



Overview

You want to build a space station, but you want it cheap. Instead of making a custom design, you are using repossessed space station modules. The only catches are that not all the airlocks connect and that a bunch of other builders want the same space station modules you do.

In *Airlock*, the players take turns selecting tiles from a central pool and connecting them to build their own personal space stations. There are three rounds, and each round contains fewer tiles to choose from. Each player selects six tiles the first round, four the second, and two the third (for a total of twelve at the end). The player whose space station scored the most points after all three rounds wins.

Selecting First Player

Give one tile to each player randomly. The player whose tile has the highest maximum point value goes first. If there is a tie, deal another tile to the tied players until one is a clear winner.

Return these tiles back to the stack. The first player will change in the second and third rounds.

Set Up

Shuffle the tiles, then make a central pool of tiles with six tiles times the number of players. Spread these tiles out so each player can see all of them.

Number of Players	Tiles in Round 1	Tiles in Round 2	Tiles in Round 3
2	12	8	4
3	18	12	6
4	24	16	8
5	30	20	10
6	36	24	12

Turn Order

Airlock uses what is called a serpentine or horseshoe pattern. The first player takes a turn and play proceed clockwise until it reaches the last player, who takes two turns in a row. Play then proceeds counter-clockwise until it reaches the first player, who takes two turns, and play then proceeds clockwise again. This pattern continues until all of the tiles are selected for a given round.

Player Turns

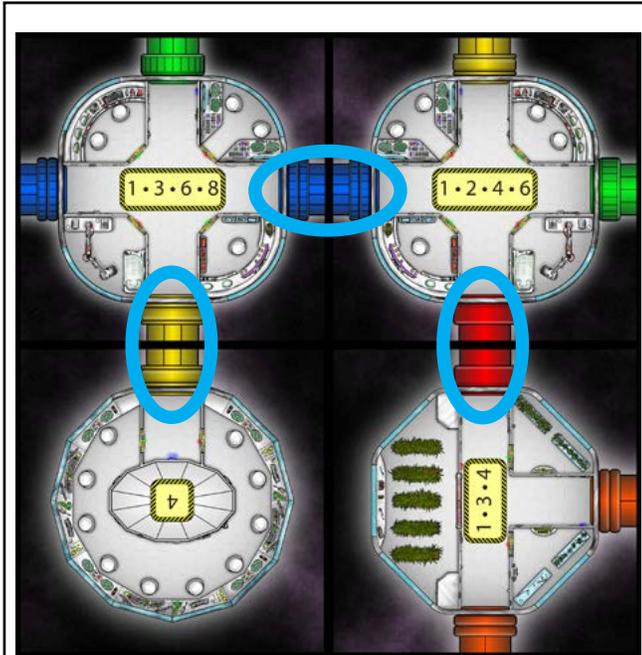
Each turn, players do two things: select a tile and connect it to their individual space stations.

Selecting: Each turn, players select a single tile from the central pool to use to creation their personal space station.

Connecting: Every turn after the first turn, players must immediately connect their new tile in a legal position to the tiles that are already part of their individual space stations (see **Legal Connections**). Players score points for tiles as soon as they connect them (see **Scoring**).

