

ESTD ★ 2025

MASTER DETECTIVES®

CODE X RULEBOOK



MN
XY



ESTD ★ 2026

MASTER DETECTIVES®

CODE X

Master detective Mister X has lived a reclusive life for years. No one knows his true identity, but among his peers, he is considered a legend. However, even legends eventually retire, and the time has come to find a successor. The stakes are high, as the new master detective will not only earn the prestigious title but also gain access to Mister X's secret archive!

The most promising candidates have been invited to gather on a certain day in a shadowy café to determine once and for all who is truly worthy of this wealth of information and the title of the new master detective. To prove that you deserve the title, each of you must crack the code created by one of the other detectives. But only one of you can be the fastest... and the smartest!

GOAL OF THE GAME

In *Master Detectives: Code X*, you are skilled detectives. By moving strategically across the playing field, asking the right questions to other detectives using your Code tokens, and taking notes on your Notepad, you must decipher your own secret code as soon as possible. The first detective to do so will be declared the ultimate master detective once and for all.

CONTENTS

15 Detective tiles (3 per player)



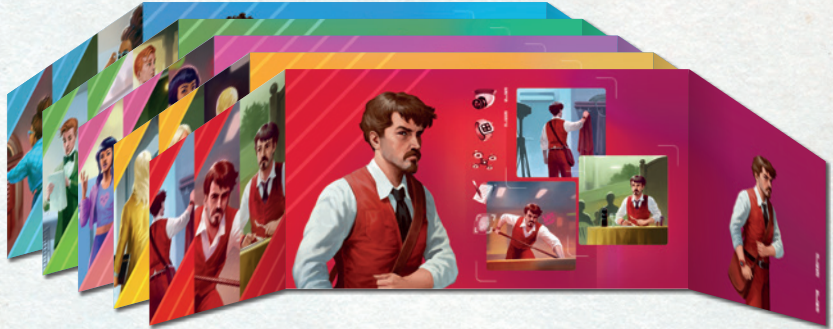
3 Duo tiles



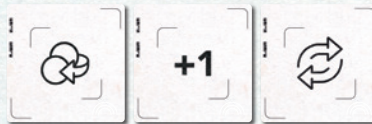
5 Detective figures (1 per player)



5 Detective screens (1 per player)



7 Action tiles



3x

2x

2x

15 Movement tokens (3 types)



5x

5x

5x

10 Espionage tokens (2 types)



5x

5x

1 Notepad



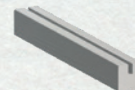
30 Code tokens (Uniquely numbered 1-30)



1 Information board



5 Code holders



1 Turn marker



SETUP

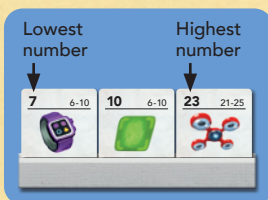
- Each player selects a character. Take the **Detective screen**, the **Detective figure**, and the three **Detective tiles** that belong to your character and place them in front of you.
- Take a **Notepad** sheet and a pen (not included) and place them behind your screen.
- Take a **Code holder** and place it in front of your screen.
- Take one of each type of **Espionage and Movement tokens** and place these five tokens face up next to your screen.
- Shuffle the **Code tokens** face down and distribute a number of them to each player according to the number of players:

2-3 players	Six Code tokens per player
4 players	Five Code tokens per player
5 players	Four Code tokens per player

Place the remaining Code tokens face down to one side, they will be used later in setup.

IMPORTANT: Do not allow players to see the tokens being distributed. Only once a Code token is behind your screen may you look at it in secret. Do not reveal Code tokens from behind your screen to other players unless told to do so by another rule.

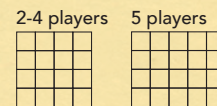
- Look at your Code tokens and choose three to give to the player to your right. Place the Code tokens in their Code holder, arranged in ascending order from left to right. Ensure that this player cannot see the numbers on the tokens. All players can see their opponents' secret codes but not their own. Keep your remaining Code tokens hidden behind your screen.



Hint: Cross off all the numbers you can see on your Notepad, as they cannot be part of your own secret code.

- The oldest player becomes the starting player and takes the **Turn marker**.

- To set up the **playing field** you will need to create a 4x4 grid of tiles in a 2-4 player game and a 5x4 grid in a 5-player game. Gather the following Action tiles based on your player count:



2 players	All seven Action tiles and three Duo tiles
3 players	All seven Action tiles
4 players	Four Action tiles, selected at random
5 players	Five Action tiles, selected at random

We recommend using the random variant for your first game. Once you are familiar with the game, you may choose to use the advanced variant.

