

Rules for CHECK PLEASE

A cooperative boardgame by Ryan Hackel

Welcome to Verne's! It's another bustling evening shift at the town's favorite eatery, and your manager is feeling mean tonight. He has issued another ultimatum: if he gets too many complaints from customers, or if too many customers walk out unhappy, you and the rest of the waitstaff will be fired! Also, Smedley Saltpotter, the Globe-Gazette's notorious food critic will be dropping by at some point, as will Sawbuck County's meticulous health inspector, Wayne Grimes. Can you deal with all of these demands in a timely manner, and save your job? Or will you be checking tomorrow's classifieds looking for new work?

Check Please is a cooperative game where the players work together as a team instead of against each other. As a team, you will need to greet customers at the door, escort them to open tables, bring them entrees, and bus the tables when they are done. If you leave a customer waiting too long for service, then they will complain. If you get too many complaints before the game ends, you all lose. If you serve all of the customers without getting excessive complaints, then everybody wins!

EQUIPMENT

You will need to print out:

- the board (4 pages)
- the customers (1 page)
- these rules (5 pages)

You will need to provide:

- one D6 (one six-sided die)
- one pawn per player
- 1-4 players
- 30 black tokens
- 30 white tokens
- 30 red tokens

The COMPONENTS

The board shows a floor plan of Verne's. There is a Front Door where customers wait to be seated. There are several tables and booths in the restaurant where they can be seated. Each table or booth shows the maximum size of a customer group that can be seated there. Tables and booths are separated by aisle squares; these aisles are the paths your pawn can travel along. Opposite the Front Door is the Kitchen, where entrees are issued for delivery and dirty dishes must be taken for cleaning. Along one edge of the board is the Complaint Track. On the opposite edge is the shorter Walkout Track.

Customer Parties (CP) have a value from 1 to 6. This is how many customers are in that party. They are color-coded for easy identification at a glance.

White tokens are Entrees, the meal items that your CPs have requested. Each CP needs delivered to them a number of entrees equal to the size of that party.

Black tokens are Dirty Dishes, left behind by a CP when it has finished its meal and leaves the table.

Red tokens you provided are Complaints tokens. These represent the amount of irritation or frustration your customers have due to your inadequate service. If you earn too many complaints, you lose the game!

(The colors of these tokens are flexible, as long as you know which represent which.)

SETUP

Shuffle the CPs face down, and place them near the front door (but not on it).

Make piles of entrée, dirty dish, and complaint tokens near the board.

Each player places their pawn at his or her choice of front door or kitchen.

Choose a player to go first. Play continues in clockwise order around the board.

GAMEPLAY

Rounds and Turns – The game is played in rounds, and each round is made up of turns. Each round begins with the starting player's turn, and ends when every player has taken one turn.

DURING YOUR TURN

New Customer Check – This is the first thing you do on your turn. Roll the D6. If the result is GREATER THAN the number of CP at the front door, flip over a face-down CP and place it at the front door. Otherwise, do nothing. (Once the CP pile is empty, stop making New Customer Checks.)

During your turn, you can move your pawn, escort a CP to a table, or deliver entrees and clear away dirty dishes. After the New Customer Check is made, you can do these options in any order, *even during movement*. You can also choose to do nothing.

Movement – You can move your pawn up to 8 spaces per turn, traveling along the aisle squares, the kitchen, or the front door. Your movement points can be interrupted by taking other actions, and you can still use leftover movement points later in that turn.

- You cannot move through an aisle square occupied by another player.
- There is no limit to the number of players at the front door or kitchen.

ADJACANTCY: Your pawn is adjacent to any table or booth which shares a side with the aisle space you occupy. You can be adjacent to more than one table at once.

Escort (Pick up and/or deliver) a CP - When your pawn is at the front door, you may instantly pick up one CP (and any Complaints on them). CPs must be delivered to a table or booth of adequate size. When your pawn is adjacent to an empty table or booth of sufficient size (See Movement), you may instantly deliver the CP there (and their Complaints, too).

- The booth or table cannot be smaller than the size of the CP.
- The booth or table cannot have another CP or any Dirty Dishes present.
- You cannot escort a CP if you are already escorting a CP, or if you are carrying Entrees or Dirty Dishes.

If you still have unused movement points after picking up or delivering a CP, you can keep moving.

