

Groundbreak

Six syndicates, one grid

TRONSOFT GAMES · VERSION 1.0.4 · PACKAGE SPECIFICATION 1.6.2

1. The city

A grid of 110 lots is opened for development. Six syndicates compete to charter it, enlarge across it, and absorb one another on it. You sit in one of the development offices with a strip of lots and a purse. Hold the largest fortune when the city settles and you win.

The grid	11 columns × 10 rows = 110 lots
Syndicates	6
Certificates each	24
Lots in hand	6
Opening purse	\$7,000, plus \$200 for each seat after the first
Founder's grant	2 certificates
Protected at	12 lots
The finish at	38 lots, or every syndicate protected
Certificates a turn	4, and no more than 3 of one syndicate
Exchange rate	2 absorbed certificates for 1 of the survivor

2. The syndicates

Six names may be chartered, in three price tiers. A higher tier opens dearer and settles dearer, but no name is stronger than the lots behind it.

SYNDICATE	TIER	OPENING PRICE	CERTIFICATES
 Clayworks	1	\$200	24
 Foundry	1	\$200	24
 Meridian	2	\$300	24
 Halcyon	2	\$300	24
 Obelisk	3	\$400	24
 Zenith	3	\$400	24

3. A turn

Offices act in seat order. A turn is two acts, with a possible interruption between them.

- **Lay one lot** from your strip.
- **A merger may fall due**, and is settled before anything else.
- **Take up certificates** — up to 4, and no more than 3 of any one syndicate.

Dead lots are then exchanged and the strip is refilled from the undrawn lots. Offices that open later are paid \$200 a seat to wait, because they charter later.

4. Laying a lot — the assay strip

Your 6 lots are quoted before you commit. This is the heart of the game: the strip tells you what a lot would do and what it would be worth.

- **Open ground.** The lot touches nothing yet.
- **Charters a syndicate.** Laid beside a loose lot. You choose the name and take 2 certificates free. Every loose lot connected to it joins at once.
- **Enlarges.** Laid beside a syndicate. The ticket shows the new size, the new price, and what the change is worth to your own holding.
- **Merger.** The lot touches two syndicates. The ticket names the survivor and totals the prizes and paper the merger would put in your purse.
- **Sealed.** All six names are already chartered, so nothing new may be founded. The lot stays in your strip and may become playable later.
- **Dead.** The lot would join two protected syndicates. It can never be laid, and is exchanged at the end of your turn.

If **every** lot in your strip is sealed or dead, the **Exchange the strip** control appears. It discards those lots out of play and draws you 6 fresh ones. You then take up certificates as usual.

5. Prices

A certificate is priced by the size of its syndicate and the tier of its name. Price is read at the moment of purchase or payout — it is not fixed when the certificate is issued.

LOTS	CLAYWORKS · FOUNDRY	MERIDIAN · HALCYON	OBELISK · ZENITH
2	\$200	\$300	\$400
3	\$300	\$400	\$500
4	\$400	\$500	\$600
5	\$500	\$600	\$700
6–10	\$600	\$700	\$800
11–20	\$700	\$800	\$900
21–30	\$800	\$900	\$1,000
31–40	\$900	\$1,000	\$1,100
41 or more	\$1,000	\$1,100	\$1,200

6. Mergers

When a lot touches two syndicates, the larger absorbs the smaller. If they are equal, the office that laid the lot chooses which survives. A syndicate of 12 lots or more is **protected** and can never be absorbed; a lot that would join two protected syndicates is dead.

The absorbed syndicate settles at once, at the price its size commanded.

RANK	PRIZE	AT \$700 A CERTIFICATE
Largest holder	$8 \times \text{price}$	\$5,600
Second largest	$4 \times \text{price}$	\$2,800
Third, when three or more hold	$2 \times \text{price}$	\$1,400
A sole holder	$12 \times \text{price}$	\$8,400

Tied ranks pool their prizes and split them, rounded up to the nearest ten. The third prize is paid only when three or more offices hold certificates.

The transfer slate

Every holder then disposes, in turn order beginning with the office that laid the lot:

- **Sell** at the price the syndicate commanded when it fell.
- **Exchange** 2 absorbed certificates for 1 of the survivor, as far as the survivor's unissued certificates allow.
- **Hold.** The certificates stay in your hand, worth nothing, and revive only if that name is chartered again later.

On holding. The rule is real and the certificates do revive. Measured over 560 seat-rotated games, however, holding is worth nothing on average and loses ground when leaned on. It is offered because the rule exists, not because it is strong.

7. The finish

Once any syndicate reaches 38 lots, or every syndicate on the grid is protected, the office whose turn it is may call the finish after taking up its certificates. The city then settles:

- Prizes are paid on **every** syndicate still on the grid, at its current price, by the same ranks as a merger.
- All paper is sold at its current price.
- Certificates of a name that is off the grid are worth nothing.

The largest purse wins. There is no elimination and no way to be knocked out.

8. Reading the screen

Information sits on the left, the grid in the middle, and every control you can press on the right.

- **Your purse** — cash in hand, the round, and how many lots are undrawn.
- **The register** — each syndicate's size, price, unissued certificates, your holding, and who leads it. A tick marks a protected syndicate.
- **Standings** — every office by net worth: cash plus paper at its current price. Prizes not yet fallen due are not counted.
- **Day book** — every lay, charter, merger, prize and purchase.
- **Assay strip** — your lots, quoted.
- **Certificates** — the sheet you buy from, and the turn's buttons.

9. Three openings worth knowing

- **Charter early.** Two free certificates in a syndicate that grows is the cheapest paper in the game, and the founder is usually the last to be overtaken.
- **Second place pays.** 4 times the price for coming second in a large syndicate beats 8 times the price for leading a small one. Count the price, not the rank.
- **Trigger, don't build.** Merger prizes fall due immediately, while growth only pays at the settlement. A lot that sets off a merger you are placed in is often worth more than a lot that builds one you lead.

10. Saving

Keep stores one position in this browser under the single key `tronsoft_groundbreak_save`, written only when you press it. The cover sheet offers it back as **Resume kept position**. Nothing is transmitted anywhere, and the game collects no personal data.