Random Variant

Add all of your Detective tiles to the Action tiles and shuffle them together into a face down stack. Place the tiles one by one face up to set up the playing field in the grid according to your player count.

Advanced Variant

Shuffle the Action tiles (with 2 players also the Duo tiles) face down and distribute a number of them to each player based on your player count:

2 players	Five Action/Duo tiles per player
3 players	Two Action tiles per player. Place the remaining Action tile face up in the middle of the play area as the first tile of the playing field
4-5 players	One Action tile per player

In this variant, you choose where to place your tiles. The placement of an Action tile or Detective tile can be strategically significant during the game. Keep your three Detective tiles and your dealt Action tiles in front of you. Beginning with the starting player and continuing clockwise, you each take turns placing one of your tiles onto the playing field. Once at least one tile is placed, each new tile must be placed adjacent to at least one existing tile and the grid must be the correct layout for your player count.

- Randomly place one **Code token** face down onto each Action tile on the playing field.

GAMEPLAY

The game is played over a number of turns, until one player discovers their secret code. The starting player takes the first turn, followed by the other players in clockwise order.

On your turn, you may take one of two turn types:

A. Move and Act

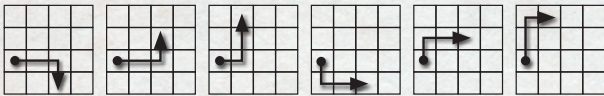
OR

B. Decipher a Code token

A. Move and Act

Perform one of the following two movements:

- **Move in an L-shape:** Move your Detective figure two spaces forward and one space sideways or vice versa in an L-shape to another tile, just like a knight in chess.



L-shape examples

- **Use ONE Movement token:** Use one of your Movement tokens to perform its special movement.



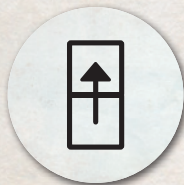
Then take an action based on your final location.



Example: The yellow player moves in an L-shape.

Movement Tokens

There are 3 different types of movement tokens:



Move your Detective figure to a horizontally or vertically adjacent tile on the field.



Move your Detective figure to a diagonally adjacent tile on the field.



Move your Detective figure to any tile on the field.

Flip the token after use, it is now deactivated. You may reactivate your Movement tokens via an Action tile or by deciphering one of your Code tokens (see '**Decipher a Code Token**' on page 12).



After your movement, there are 4 possible actions determined by the tile you finished your movement on:

- **Take a Code Token:** If there is a Code token on the tile where your Detective figure finished, take the token without showing it to other players, cross out the corresponding number on your Notepad sheet, and place the Code token behind your Detective screen.



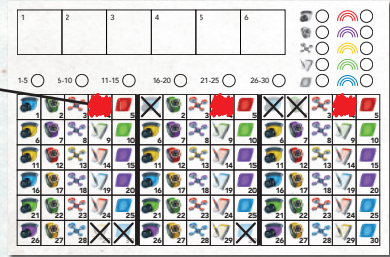
Step 1.
Take the
Code token.



Step 2:
View the
Code token.



Step 3: Cross
out the number
on all three
sections of your
Notepad sheet.



- **Perform an Action:**
If there is no Code token on the tile, and the tile is an Action tile, perform the action of the tile (see '**Perform an Action**' on page 8).



- **Ask a Question:** If there is no Code token on the tile, and the tile is a Detective tile belonging to another player, you may give this player one of your Code tokens and ask a question based on this token to gain information about your own code (see '**Ask a Question**' on page 9).



- **No Action:** If there is no Code token on the tile, and the tile is one of your own Detective tiles, do not perform any action.



After resolving one of the above actions, your turn ends. Pass the Turn marker to the player to your left.



PERFORM AN ACTION

There are 3 different types of Action tiles:



Reactivate: Flip two of your used Movement and/or Espionage tokens face up. They are now available again.



Extra Turn: Immediately take an additional turn.



Swap: Take one Code token from the Information board or the playing field without looking at it. Swap this token face down with one of the Code tokens behind your screen. Once behind your screen you may look at the token.

Example:

Matthias (green) wants to ask Sarah (blue) a question about the number range of his code. He uses one of his Movement tokens to move to a horizontally adjacent tile. This tile allows him to take an extra turn immediately. He then uses an L-move to reach Sarah's Detective tile. Now, he may ask her a question.

