

FREE THE BOX GAME RULES



CONTENTS: Game board, six sets of colored tokens (18 total), one 8-sided die and yellow cards (32 total).

OVERVIEW: Pictured on the board is a neighborhood where you can play an old fashioned game called FREE THE BOX. As you move around this neighborhood you can hide from and seek your opponents among places like a house, mailbox or a fence, to try and capture them or to avoid being captured. If another player lands on the same hiding space that you occupy, then you are captured and have to move your token to your capture box.

OBJECT: Move around the neighborhood to try and capture all of your opponent's tokens. To do this you have to land on the same hiding space (house, mailbox, fence, etc.) that they are on. It could be one on a different side of the neighborhood or the same one they currently occupy. When this happens they have to move their token to their capture box and can only be freed by using a FREE THE BOX card (if they have one) or jumping to the center space (see below). Be aware though, that if all of your tokens get captured and are in your Capture Box, then the game is over for you and play continues with any other players (even if you have a FREE THE BOX card in your possession).

SPACES:



A player's HOME SPACE



A player's STARTING BOX



A player's JUMP TO CENTER space



A safe space (to rest for a bit)



Land here and draw a yellow card



One of the neighborhood hiding spaces that all players can land on to capture or be captured!

STARTING THE GAME: Shuffle and place the yellow cards on the yellow space near the middle of the board. Each player then chooses their color and grabs their tokens and then places them on their HOME SPACE. Each player then rolls the die to see who plays first; the highest number goes first and play proceeds counter-clockwise (follow the arrows!). You can move in to the neighborhood during your turn from your home space by rolling a two or seven; if you do then move one token to the STARTING BOX. After that you can move this token throughout the neighborhood on future turns. You can land on the same space occupied by your own token and you can also pass your other tokens if you want. Remember though that if you have multiple tokens on the same hiding space all of those tokens could be captured at the same time.

PLAYING THE GAME: Once your token is no longer on your home space, it can move around the neighborhood. On your turn, roll the die and move one of your tokens the number of spaces indicated. If you land on a yellow DRAW A CARD space then draw a card from the yellow deck. If you draw a FREE THE BOX card, you can use it immediately if needed to free one token that is captured or you may save it for another time. Return all other cards to the bottom of the deck. If any action is required by the card (moving forward, back or being captured, etc.) that same token must complete the action.

There are several spaces on the board where you can avoid being captured by another player. These safe spaces are: NEUTRAL, STARTING BOX, DRAW A CARD or JUMP TO CENTER. Multiple tokens (of any color) can occupy these spaces as well. One of your tokens may stay on any safe space to try and trap an opponent or to wait for an exact count to jump to the center, as long as you have another token that can move after you roll the die.

If you have any tokens captured you can use a FREE THE BOX card (if you have one) on your next turn. Once used you can move one token from the capture box to your home space. Place the used card on the bottom of the deck.

Once a token goes around the whole neighborhood, they can try to jump to the center through their same colored JUMP TO CENTER space (next to your STARTING BOX). To do this you must land on your own JUMP TO CENTER space with an exact count (if you don't then that token will have to go around the neighborhood again). If you do, then move that token to the center space and exclaim "FREE THE BOX". Any and all of your captured tokens can then be freed and moved to your HOME SPACE. This token remains in the center and you continue play with your other tokens. This rule frees tokens captured at this time; any tokens being captured in the future will have to be freed with a FREE THE BOX card or jumping another token into the center.

Remember if all three of your tokens get captured and are in your Capture Box, then the game is over for you even if you have a FREE THE BOX card in your possession. This is the only time that you can't use a card when your last token gets captured; otherwise, in any other situation, you can use a card to free one token when your last one gets captured.

WINNING THE GAME: There are two ways to win this game. Either be the last surviving player after all of your opponent's tokens are captured or be the first player to jump all of your tokens to the center of the board. If this is you then guess what...you win!!!

FREE THE BOX GAME HISTORY

Free the Box was a game I played on the street corner with my friends when we were kids. The game board represents a neighborhood and the things that are in it. We would hide behind houses, cars, trees, etc., and the lines on the sidewalk made up the capture box. The game was mostly played in daylight, but was best played in the early evening or at night when the capture box would be under a street light so we could see who was captured. When we played, there were only two teams containing four to five players each. One team would go and hide and the other team would have to find them. When someone was caught they would be brought to the capture box and in order to be freed a teammate would have to run through the box and yell, "FREE THE BOX!" Sometimes this was hard because there could be two or three players guarding the capture box. If all a team's players were captured then the other team would go and hide. If you had a strong team this game could go on for hours or at least until our parents called us in for the night. In the late 1980s I converted this childhood game into the board game that you see. In the early 2000s, we also created a card game called FREE-O based off this board game. They are both great fun for the whole family and can be learned very quickly.

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