



SHUT DOWN

Design Document

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Table of Contents

Concept	3
Rules	3
Arrays	3
Color Cards	4
Special Cards	4
Starting the Game	5
Turns	5
Hands	6
Ending the Game	6
Turn Example	7
Turn Options	7
So, What Should the Player Do?	8

Concept

Shut Down is **turn-based simulation** card game modeled after systems of decay that began as *UNO*. Players start with high-energy “arrays,” sets of four cards laid out flat on the table face up. Their goal during the game is to reduce the energy in their cells enough to shut them down.

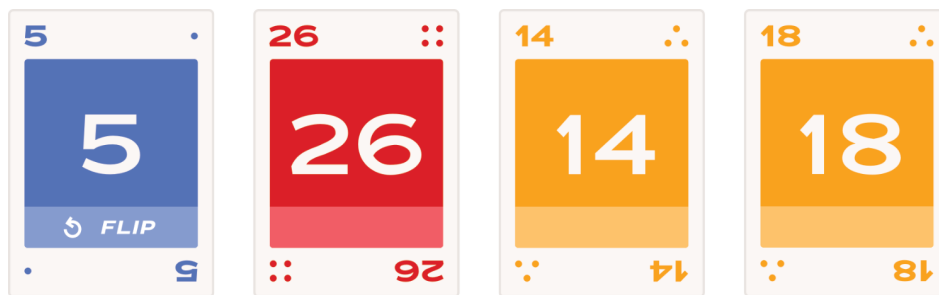
In its final form the game still shares some similarities with *UNO*; the main goal is to reduce a resource down to nothing. Unlike *UNO*, however, *Shut Down* offers much more freedom and potential for strategy by always allowing players to draw from both the **color** and **special** decks of cards and choosing how to use their cards.

Rules

Shut Down is **turn-based** card game for 2-4 players. The objective of the game is for players to **shut down** all of the cards in their **array**, and to do so with a lower total score than all of the other players.

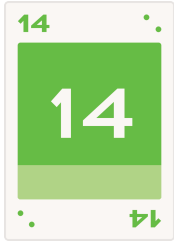
Arrays

Each player has an **array**, a set of four face up **color cards** in front of them on the play surface. The cards in a player’s array represent their current score, the total combined number between all four cards.

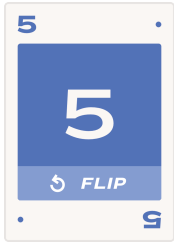


Example of an array

Color Cards



Color cards are used for player **arrays**. Each card has both a color and score value. Since the objective is to end the game with the lowest score, lower numbered cards are more desirable. Card colors are also hierarchical. From lowest to highest, colors ranked are **blue**, **green**, **yellow**, and **red** (you can use the number of dots in the top right corner of a card for reference if you ever forget). Lower colored cards tend to have lower scores as well.



Blue cards have the special property of being **flippable** in an array. Once flipped, the card is safe from **swap** and **steal** special cards. The game ends when a player has **shut down** their array by flipping over all of their cards.

Special Cards



STEALS

Steal cards allow players to take a card from an opponents' array and add it to their hand, permanently allowing them to hold another card (up to five). Once a card is stolen, opponents are forced to replace the empty slot in their array with the top card from the color card deck.

Flipped cards in an array cannot be stolen.

- **Steal** cards allow players to take a card from an opponent's array matching the color on the steal card.
- **Wild Steal** cards allow players to take cards of any color from an opponent.
- **Steal 2** cards allow players to take up to two cards from opponents. If playing with more than two players, both cards need not be stolen from the same opponent.



SWAPS

Swap cards allow players to switch out a card from their own array with that of an opponent's. Only the color of the card in the *opponent's* array needs to match a swap card's color. Players can replace the empty slot in their opponent's array with any card from their array. **Flipped** cards cannot be moved in swaps.



