your team wins.** Often, you will win by guessing your last picture. But you can also win if the other team guesses your last picture on their turn.
- **You also win if the other team guesses the assassin.**

YOU NOW KNOW THE RULES. GO PLAY!

VALID CLUES

Your clue should be **one word**, no hyphens, no spaces. If you don't know whether your clue is one word, ask the opposing spymaster. **If the opposing spymaster allows it, the clue is valid.**

In Codenames: Pictures, all word play is allowed. So you can use *knight* to lead your teammates to a picture with a moon and a picture with a guy in armor. But that doesn't mean they will get it.

You are allowed to spell your clue. This is helpful when you want your teammates to think *k-n-i-g-h-t* and not *n-i-g-h-t*, or when players have very different accents.

You must spell out your clue if someone asks. In this example, that means you must spell either *k-n-i-g-h-t* or *n-i-g-h-t* and not reveal that you are trying to use both words.

Your clue must be about the pictures, not about the patterns that cards make on the table or the letters in certain words or the shading of the pictures. *Dark: 2* is not a valid clue for the two darkest pictures. However, it is a valid clue for things associated with night, shadows, or darkness.

Singing, funny accents, and foreign words are generally not allowed. Your group can decide they are okay, but remember that using a French accent to give a clue for the Eiffel Tower is only clever once.

Your group may agree to relax the one-word restriction. Maybe you would like to allow multiple-word names (*James Bond*, *New Zealand*) or abbreviations (*FIFA*, *FBI*) or even common compound words (*merry-go-round*, *scuba diver*).

Your group may agree to add more restrictions to make the game more challenging. For example, you may agree to not talk about the shapes of the pictures (*circle: 3* or *rectangular: 2*).

Tip: Giving a clue for one picture can be trivially simple, because you can just name something depicted on the card. To spice things up, try a more creative clue that makes your operatives think a bit. But don't overdo it. You're just trying to amuse them, not to make them guess wrong and lose the game.

KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE

Spymasters are expected to give away no more information than one word and one number. Do not preface your clue with additional comments. "I don't know if you will get this" is a fact that goes without saying. And "I don't know if you will get this unless you've read *The Hobbit*" reveals way too much.

Spymasters must not appear to be focusing on one picture, and they certainly must not touch any picture cards once they have seen the key.

Keep a straight face while your operatives are guessing, and do not reach for any agent tile until they make their guess official by touching a card. If they guess a picture in your color, you must act as though it is the picture you meant even if it isn't.

Operatives should focus on the t able when making guesses. Do not make eye contact with the spymaster. This will help you avoid nonverbal clues.

EXPERT RULES

UNLIMITED CLUE

Instead of a number, you can say your clue is unlimited. For example, *tiny: unlimited*. This allows your operatives to make as many guesses as they want, as long as they keep guessing right.

Operatives do not know how many pictures were intended by the unlimited clue, but sometimes they can figure it out. If you have 3 pictures left, a clue for 2 or 3 is enough to guess them all. So, in this case, *tiny: unlimited* probably means "guess 1 picture for tiny and 2 pictures from previous clues."

ZERO CLUE

A clue like *reptiles: 0* also allows unlimited guesses. (Ignore the "plus one" rule.)

The clue means "Don't guess the picture (or pictures) related to *reptiles*." So if you see a snake and a dinosaur, don't guess them.

Next ask "Why not?" Well, if you see other animals on the board, maybe your spymaster wants you to guess all the animals that aren't reptiles. Or, if it is late in the game, maybe you can win by guessing every card except the snake and the dinosaur.

CODENAMES PICTURES

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Special thanks to: everyone who sparked and shared their creative ideas for the pictures – whether it was the artists, CGE teammates, or my kids. And to all the players around the world who've been enjoying Codenames for years – your love for the game gives our work meaning.

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REMINDERS AND TIPS

Learn more at
www.codenamesgame.com

- **Spymasters must keep a straight face.** When the operatives discuss your clue, do not react to their misguided ideas. Do not reach for any tile until they have touched one of the picture cards. If they guess right by accident, act like that was what you intended all along.
- **Operatives must not look for spymaster reactions.** We recommend focusing on the cards and avoiding eye contact with your spymaster.
- **The operatives can guess pictures from a previous turn's clue,** even with their first guess of the turn. They are also allowed to guess randomly, but they probably shouldn't.
- **The spymaster must not tell operatives they are missing pictures from a previous clue.** You can't even mention previous clues, unless you are asked to repeat them.
- **The operatives can end their turn early,** without guessing all the pictures specified by the clue. However, they are required to make at least one guess.

COMBINE WITH CODENAMES

You can play with words and pictures!

Lay out the cards in a checkerboard pattern.

For a 5×4 grid, use key cards and agent tiles from Codenames: Pictures.

For a 5×5 grid, use key cards and agent tiles from Codenames.

COMBINE WITH DUET

For a 2-player cooperative game, get Codenames: Duet.

Use cards from this game to make a 5×5 grid of pictures.

Play the game like Duet with Duet agents and a Duet key card.

CODENAMES APP

Finding enough players for a game of Codenames isn't always easy. But now you can play whenever you want with the **Codenames app**.

Designed and built by CGE, the app comes packed with features:

- Explore intriguing **new game modes**.
- Collect fun and quirky **word cards** from categories like fantasy, history, movies, and travel.
- Take on **daily challenges** and prove you are the ultimate secret agent.
- Play with strangers. Play with friends. **Play anywhere, whenever you want.**

Even when you have only 5 minutes free, the Codenames app is ready to bring you a game of clever clues and bold guesses.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

4.9 ★★★★★

Find out more at: cge.as/cnapp