Ark Nova | Quick start

2–4 players • First game on Map A • Learn with the TAP video or use on its own

THE GOAL

Build a zoo whose **appeal** and **conservation** markers meet or pass each other. Appeal also earns income; **reputation** opens access to cards in the display. Reputation is not added directly to your final score; the highest final score wins.

Shared setup

00:35–01:17

- ☐ Main board: set the Break token to your player-count start. Randomly fill the four blank yellow bonus spaces.
- ☐ Shuffle the Zoo deck; deal 6 display cards face down. Put money, tiles and tokens within reach.
- ☐ Association board: stock one of each of the 5 partner zoos and 3 universities.
- ☐ Shuffle base projects; reveal 3 below the board (4 for four players). Shuffle Final Scoring cards separately; randomly choose a start player. Play clockwise.
- ☐ **2 players:** block left/middle/right project levels on the left/middle/right cards, respectively, and the 3 left donation spaces with an unused color.

Each player

01:18–01:56

- ☐ On Map A, place the empty size-3 enclosure. Place the kiosk only if yours is not already printed.
- ☐ Take 25 money, 7 tokens on your map's left bonuses, and 4 workers (1 active, 3 inactive).
- ☐ Conservation and reputation start at 0. Appeal starts at 0 / 1 / 2 / 3 in turn order.
- ☐ All 5 action cards start on side I: Animals in slot 1, others randomly in slots 2–5.
- ☐ Deal 2 secret Final Scoring cards and 8 Zoo cards; keep 4 Zoo cards. Reveal the 6 display cards only after all players choose their hands.

Video pause map

Published video | approximate

01:57	Finish setup; check starting hands.	06:57	Check animal costs and enclosures.
02:34	Practice the action-card shift.	09:27	Practice a project or worker task.
03:33	Find your reputation range.	11:02	Review sponsors and upgrades.
04:52	Check a legal building location.	12:02	Rehearse the break; finish scoring lesson at 12:54.

Tap a time to open the published teach. See pages 5–6 for pieces and hands-on practice.

FIRST GAME / CHOOSE AN OPENING HAND

Look for affordable animals you can house soon, a sponsor you can play at low strength, and icons that match a visible base conservation project. Before your first turn, check which action starts at strength 5. Avoid keeping only expensive animals.

Component finder on page 5 | Practice the moves on page 6

Your turn & zoo actions

Keep this page beside your action-card row. X = effective action strength.

The turn loop

01:56–02:34

Pick one action card. Its numbered slot sets its strength (1–5); spend any X-tokens now for +1 each. Resolve the action, move its card to slot 1, and slide only the cards originally to its left one position right. Resolve “after finishing” effects after the shift.

1	2	3	4	5
Animals	Cards	Association	**Build**	Sponsors
Build	Animals	Cards	Association	Sponsors

Example: use Build at strength 4; it returns to slot 1. Sponsors stays in slot 5.

IF YOU CANNOT OR DO NOT WANT TO TAKE AN ACTION

Instead of the card’s effect, take 1 X-token and shift the chosen card as usual. Maximum 5 tokens held; this alternative is unavailable at the cap. Tokens gained during an action cannot boost that same action.

Cards — refill your options

02:34–03:36

I: Move Break +2 (no money). Use the card’s draw/discard table for X, or at X ≥ 5 snap exactly one card from anywhere in the display. **II:** Draw from deck and/or within reputation range using the improved table, or snap anywhere at X ≥ 3. Cards II unlocks reputation beyond 9.

Range = the folder beside your reputation marker and all lower-numbered folders. Refill the display only at turn end, sliding cards toward folder 1. Hand limit applies at breaks only.

Build — create space

03:36–04:52

I: One building of size ≤ X; pay 2 money per hex. Standard enclosures (1–5), kiosk (1), pavilion (1), petting zoo (3). **II:** Multiple different buildings totaling ≤ X; adds reptile house and large bird aviary (5 each), and unlocks marked map spaces.

