

Quick Start Guide and Sample First Turn Commands

If you are just now signing up for your first game of Fall of Rome, just print out the Quick Start Guide (click the printer icon at the top) and have these pages ready to refer to when you are notified by email that your game has just begun. You can scan the Guide now, but it will make a lot more sense when you are signed into your game and can see the maps and screens in front of you and follow along. Once you have begun your printer, just click [here](#) to go on to sign up for your first game!

The Quick Start Guide is intended to provide you, a first time player entering your first turn, just enough guidance to learn a bit about the game controls and what the various playing pieces do so you may jump in and issue commands prior to digesting the Rules in their entirety.

Click the “Launch” button for your game after you Sign In with your email address and password on the Fall of Rome web site. The first time you load the game it will take a bit longer than it will in subsequent times: a minute or two with broadband, much longer with dialup. If the game doesn’t load, visit the Support Page – a link to it is there in My Kingdoms where you launch the game.

After the game loads, notice the fourteen or so buttons in a row near the top of the screen: the Menu Bar. Some of these screens will contain scant information right now, before any turns have run or even any of your commands (also called orders) issued. For starters, hold your mouse cursor over the left most button in the row. The name of the button appears, in this case “The Plan”. The Plan stores information on the commands you have given in the current turn. Click the button and you see The Plan screen. It is barren at this point because you have issued no commands for the current turn. When you do issue commands, The Plan will record these and list them in the sequence they will be executed (not the sequence in which you issue them) when the turn is run. It also shows the resources consumed so far by the commands you have issued, and your remaining resource balances. Take a couple minutes to left click on each of the menu bar buttons to learn what kind of information each holds.

The fourth button from the left opens the Character Screen, listing each character (King, High Priestess, Nobles, Leaders, and Agents) you know about. At the beginning, this will be a listing of all of your characters, but none from any other kingdom. You should also find the icon representing each of your characters on the map. Most of these will be located at your capital at the start of the game. Each character may be given one command per turn, subject to your command limit and available resources (gold and supplies). Your King’s Rulership score determines your command limit each turn. Most Kings begin with a Rulership of 13, meaning they may give 13 commands in a single turn. Almost always you will be best served by issuing as many commands as you are permitted each turn.

Your population centers (PC's) are the villages, towns, and cities which fly your banner, meaning they are under your control and a part of your kingdom. You begin the game with two towns and two villages under your control. One of the towns is your capital, and is designated with a gold border around the banner. Click on the Menu Bar icon that looks like a map. This gives you the Operational View of the map. You see a portion of the entire map and can scroll it by dragging on the wood scroll bars between the chain links on the map edges. Locate your capital on the operational map. PC's produce gold and supplies. Constructing Improvements in your PC's can increase production and defense. Left click on the hex containing your capital. Note that left clicking on the map changes the view – in this case from the operational view to the tactical view. The tactical view is a zoomed in view of a single hex. The tactical view may take a moment to load the first time you visit it. In crowded hexes such as your capital hex, it is sometimes necessary to be in the tactical view to issue commands to characters. You may also issue commands to them in the operational view. Notice in the tactical view the top half of the screen shows characters, brigades and buildings inside the PC. The bottom half shows legions that are outside of the PC. Move the mouse cursor to somewhere near the top of the area for the PC (like on one of the houses) and right click. This will bring up a menu showing what commands can be given to the PC. Click on “Construct Population Center Improvement”. Then notice the little pull down menu on the new pop-up window. Review the different improvements you could build and see what they add to the PC by clicking on each in turn. When done, click on Cancel Order – we won't build any Improvements this turn.

Commands to characters are given in a similar way. Stay in the tactical view and hover your mouse cursor over each character icon to see who is who. Right click on the icon that is your King to bring up his menu of possible actions. For now, click on Enamor, and with the new popup window that appears, choose the region name that contains your capital (look on the operational map again if you don't remember the name). You'll be asked then to confirm your intention, and your order is submitted.