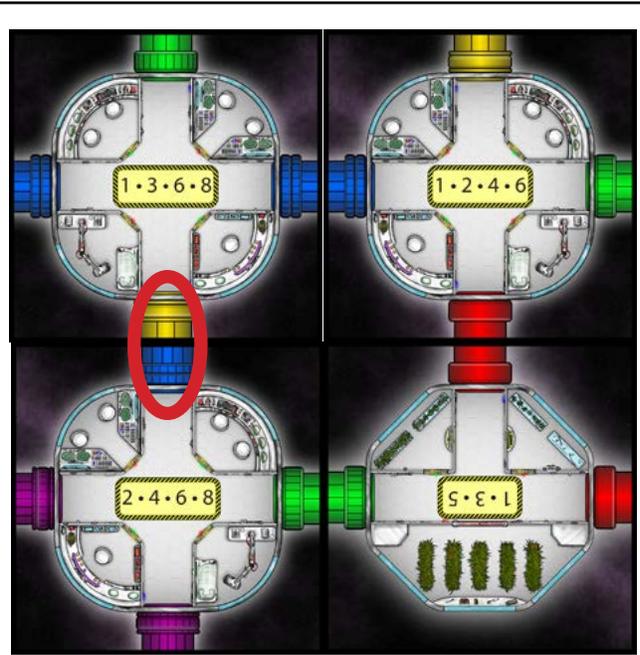
Players must take a tile and make a legal connection if possible. If there is no legal way to connect any tile remaining in the pool, there are two options. Either the player selects and discards one tile, removing it completely from the game, OR the player discards his current space station and starts a new one with a new tile. (The second option is usually only a good idea if the current space station only has one tile).

Figure 1a



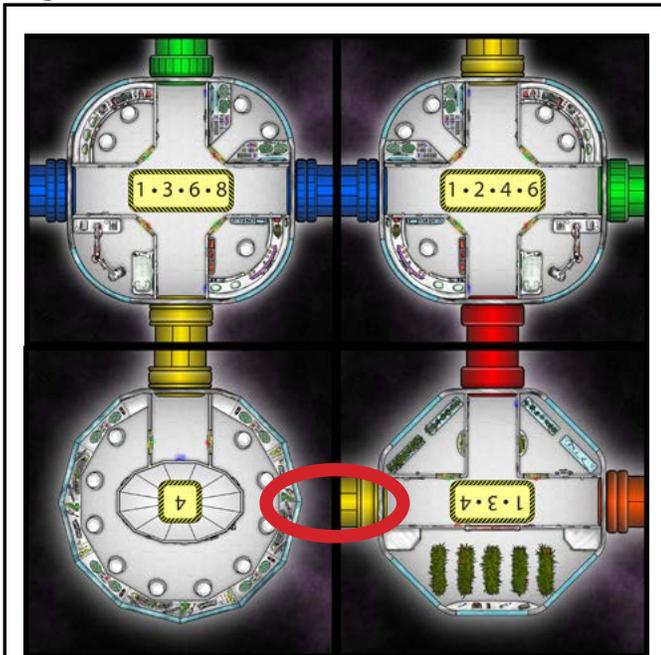
All of these connections are legal.

Figure 1b



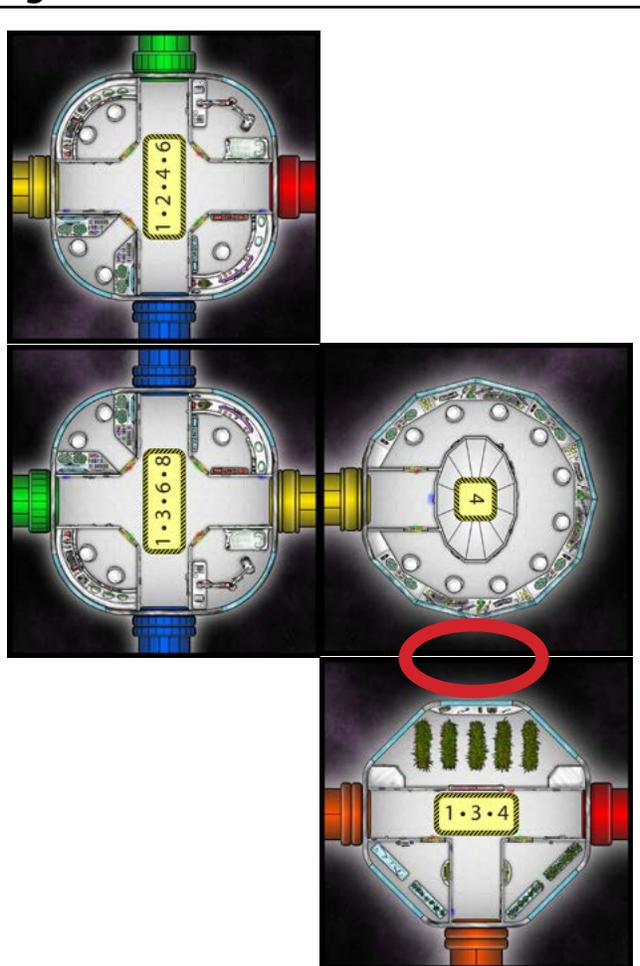
This is ILLEGAL because a blue connection touches a yellow.