- First building touches a border space; later buildings must share an edge with an existing building. Never cover rocks, water, other buildings or locked spaces.
- Pay for and place each building separately; take covered placement bonuses immediately. Pavilions grant 1 appeal; kiosks must have at least 2 intervening spaces between them. Fill all buildable spaces for +7 appeal.

Animals — populate your zoo

04:52–06:57

I: Play up to the number on the action card’s X table, from hand. **II:** Also play from within reputation range (pay folder number extra); at X ≥ 5, optionally gain 1 reputation **before** choosing cards. Animals II unlocks cards requiring it.

For each animal: check requirements → pay its cost → fill a legal enclosure → place the card → collect appeal, other points and effects. Resolve animals one at a time. See the enclosure and cost checklist on page 3.

Animals, partners & sponsors

Check conditions before spending money. Use your actual cards for specific effects.

Animal checklist

04:52–06:57

- Check left-side prerequisites, required enclosure size, and shared edges with the required number of rock/water hexes. A standard enclosure holds one animal; flip it to occupied. Larger than required is legal.
- Matching partner zoo: subtract 3 money per matching continent icon on the animal. Pay before collecting any animal-triggered money. Count owned icons at the top of played cards, not prerequisites or cards in hand.
- Petting zoo animals must use their special enclosure. Eligible birds/reptiles can use a matching special enclosure; mark the indicated capacity with player tokens, never flip the special tile. Only one of each special enclosure is allowed. When building a new aviary or reptile house, eligible animals may move there immediately, once.

Association — send workers

06:57–09:27

Strength 2	Gain 2 reputation.
Strength 3	Take an available partner zoo you do not own; place in lowest open slot.
Strength 4	Take an available university you do not own; collect its printed benefits.
Strength 5	Support a project already in play, or play one from hand and support it immediately.

I: One task. First use of a task between breaks takes 1 active worker; repeating that task takes 2 additional workers. Other colors' workers do not block you, but unavailable tiles do. **II:** Different tasks may be combined within X; third/fourth partner zoos unlock. New projects may come from your reputation range (pay folder number). After at least one task, optionally donate once for 1 conservation: pay cheapest uncovered price, cover with a supply token; 12 remains repeatable.

Projects: Meet one unclaimed level, once per project. Move a token from your map's left edge to the level; collect the printed reward and uncovered map bonus (some recur at breaks). New projects enter above the board on the left; cap equals player count. Discard oldest overflow and return its tokens to supply, not map. Base projects stay.

Release / relocation: For release, remove the animal and its printed appeal, retain prior gains; free special capacity if applicable or the smallest occupied standard enclosure meeting all requirements. If none, use smallest meeting size; if none meets size, flip none. Same standard-enclosure rule for relocation.

Sponsors — invest or raise money

09:27–10:31

I: Play one from hand with level ≤ X and meet requirements (level is not a money cost), or move Break +X and take X money. **II:** Play one or more with combined levels ≤ X+1, including from reputation range (pay folder number), or move Break +X and take 2X money. Receive full money even if Break stops early.

Sponsor effects: yellow = immediate; blue = recurring trigger; purple = break income; brown = endgame. An eligible icon on the sponsor itself can trigger its effect.

Upgrades, breaks & scoring

Keep this page handy throughout play. Resolve a break before resuming turns.

Upgrades and track milestones

10:29–11:02

Flip an action card to side II in place; use its upgrade from your next action. Upgrade opportunities: reputation-track bonus, second partner zoo, second university, and at 2 conservation (choose upgrade or activate worker). At 5 and 8 conservation, take 5 money or an available adjacent bonus tile. When anyone first reaches 10 conservation, everyone discards one secret Final Scoring card.

Break checklist — everyone resolves

11:02–12:04

When the Break token reaches the final space, the triggering player earns 1 X-token (cap 5) and completes their turn. Then:

- ☐ **Hand limit:** discard to 3 cards (5 with the matching university).
- ☐ **Clear action cards:** remove multiplier, venom and constriction tokens.
- ☐ **Workers and partnerships:** return used workers to active area; refill missing zoo/university tiles on Association board (unless everyone owns that tile type).
- ☐ **Display:** discard folders 1 and 2, slide remaining cards down, refill to 6.
- ☐ **Income:** take the money printed beside your appeal marker; collect kiosk income and activated sponsor/map income effects.
- ☐ **Reset:** return Break token to your player-count start; play resumes clockwise with the next player.

