

Inkblot

By Chris Backe (chrisbacke@gmail.com - entrogames.com)

3-10 players, 20-30 minutes, 8 and up

Although it's no longer used as an investigative tool, the Rorschach test was used for decades as a way of evaluating people. Today, we players go on a similar journey with inkblots. One player is the Patient, while everyone else is a Doctor trying to understand their Patient. If your answer is chosen by the Patient, you score points. Simple. Or is it?

Components

100 square inkblot cards

10 dry-erase markers/erasers

10 dry-erase cards to write on

20 cubes / tokens / coins

1 Patient token

1 'Bottom' token

1 'I know it' token

Setup

Give each player a dry erase marker and card to write on. Shuffle the inkblot cards, then stack some of them in a category-side deck (the side with words) in the middle of the table. Place the 'I know it' and 'Bottom' tokens and all of the cubes just below the deck of tiles.

The player who most recently saw a doctor starts the game as the first Patient.

Play / on your turn

Each round, one player is the Patient while the rest of the players are Doctors.

To start each round, have the Patient flip the top Inkblot card, look at it, then read the category on the pile's top tile out loud. The Patient may rotate the Inkblot card as they like, then must secretly write what they see in the Inkblot on their dry-erase card. Bear in mind your answer should fit the category chosen. Once the Patient has written their answer, place the 'Bottom' token on the side meant as the bottom. The inkblot should not be rotated any further for the rest of the round.

When the Patient has finished writing their answer, start from the player on the Patient's left. In turn order, each Doctor (all other players) may ask the Patient a question about what they see in the inkblot. You may **not** guess what they wrote down. The Patient must truthfully answer all Doctor's questions with a yes or no, but should not volunteer other information.

Any Doctor may grab the 'I know it!' token at any time, even when it's not their turn. If you do this, you become the Lead Doctor and must write your answer down immediately. When you're finished, put your card face-down on the table. Ensure all Doctors have asked an equal number of questions, then the round ends. As a more cut-throat variant, the round ends immediately when someone grabs the token.

When the round ends, all other Doctors must write their guess and place their answers face-down in a pile in front of the Lead Doctor. When all of the Doctor's answers have been collected, the Lead Doctor shuffles them all up, reads them out loud, then lays them on the table.

The Patient then reveals their answer, then takes 3 cubes from the supply to award to the answers as they see fit. For example:

- 3 cubes to one answer that's very close or exactly matches their answer
- 2 cubes to one very good answer and 1 cube to another good answer
- 1 cube to three different and equally good answers

If the Lead Doctor scored any cubes, they score **one bonus cube** from the supply for being the Lead Doctor. The Patient must give out all 3 cubes. After they have done so, players may retrieve their boards and erase their answers. Pass the Patient token clockwise to start the next round.

End of game / scoring

The game ends when any player has reached 10 points. If multiple players have reached 10 points, the player with more points wins. If they are tied, all tied players win.

Note: although the original Rorschach test images are now considered in the public domain, as it was published before 1923 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rorschach_test), I have created new ones using a generative tool at <https://www.openprocessing.org/sketch/889592>. The final art would of course be different, but I'd encourage a variety of black-and-white inkblot textures for the appearance of authenticity.