Figure 1c



This is ILLEGAL because a yellow connection touches a blank side.

Figure 1d



This is ILLEGAL because blanks sides cannot connect tiles.

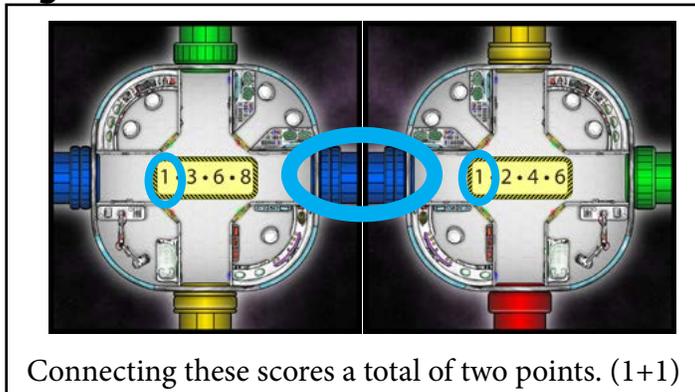
Legal Connections

For a tile to be in a legal position, all of the colored connectors must match adjacent connectors (see figure 1a). Players can rotate and flip the tiles any way they want. Connections cannot be adjacent to blank sides (as in figure 1c). Blank sides do not connect to each other (figure 1d), but they can be next to each other if connected through colored connectors (as in figure 1a).

Scoring

In *Airlock*, players score every time they connect a tile, based on how many connections the tile and its neighbors now have. When players connect their first two tiles, each has one connection, so players score the first point value on each tile (see figure 2a). When a tile gains a second connection, players score the second point value and so on (see figure 2b).

Figure 2a



Sometimes players connect a single tile to multiple tiles in a single move (as in figure 2c). In this case players get all the points up to the total number of connections the tile now has. (If they connect a tile to two other tiles in one move, the new tile scores both the first and second point values).

Players may each keep their own score, or a central scorekeeper may keep track, but any player can ask for any score at any time.