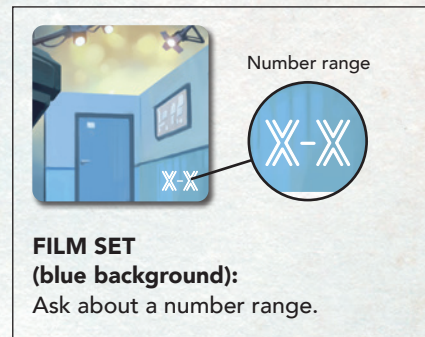
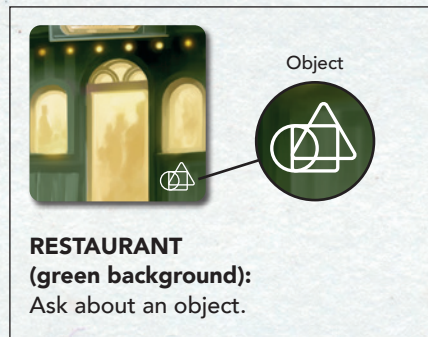


ASK A QUESTION

Asking a question gets you information about your secret code by comparing it to a Code token. However, you are also giving information to another player by showing them that token.

The Detective tile you land on determines which player you ask a question to and the type of the tile determines what the question is about; an object (🏠), a colour (🌈), or a number range (X-X). To ask a question you must give one of your Code tokens to that player. The Code token determines the object, colour, or number range of your question.

For 2 Players: On a Duo tile, you may ask your opponent a question.



To ask a question, give one of the Code tokens from behind your screen to the player whose Detective tile you are on. They may look at it without showing it to the other players. This player uses this token to answer your question.

NOTE! If you have no Code tokens behind your screen, you cannot ask a question, and your turn ends immediately.

If you are at a Restaurant, you must ask about an object. The question concerns the object on the Code token you gave to the other player.

If you are at a Bar, you must ask about colour. The question is about the colour of the Code token you gave to the other player.

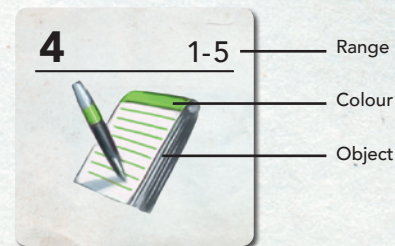
If you are at a Film set, you must ask about the number range. The question concerns the number range on the Code token you gave to the other player.

NOTE! When asking the question, do not specify a particular object, colour, or range, as this is already indicated by the Code token. Only you and the player answering the question know what it refers to.

You may ask a question about your entire code or about one of your unknown Code tokens:

<p>A) How many Code tokens in my code show this object/colour/range? The answer you receive from the other player is 0, 1, 2, or 3.</p>	<p>OR</p>	<p>B) Is this object/colour/range on my lowest/middle/highest Code token? The answer you receive from the other player is yes or no.</p>
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NOTE! The uninvolved players only hear whether you are asking about the entire code (A) or a specific Code token (B). They know whether you are asking about an object, colour, or range, but not which object, colour, or range, as this is determined by the Code token only you and the answering player have seen.



Example: Code Token

After receiving an answer, you can use this information to make notes on your Notepad sheet. The player who answered the question can also take notes based on the Code token they were given.

The player who answered the question completes the following:

- 1: Place the just received Code token on the question field of the Information board.
- 2: Move a face-down Code token to an empty tile on the playing field (a tile without a Code token or Detective figure).

NOTE! This may also be a Detective tile.

- 3: Move the Code token from the question field to the vacated spot on the Information board.

NOTE! For 3 or 5 players: there are only 5 Code tokens on the Information board. The sixth space remains empty throughout the game.

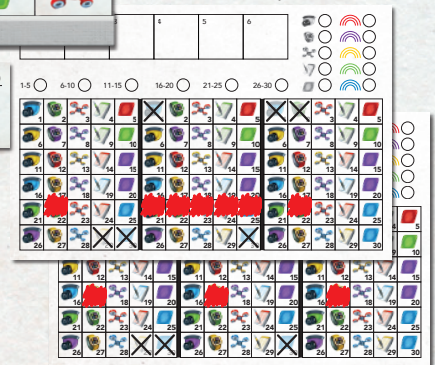
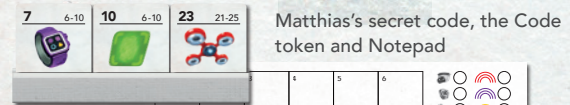


Example:

Matthias (green) moves to Sarah's (blue) Film Set Detective tile, which requires him to ask a range question. He gives Sarah the Code token with number 17 (yellow, watch). This token displays the range 16-20.

Matthias asks: "Is this range on my middle Code token?" Sarah answers: "No." Matthias crosses out the numbers 16-20 for the middle code number on his Notepad sheet, while Sarah crosses out number 17 for each code number on her sheet since she now knows Code token 17 cannot be part of her code.

