



**Meal Deal** is a game about cycle delivery that puts you in the role of a courier using a gig working platform in a UK city. It is for 1-4 players and takes around 30 minutes to play.

The aim of the game is to make enough money to pay rent, by taking courier jobs delivering food and groceries by bicycle, dealing with the challenges, and appreciating the pleasures, in this kind of work.

Meal Deal contains:  
38 Job Cards  
36 Ride Cards  
40 Energy Cards



### PLAYING THE GAME

Separate the cards into the three decks: Energy, Rides and Jobs. Shuffle each deck and put them face down within reach of every player.

Each player will need some space in front of them to lay out cards.



Meal Deal is played over 3 rounds, each representing a day of work. At the end of the 3 days you will calculate your earnings and try to pay rent (£32). The player with the most remaining money after rent is paid wins.

### START OF THE DAY

Deal each player a new hand of 7 Energy cards. These cards represent the time, energy and motivation you have for that day.

During each day, players take turns completing jobs. Play proceeds clockwise until all players have passed. Some players may have more turns than others. If a deck is empty, shuffle the discard pile for that deck and turn it over.

### ON YOUR TURN - DOING JOBS

At the start of your turn, if you have any face up (rejected) Jobs, discard them now.

Turn over the top card of the Job deck so all players can see. Job cards describe the energy required (⚡) to complete that job, the money that it will pay (e.g., £2) and sometimes extra symbols or rules (e.g., ⚠).

You may choose to reject this job for any reason, but must reject it if you cannot afford the energy cost.

If you reject this job, leave the card face up in front of you. Other players may complete this job in their turn. Turn over a new job from the Job deck.

You can only reject one job a turn, and you are not permitted to complete a job that you have already rejected.

You must choose a job to complete. This can be the face up job from the deck, or a face up card in front of another player.

**Immediately** pay the cost of the job in energy to the Energy discard pile. Some Energy cards are higher value than others. No change is given if you overpay.

If you cannot afford the energy cost, you may not complete the job. If there are no Job cards available that you can afford, you must pass and the day is over for you, even if you have remaining energy.

### Example:

*Amy has Energy cards of value 2, 2, 0 and 0 in her hand. She turns over a job that costs 1 energy for £1. She chooses to reject this job in hope of finding something better, and draws a job that costs 3 energy. She chooses to complete this job, paying the 2 and 2 Energy cards to the Energy discard pile. She does not get any change. She draws a ride which has no effect, so places the completed job in her earnings pile.*

*On Bri's turn, they draw a job costing 2 energy, but only have an Energy card of value 1 in their hand. They reject this job and choose to complete Amy's rejected job by paying 1 to the Energy discard pile. After resolving a Ride card, Bri puts the Job card in their earnings pile.*

*Charlie only has Energy cards worth 0 in their hand, and passes. They have finished their day's work and will not be able to complete any further jobs until the next day.*

### RESOLVING RIDE CARDS

After spending energy for a job, you must draw a Ride card from the deck to see what happens on your way to make the delivery. These cards represent the uncertainty in gig work, and might be nothing, or could be a negative or positive effect. Resolve the event and discard the ride card.

If the Ride card means you can no longer complete the job, also discard the Job card to the Job discard pile. Any Energy cards already spent are lost.

If you complete the delivery successfully by resolving the Ride card, discard the Ride card and put the Job card in front of you face down, forming a stack. This is your earnings, and will be used for paying rent at the end of the game.

Play continues clockwise until all players have passed, which is the end of the day.

### END OF DAY

At the end of each day, clean up by discarding unused Energy cards, uncompleted jobs, and shuffling discarded cards into their respective decks. The player to the left of the last player to pass starts the new day, and deals a new hand of 7 Energy cards to each player.

### GAME END


At the end of the third day, the game is over. Each player totals the value of completed jobs and other cards in their earnings pile.

Every player must deduct a total of £32 from their earnings to pay for rent. Players with negative value immediately lose. The player with the most remaining earnings is the winner.

It is possible for there to be no winners if nobody can afford rent.

### CLARIFICATIONS

Rules on cards supersede rules in this sheet. For example, some Ride cards go to your earnings pile and not the Ride discard pile after resolution.

 is a symbol used on some jobs to indicate risky decisions you might make as a courier. If both the Job and the Ride card have this symbol, resolve the additional text on the Ride card.

### VARIANTS

Make it more difficult by increasing rent to £40 or only dealing 6 Energy cards each day. Make it easier by removing the zero value Energy cards from the game.

### Credits and Acknowledgements

Meal Deal is designed by Oliver Bates and Ben Kirman, illustrations are by Emily Martin ([www.emilymartin.uk/](http://www.emilymartin.uk/)) and Tony Pickering ([pick-art.co.uk](http://pick-art.co.uk/)).

Meal Deal is funded by Digital Economy Telling Tales of Engagement 2020 as part of the UKRI Digital Economy Theme. Meal Deal is part of Crank & File, a collection of creative projects that communicate research outcomes of the Switch-Gig and Flip-Gig projects on the worker perspective of the gig economy. More information on these projects can be found at <https://crankandfile.co.uk>.

Special thanks to Carolynne Lord, Hayley Alter, Adrian Friday, Taalia Nadeem, Jo Bates, Jon White, Juliet Kirman.  
Project Baby: Nora

# CRANK & FILE

Lancaster  
University



UNIVERSITY  
of York

NOT-EQUAL



digital  
creativity  
labs