NULLS

Null cards allow players to remove any card from an opponent's array, including **flipped** cards. Once a card is nullified, opponents are forced to replace the empty slot in their array with the top card from the color card deck.

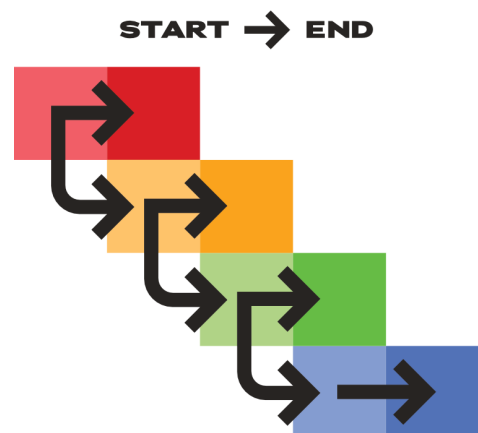
Starting the Game

Each player should lay out four cards from the **color deck** face up in front of them to create their starting arrays. Players should also draw **one** additional card from the either deck to serve as their opening hand.

The player with the highest starting score (calculated by adding up the numbers on the cards in an array) goes first. From there, play proceeds clockwise.

Turns

On a player's turn, they can either choose to **discard** or **play** a card from their hand. **Color cards** can be used to replace a card in a player's array, but **only if the card being replaced is within the same color or a single step down**. For example, a **red** card can be switched out for a different **red** card or a **yellow** card. A **yellow** card can be switched out with a **green** card, and a **green** with a **blue**.



Special cards have unique effects (see Special Cards section above).

Whenever a player uses a card from their hand during a turn, they should end their turn by drawing a new card from either the **color** or **special** card decks.

Discarded cards should go into two piles, one for the **color deck** and one for the **special deck**.

If a player has a **blue** card in their array, they can instead use their turn to flip it over. Flipped blue cards can be unflipped during a turn as well.

Hands

During play, **Steal** special cards result in players gaining an additional card in their hand during a turn. Players can hold up to **five** cards in their hand at a time, after which players should stop drawing an additional card at the end of their turn if they are already holding five cards.

Ending the Game

Once a player has **shut down** their array by overturning all four of its cards, the game ends. From there, all players will turn the cards in their arrays face up and add their numbers together to determine their final score (note: cards in player's hands should *not* be counted when determining the final score).

The player with the lowest ending score is the winner.

Turn Example



In this example, Player 1 (the player whose turn it is) has several restrictions and considerations to take into account in how they might play their turn.

Turn Options

While not an exhaustive list of every possible choice player 1 could make in this scenario, below are the main moves the player might consider making.

Flip Blue?

They could flip their **blue** card to inch the game closer to an end, but since player 3 almost certainly has a lower score than them, it might be in the player's best

interest to prolong the game and attempt to improve their standing in relation to player 3.

Play Null?

In their hand the player is holding three cards, the first of which is a **null** special card. To prevent player 3 from ending the game soon, player 1 could nullify one of their overturned cards, forcing them to replace it with the top card from the color card deck.

Discard Red?

Next, the player is holding a **red 30** color card. There is one red card in the player's array, a **red 26**, but since 30 is a higher number than 26, replacing it in the array would only hurt the player. As such, it might be in the player's interest to discard the **red 30** and get a better card for their hand.

Swap Yellow?

The player is also holding a **yellow swap** special card. They could optimally use this card by swapping out the **yellow 14** card in player 2's array for their array's **red 26**.

So, What Should the Player Do?

One of the fun aspects of *Shut Down* is that there are multiple valid strategies during a turn like this one. In this specific scenario, I would personally opt to use the void card (all of those flipped over cards in player 3's array would make me a bit nervous).

Still, any of the options discussed could prove effective, including multi-turn strategies I didn't even discuss. For example, the player could choose to play their **red 30** card and then saddle player 2 with an even worse card when using the **yellow swap** on their next turn.