Sarah places Matthias's token face down on the question field of the Information board. She then takes a token from the Information board and places it, face down, on an empty tile on the playing field. Finally, she moves the token from the question field to the vacated spot on the Information board.



Sarah's Notepad

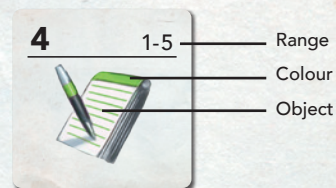
HINT: If you ask a question, the player you ask will receive additional information from the received Code token. At the beginning of the game, the Code tokens are only placed on Action tiles, but during the game, it is also possible to place Code tokens on Detective tiles. Placing Code tokens on other player's Detective tiles allows you to prevent that player from being asked questions and therefore gaining information from a Code token they are given.

HINT: From the answers '0', '1', '2', '3', 'yes', or 'no', it is sometimes possible for non-involved players to deduce which range, colour, or object the exchanged Code tokens represent. If that colour, range, or object could be important for you to ask a question about, you can "follow" that Code token to the playing field and potentially pick it up in a later turn.

CODE TOKENS AND NOTEPAD

The game includes 30 unique Code tokens with values from 1 to 30. Each Code token displays an object, colour, and falls within a range of 5 numbers.

The Notepad is divided into a number of sections to help you keep your notes organised.



Notes about possibly interesting Code tokens on the Information board.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---



Note here how often a colour or object appears.

Note here how often a range appears.

1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
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Lowest number Middle number Highest number

- All possible options for the lowest, middle, and highest number in your code.
- All numbers in a row share the same range, and all numbers in a column share the same object.
- The colours are randomly distributed.

Cross out the numbers you know are not possible based on their object, range, colour, or precise Code token. There is a section for each of the Code tokens in your secret code.

Espionage Tokens

You may use the Espionage tokens at the end of your turn to gather additional information.



View token

View any Code token of your choice on the playing field or Information board.



Swap token

Choose a Code token of your choice on the playing field or Information board and swap it with one of the Code tokens from behind your Detective screen.

You may use a maximum of one Espionage token per turn. Turn over the Espionage token after use. It is now deactivated. You can reactivate your Espionage tokens via an Action tile on the playing field or when you have deciphered one of your Code tokens.

B. Decipher a Code Token

If you are certain about one or more of the numbers in your code, you may announce one of your Code numbers that has not yet been deciphered. This is done instead of moving and taking an action. You must specify whether it is the lowest, middle, or highest number, alongside announcing its exact value. The other players must confirm whether this is correct or not. You cannot decipher a token which you have previously deciphered (already ticked off).

If incorrect, note an incorrect guess on your Notepad with a cross. Your turn ends and you must **skip your next turn**. If correct, mark it on your Notepad with a tick. You may reactivate all of your deactivated Movement and Espionage tokens, flipping them back over.

If you believe you know all three numbers of your code, you may declare them at the start of your turn. The other players confirm if the entire code is correct or not. They cannot tell you what is incorrect, only that your answer is not (completely) correct.

If incorrect, your turn ends and you must skip your next turn.

If correct, you win the game!

End of the Game

The first player to fully decipher their secret code wins immediately.





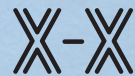
ICON OVERVIEW



Object



Colour



Range



Move horizontally or vertically



Move diagonally



Move to any chosen location



Extra turn



Reactivate



Swap



View



Object:
Camera



Object:
Notebook



Object:
Smartwatch

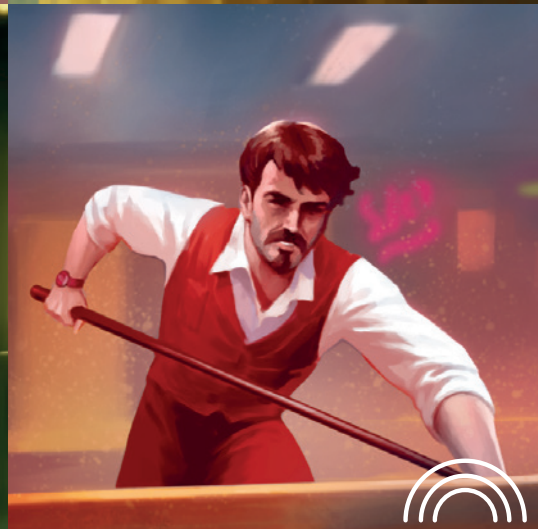


Object:
Drone



Object:
Fingerprint

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WARNING! Choking hazard. Not suitable for children under the age of 3. Contains small parts. Game components might differ from the images used in the rulebook.