



British Rails

A crayon rail game of railway building and freight haulage across Great Britain, for two to six companies. Version 1.0.0, released 27 July 2026.

Every company starts with GBP 60 million and an empty map. You lay track from milepost to milepost, pick up goods where they are made, and deliver them where they are wanted. The first company holding GBP 250 million with London, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow joined on a single network wins.

1. The board

The map is the real coastline of Great Britain, overlaid with a triangular grid of 529 mileposts about 22 kilometres apart. Track runs along the grid, from any milepost to any of its six neighbours.

What a milepost costs to build to

Milepost	Drawn as	Cost
Open country	small dot	GBP 1M
Hills	outlined triangle	GBP 2M
Summit	filled triangle	GBP 5M
Town	red circle	GBP 3M
City	red square	GBP 3M
Major city	red hexagon	GBP 5M
River crossing	added to the milepost cost	+ GBP 2M
Estuary or firth	added to the milepost cost	+ GBP 3M

There are 49 cities and towns and four major cities: Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and London. Belfast sits off the map and is reached only by the ferries from Stranraer and Holyhead.

Ferries

A ferry is shown as a dashed white line. Any train may sail provided its company has track at one of the two ports. Sailing ends your movement for the turn and your train runs at half speed on the following turn. You cannot lay track over water.

2. Setting up

- Choose two to six companies and decide which are played by you and which by the computer.
- Every company begins with GBP 60 million and three consignment notes.
- There are two building turns before any train moves. They run down the table and then back up it, so the last company to build first is the first to build second.
- Your first track must start at a major city. After that, everything you lay must join your own network.

3. A turn

A turn has two parts, in this order: run your train, then lay track. Track laid this turn cannot be used until your next turn.

Running

A Freight engine moves nine mileposts a turn. Moving from one milepost to the next costs one, whether the ground is flat or mountainous; terrain only affects the cost of building. Your train may stop in a city to load or unload as often as you like at no cost in movement.

The first time you run, choose any city on your own network and put your train there.

Building

You may spend up to GBP 20M on track each turn, and never more than you actually hold. Each segment costs the price of the milepost it enters, plus any water crossing. Instead of building you may buy a new engine, which uses the whole of the building part of the turn.

4. Freight

You always hold three consignment notes. Each lists three deliveries: a city, the goods it wants, and what it pays. Load the goods at any city that produces them, take them to the city named on the note, and collect the money. That note is then discarded and you draw another.

A load takes up one place on the train. A Freight engine carries two. You may tip a load out anywhere at no cost if the contract for it has gone.

There are 37 commodities. The full list of what is made where appears at the end of this manual.

5. Other companies

- Only one company may own an ordinary line between two mileposts. First there wins it.
- Every company may build into a major city, however crowded its approaches already are.
- You may run over a rival's metals by paying them GBP 4M. That buys you their whole network for the rest of your turn.
- The fee is paid to the rival, not to the bank, so blocking a rival into a corner and charging them for the way out is a real tactic.

6. Engines

Engine	Speed	Loads	Upgrades from	Cost
Freight	9	2	the engine you start with	-
Fast Freight	12	2	Freight	GBP 20M
Heavy Freight	9	3	Freight	GBP 20M
Superfreight	12	3	Fast or Heavy Freight	GBP 20M

7. Events

Twenty-one event cards are shuffled through the contract deck. Drawing one resolves it at once and you draw again, so an event never costs you a contract.

Event	Effect
Derailment, Points Failure	The train stops and loses a load.
Heavy Fog, Freezing Fog	Trains in the named region run at half speed for a round.
Flooding, Washout	No river may be crossed for a round.
Gale Warning, Force Ten	Every ferry is closed for a round.
Miners' Strike, Steel Dispute, Dock Strike	The named goods cannot be loaded for a round.
General Strike, Signalmen Out	Every train runs at half speed for a round.
Excess Profits Tax, Windfall Levy	Every company over GBP 150M pays a tenth of its cash.
Inflation	Every company pays GBP 5M.
Government Grant	Every company receives GBP 5M.

8. Winning

A company wins by holding GBP 250M and having all four major cities on one connected network. Turns are equal: a claim made early in a round is not settled until every company has played that round, and if more than one company qualifies, the richer takes it.

9. Using the game

Action	How
Move the map	Drag it.
Zoom	Scroll wheel, pinch, or the buttons at the bottom left.
Run the train	Click any milepost within reach and the train runs there. Reachable mileposts are marked while it is your turn to run.
Load and deliver	While the train is in a city, the panel lists what that city makes and what is aboard. A contract you can complete is highlighted.
Lay one segment	Click a milepost on your network to select it, then click a neighbour. The cost appears on the dashed line.
Lay a run of track	Click a milepost further off and the line is built toward it as far as this turn's money allows.
Undo	Undo last, in the building part of the turn.
Change contracts	Throw in the hand, before you move, gives you three fresh notes and costs the rest of your turn's movement.
Save	The game saves itself after every action. Resume saved picks it up again.

Appendix: what is made where

Goods	Produced at
Aircraft	Gloucester, Bristol
Beer	Edinburgh, Nottingham, Norwich
Biscuits	Carlisle, Reading
Bricks	Stoke, Northampton
Cars	Birmingham, Coventry, Southampton
Cattle	Dumfries, Carlisle, Lancaster, Cardiff, Hereford
Cement	Dover
Cheese	Gloucester, Barnstaple, Exeter
Chemicals	Middlesbrough, Liverpool
China Clay	Plymouth
Chocolate	York, Bristol
Cider	Hereford, Exeter
Coal	Ayr, Newcastle, Sheffield, Nottingham, Swansea, Cardiff
Cutlery	Sheffield, Birmingham
Electronics	Bristol, Portsmouth, Brighton, Reading
Fish	Dundee, Berwick, Lancaster, Hull, Cardigan, Plymouth, Penzance, Brighton
Glass	Liverpool
Jute	Dundee
Lace	Nottingham
Leather	Northampton, London
Machinery	Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Coventry, London
Oil	Hull, Pembroke, Southampton
Oysters	Colchester
Paper	Norwich
Potatoes	Ayr, York, Lincoln
Pottery	Stoke
Printing	Edinburgh, Manchester, Cambridge, Ipswich, London
Sheep	Stranraer, Dolgellau, Aberystwyth, Cardigan, Barnstaple
Ships	Glasgow, Newcastle, Portsmouth, Belfast
Slate	Holyhead, Dolgellau
Steel	Glasgow, Middlesbrough, Sheffield, Swansea, Cardiff
Textiles	Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Belfast
Timber	Perth, Dumfries
Tin	Penzance
Wheat	Berwick, Lincoln, Cambridge, Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester
Whisky	Dundee, Perth, Edinburgh, Belfast
Wool	Leeds, Aberystwyth, Dover

Notices

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