Return to the tactical view at your capital if you are not there already, and now find the icon for your Duke. Although most commands can be given from the operational view, at the beginning of the game there are too many characters in your capital to display each icon in the hex, so we use a “multi-character icon” to signify that, and you'll want to issue commands in the tactical view. Right click on the icon of the Duke, and now you'll see a menu of possible commands for all of your noble characters (nobles). These are characters of varying power in this sequence from most to least: Prince, Duke, Count, Baron, Provincial Governor and Ambassador. Nobles carry out missions in their base, the PC they are in. They can also relocate to another PC up to seven hexes away to be able to undertake a mission there in the next or later turn. At the beginning of the game, you'll want to Relocate many of your nobles to the neutral PC's you know about. Click on Relocate for the Duke. The view now changes to the operational map. Now move the mouse cursor over the town you know about that has no banner (is neutral) near your capital, and click on the mouse. Confirm your choice, and in a moment you'll see a blue arrow to the town, reminding you that a noble has been ordered to relocate to the town. The next turn you would order the Duke to Usurp Control of the town.

You may cancel this or any other command by returning to The Plan screen (the left most button in the Menu Bar), click on the row with the command you wish to cancel, and then click “cancel”.

Unlike nobles, agents may complete missions up to seven hexes from their base, and return to their base (if they live), all in the same turn. An agent’s skill is reflected in his level, for example a level 4 agent is more effective than a level 1 (beginning) agent. Early in the game you will want to use your agents on Reconnaissance missions and you’ll want to Train them to increase their level and so effectiveness. At level 4, agents are capable of the powerful Advanced Reconnaissance order. Later in the game, when an agents are level 7 or so and higher, you’ll use their nastier capabilities like poison and assassination.

The High Priestess is a very powerful and unique character. She can uncover information over vast areas and can Heal characters who are wounded as well as brigades that have suffered losses. Early in the game you may use the High Priestess to discover the location of PC’s in your capital’s region, or to learn the hiding place of an artifact. As with all assets, you will right click on the High Priestess icon to bring up the command menu, click on the command of interest, and then you will identify a target or the center of the area you wish to glean information about, depending on the command.

What of legions - the armies in the field? Each kingdom has a unique icon to identify its legions. Return to the tactical view of the hex of your capital. See the two legion icons in the lower half of the screen? The black background icon represents the legion, and all icons within the white bordered box are the brigades (if any) and characters in that legion. One legion at your capital is division sized, meaning it has from three to five brigades. One is a patrol, meaning it has no brigades but at least one leader. Patrols may move and investigate Unusual Sightings, but they may not attack legions or PC’s. Legions fight battles early in the turn, and move later in any turn. When your legion is in the same hex as an enemy legion or PC, it may attack it. Occasionally you may find your legion is better of defending against another legion in its hex, rather than attacking it. In either case, you will want to issue an order to Attack or Defend against that legion, and then you will be asked to select the tactic you wish to use for the battle. You’ll want to review the Tactics part of the rules to help you make a good choice. No battles are possible on turn one, because all legions begin in friendly (controlled by your kingdom) PC’s. However, there will be some battles on turn 2 after legions are moved into position on the first turn, most likely attacks on neutral PC’s.

Now let’s try moving a legion. Right click on the legion icon for the division sized legion in your capital. When the menu appears, select Move Legion. You will then use your mouse to lay a path of hexes for your legion to move to. Legion’s movement is limited by a number of factors including size, speed, and leadership, and your movement allowance is consumed in different degrees by the terrain in each hex entered. If a hex is within the movement range for the legion, it will have a green outline. If out of range, the hex outline will be red. For now, trace a path to one of the villages near your capital,

and then click twice to confirm your final destination. You may set way points in moves by clicking once instead of twice. Then confirm your move by clicking Yes on the dialogue box that appears. The GUI will leave a red arrow showing the path of your legion's movement as it leaves blue arrows for nobles relocating.

Transfers are important orders. Transfers are how you move characters, brigades, and artifacts from one base (PC or legion) to another. Transfers may be ordered to occur either before or after movement. Left click on the hex you wish to Transfer assets in to get to the tactical view. If your transfer is to occur after legion movement, click on the hex that your legion is moving to after you have issued the movement order. For now, click on the hex with your capital. Then in the tactical view, right click in the lower half of the tactical screen. A menu will come up, click Transfer before Movement. Then drag an agent from your capital town into the division sized legion.