Pick up and/or deliver Entrees and/or Dirty Dishes - When your pawn is in the kitchen, you may instantly receive up to 4 Entrées, and instantly deliver any number of Dirty Dishes. The kitchen supplies an unlimited number of Entrees on demand. Entrees must be delivered to CPs at tables.

- Each CP wants a number of Entrees equal to its size.
- When your pawn is adjacent to a table or booth with Dirty Dishes on it, you may instantly pick up 4 or less of those tokens.
- Dirty Dishes must be returned to the kitchen, returning any delivered Dirty Dish tokens to the pile off the board.
- Picking up or delivering Entrees or Dirty Dishes does not take any time or use any movement points.
- You cannot carry more than four Entrees and/or Dirty Dishes at once, in any combination.

END OF ROUND

The round ends when the next turn is back to the start player.

Complaint Check – Roll the D6. Look around the board for any CPs whose size equals the number rolled, whether they are seated or waiting at the door. (Helpful tip: CPs are color coded by size.)

If that CP is seated at a table and has received enough Entrees, that CP has finished eating and is satisfied. Remove the CP from the game, and replace the Entrees at that table with an equal number of Dirty Dishes. If there were any Complaints on that CP, add them to the Complaint Track.

If that CP is seated but not received enough Entrees, the CP complains about waiting for service. Add a Complaint to that CP. If a CP receives a third Complaint, they are fed up with waiting, and walk out angry. Add their Complaints to the Complaint Track, and add the CP to the Walkout Track. If that CP had any Entrees, replace those Entrees with Dirty Dishes.

If that CP is at the door or being escorted by a player, add a Complaint to that CP. If a CP receives a third Complaint, they are fed up with waiting, and walk out angry. Add their Complaints to the Complaint Track, and add the CP to the Walkout Track.

The Food Critic

Smedley Saltpotter is the ornery food critic who has settled for a mediocre position with the Globe-Gazette. The Globe-Gazette is a far cry from Zagat's, and Saltpotter resents this, venting his frustrated ambitions in his review column twice weekly. No line is too long, no service too slow. He will wait as long as he needs to give a meal its fair assessment, but his readers know that Saltpotter writes good reviews the way he likes his porterhouse steak... rare.

The Food Critic is treated as a CP with a size of one. He waits at the front door like a normal CP, must be escorted to a table like a normal CP, but he never walks out early. If he is given a Complaint during the Complaint Check, give him an *additional* Complaint. Handle Entrées and Dirty Dishes for the Food Critic as you would for a normal CP. When he is finished eating (on a Complaint Check roll of 1), remove him from play, add his Complaints to the Complaint Track, then roll the D6. Remove that number of Complaints from the Complaint Track! Lucky you.

The Health Inspector

Wayne Grimes has been Sawbuck County's chief health inspector for nearly three decades and he bears the scars to prove it. He survived the Great Roach Infestation of '86 and the Deep-Fryer Meltdown of '94. It's all in a day's work for the least-thanked government official in town. Don't let his amicable demeanor fool you into letting your guard down. He's a strict and methodical inspector who thinks that every restaurant has something to hide. Managers have been driven to the brink of madness by the clicking of his pen and the secrecy of his clipboard. But if you've kept your nose clean (and everything else, mind you), he'd love to have a beer with you afterward.

The Health Inspector is not treated like a normal CP. He is exempt from the Complaint Check, does not go to a table, and does not require an Entrée. Instead, he must be escorted from the front door to the kitchen and back. He *must* be escorted first, before any other CPs at the door are picked up. When he completes this round trip, add one Complaint to the Complaint Track for each table or booth with at least one Dirty Dish token on it at that time, then remove him from play.

END of GAME and WIN/LOSE CONDITIONS

If, at any time, the Complaint Track becomes full, the game ends and you lose!

If, at any time, the Walkout Track becomes full, the game ends and you lose!

The game also ends if ALL of these conditions are met:

- there are no face-down CPs remaining off the board
- there are no CP waiting at the door
- there are no CPs being escorted
- there are no seated CPs waiting for Entrees.

Move any Complaints from all remaining CPs to the Complaint Track. If the Complaint Track is still not full, you win! Congratulations on keeping your job.

Credits: Thanks you to all my playtesters who provided valuable feedback during this design project: Ben & Erin, Nathan, Chris, Kurt and Dee at the Strategist, and my fabulous wife Evelyn.

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Other Ryan Hackel games are available for free at CeruleansGames.tripod.com.