Figure 2b

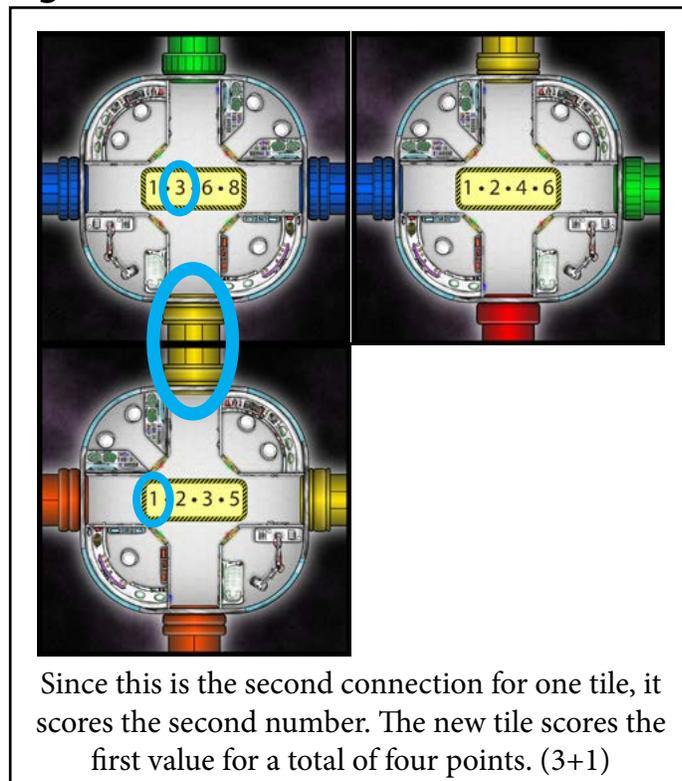
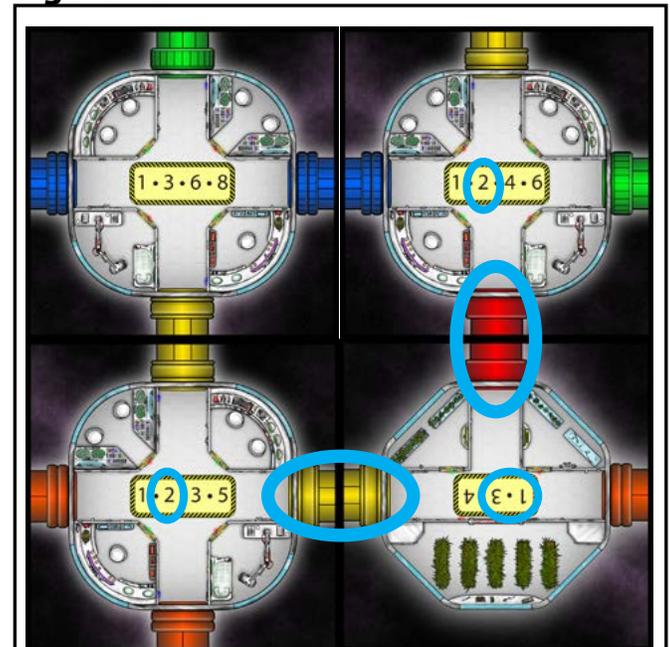


Figure 2c



Strategy Tip

Tiles with connectors that are closer to the red end of the spectrum are worth the fewest points, but have the most options for connections. Tiles with connectors towards the purple end of the spectrum are worth the most points, but have the fewest options for connections. (From commonest to rarest the possible connections are: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple).

Tiles with fewer options for connections have greater minimum values, but lower maximum values than tiles with more options for connections.

Rounds Two and Three

Rounds two and three use all the rules above, except there are fewer tiles in the central pool. Round two has four tiles in the pool per player. Round three has two tiles in the pool per player.

First player also changes each round. At the start of rounds two and three, after the tiles have been placed in the middle, the player with the lowest score chooses who goes first in the next round.

Victory

At the end of the third round, after all tiles have been played, the player with the most points wins. If there is a tie, all tied players win.

Variant Rules

The *Airlock* game tiles are extremely versatile, and allow many variations. Here are a few different ways you can change the game for a different experience. We encourage you to create your own variations and share them with the *Airlock* community.

Game Length

Airlock is originally designed to be a quick game that takes less than an hour to play, but for longer games players can increase the number of tiles they choose from in each round.

For an extended game, players can create a pool of eight tiles per person in the first round, six in the second, and four in the final round. For a truly marathon game, the central pool can have ten tiles per person in the first round, eight in the second, and six in the final round.

Delayed Scoring

Instead of counting points as tiles are placed, players can count point totals at the end of each round or at the end of the entire game. This makes the game slightly faster and increases the suspense, but can lessen the sense of progress and makes relative positions unclear. In this method, players must remember to score all point values for tiles with multiple connections, not just the highest one (see figure 2c).

If players count points at the end of each round, they need to mark which tiles were connected during which round, so they do not accidentally re-score tiles placed in an earlier round at the end of the second or third rounds.

If players count points only at the end of the game, players need to select a random starting player each round, similar to how they select one at the start of the game.

Delayed Connecting

In this variation, players wait to connect their tiles until the end of each round, until then, they place the tiles in front of themselves in any order. This variation is recommended for experienced players who want more of a challenge, as it requires more planning and increases the emphasis on memory and spacial reasoning.

It's a good idea to limit the amount of time players have to build their space station, such as limiting the time to 30 seconds total, or 10 seconds after any player announces he is finished.