Note the counter in the lower right corner of the screen. When this reaches 0:00, the game is locked and no more commands may be issued and the current turn has ended. You will then need to reload the game and learn the results of all your actions, as well as those of your rival players that have impacted upon you. Be sure to never miss a turn: it is a serious setback to have issued no commands while all your enemies do.

As you gain experience, you will learn the importance of planning ahead. Like chess or any good strategy game, the successful player must plan for the future. All your actions have consequences. Some will be known to your rivals through their agents. Early on, you will wish to save some of your gold and supplies if you can for your second turn. For most players, the second turn is the most difficult from a resource perspective because they have not yet gained the resource production from any newly conquered (by legions or nobles) PC's. Like any good game, *Fall of Rome* requires skill to play well. Do not expect to place well in your first game, let alone win. Fear not! Unlike many games, you will have a blast without finishing high. Each turn brings its own challenges, lessons and rewards and, for most players, the final outcome is less important than the adventure that unfolds along the way.

Do use the game's messaging system! You will have fun with your witty or barbed exchanges with future allies and enemies, but keep it clean. Click on the second button from the right on the Menu Bar to see how the messaging system works. You select the recipients by clicking on the banner of the kingdom or kingdoms you wish to send a message to. Pick a title for the message and type your message as you would an email. Your received and sent messages are saved here. Remember, *Fall of Rome* is a game of twelve human players, and this is where the grand strategy of who stands with or against another is formed. Communicate *before* the very first turn is due with your neighboring kingdoms at a minimum. What to say? Just an introduction as your game persona and offering good wishes is sometimes enough to get the ball rolling and have that rival look on you more favorably than he might another neighbor. Frequently messages ask for non-aggression for a period of time, or for outright alliance. Beware, there is no guarantee of compliance with any agreements here, but most deals are honored because players value the reputation of their persona.

Have a great time learning the game, its depth and nuance, and the rewards of crafting great strategy and seeing your plans unfold in a terrific online environment. Good hunting!

Use these other resources to augment your understanding of *Fall of Rome*:

- All sections of the rules, available on the website;
- The strategy articles posted in Strategicom on the website, particularly the New Player Guide and the beginning strategy articles;
- Use the forum to learn more from other players and moderators and to ask questions, seek advice, or state an opinion;
- Should you encounter technical problems, visit the Support page for help.

Sample First Turn Commands

Here is an example of commands you might consider issuing on your first turn. Like a chess opening, this is not the “best” or even necessarily the recommended opening set of commands, but they are reasonable and unlikely to get you in serious trouble, and should lend themselves toward your gaining control of the region of your capital within the first few turns in most cases:

- Have your king Enamor the region of your capital
- Relocate your prince to the city in the region of your capital
- Relocate your count to the city in the region of your capital
- Relocate your baron to one of the two neutral villages you are aware of
- Relocate your duke to the neutral town you are aware of
- Scout and Move your division sized legion at your capital to the other neutral village
- Train your level 3 agent to level 4
- Reconnaissance of the city in your region with a lower level agent
- Move and scout the patrol at your capital to explore in your region
- Divine Population Centers with your HP in your capital’s region
- Move your legion with two brigades to the same hex as your division if possible
- Send messages to your neighboring players, attempting to secure a period of peace with at least one of them
- Issue remaining commands based on your particular circumstances and funds

These moves setup your second turn. You will command each noble that relocated to Usurp Control of the neutral PC’s they are now in, except for the count at the city. He will support the Usurp Control order of your prince by performing Stir Unrest. The exception to this approach would be if your agent performing Reconnaissance reveals that an enemy noble has also moved to this city, in which case you’ll need to study the political model in the General Rules to determine whether to try to gain control of the city. Your division will attack the neutral village using Assault. If all these commands are successful you will likely gain control of the region at the end of the second turn. Then you can broaden your horizons and with now plentiful resources, plan for the conquest of your least friendly neighbor. Of course, they too will be eying your lands for possible invasion! During the course of the game, you will make many decisions that in hindsight will appear to be errors in judgment or understanding. Don’t worry, even the very best players make mistakes, more frequently than you might imagine. No one yet has played the perfect game of *Fall of Rome*!

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