KIOSK INCOME

For each kiosk, earn 1 money per adjacent qualifying building: occupied standard enclosure, special enclosure (even empty), pavilion or unique building. Count each qualifying building once per kiosk, not each touching edge. Empty standard enclosures do not pay.

Game end and final scoring

12:04–12:54

When your appeal and conservation markers occupy the same scoring area or have crossed at the end of your turn, everyone else gets one last turn. If triggered during a break, everyone gets one more turn. If no one reached 10 conservation, everyone discards one secret scoring card before scoring.

Resolve your remaining Final Scoring card and all endgame effects, then read the two markers. **Original scale:** appeal minus the lowest appeal number in your conservation area. **White-value scale:** on boards with printed white conservation scoring values, add that value to appeal (equivalent to original score +100). Never add raw conservation steps.

EXAMPLE / APPEAL 83 • CONSERVATION 18

Target appeal = 70. Original score = +13; white-value score = 113 (83 + 30). Highest score wins. Tie: most supported projects (tokens removed from left map edge); still tied, share the win.

Official rules and further reading: Feuerland English rulebook, pp. 4–19 • Capstone Games resources (rulebook, FAQ, glossary, icon guide). Independent companion; no publisher endorsement implied. Base multiplayer game only; no Marine Worlds or solo rules.

Find the pieces

Use these labeled drawings to sort the components before the first turn.

Setup video 00:35

Drawings are simplified, not to scale.

Money



Start with 25 per player.
A 20 and a 5 make an easy first stack.

Association workers



1 active / 3 in storage

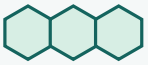
One starts active; three start in storage.
Only active workers can be sent.

Player tokens



Put seven on the left edge of your map.
Keep the others in your personal supply.

Standard enclosures



3 spaces / empty

Map A starts with a 3-hex enclosure.
Show the empty side until an animal fills it.

Action cards



Start on side I. Put Animals in slot 1.
Randomize the other four in slots 2–5.

Break token and X-tokens



Break token: set its player-count start.
X-tokens: +1 strength each when spent.

Partner zoos / universities



Stock one of each type on the Association board; keep the extras in the supply.

Zoo, project and scoring cards



Zoo cards form the deck and display.
Base projects are shared; scoring is secret.

Map A starts with a head start

Put the empty 3-hex enclosure on its marks. Place the kiosk only if it is not already printed. Both count as buildings. At two players, set aside six unused-color tokens to block project and donation spaces. Your own tokens, workers and scoring markers have different jobs.

Try the moves at the table

Pause the teach and move the pieces yourself. Each panel is a separate example.

1 Build moves from slot 4 to slot 1

01:59

	1	2	3	4	5
BEFORE	Animals	Cards	Association	Build	Sponsors
AFTER	Build	Animals	Cards	Association	Sponsors

Build returns to 1. Animals, Cards and Association shift right. Sponsors stays in slot 5.

2 Build a 3-hex enclosure for 6 money

03:44



Pay 2 per hex. On Map A, put the new tile edge-to-edge with a standing building.

3 Place one animal, then flip the enclosure

05:09



Check size and any required water or rock edges, then pay. One animal fills the whole standard enclosure, even if the tile is larger than the animal needs.

4 Send a worker or support a project

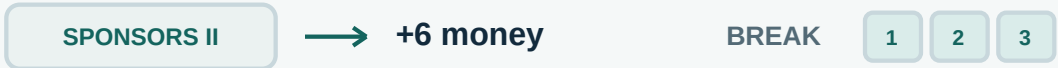
07:05



At strength 3, send a worker to take an available partner zoo you do not own.
At strength 5, meet an open project requirement and move a token from your map onto it.

5 Raise money with Sponsors II

09:58



With Sponsors II at strength 3, take 6 money and advance Break by 3, not 6.
Even if the Break token reaches the end early, you still take the full 6 money.