

# Card Games

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# Card Games

## **Canasta**

The name Canasta means “basket” in Spanish, which probably derived from the basket holding the draw and discard piles; the discard pile is of paramount importance in this game.

Canasta was originally invented in Uruguay in the late 1940s, and soon became popular in Argentina and the rest of Latin America. In the late 1940s/early 1950s, Canasta reached the United States, where it became even more popular than Bridge for a few years; it was probably the most popular card game at any one time. It has since greatly declined in popularity, except for some holdout enthusiasts.

How did Canasta get so popular? It may have been because it has elements of Mah Jongg, another enormously successful game, and as a partnership game, it is easier to learn than Bridge. (Canasta can be played with two, three, or five people, but the most popular version worldwide is the partnership game.)

Derivations of Canasta include Bolivia, Samba, Cuban Canasta and Bolivian Canasta.

### ***How the Game Is Played***

Canasta uses two regular decks of cards, including the jokers (two from each deck). Each player is dealt eleven cards. Players across from each other are partners and play cards to a common area, so each partner can take advantage of the other’s play. Canasta is usually played over several hands; the first team to reach 5000 points wins.

Jokers and 2s are wild cards and can be used to represent other cards. Black and red 3s have special properties.

### ***Rules Summary***

On your turn, you either draw a card from the draw pile or take the entire discard pile (there are special rules for picking up the discard pile; see “Picking Up the Discard Pile” later in this chapter). You can then play melds and canastas. At the end of your turn, you must discard a card to the discard pile.

Either you or your partner must make an initial meld for your team. Once your team has made its initial meld, both of you can play as many melds and canastas as you want on your turns.

If your team has made at least one canasta, either you or your partner can go out if you can play all the cards in your hand

### ***Making Melds and Canastas***

Teams score points by making melds and canastas.

A meld is three or more cards of the same rank such as 4-4-4, 6-6-6-6-6, or Q-Q-Q-Q-Q. Wild cards (2s and jokers) can substitute for any card, if needed (the only exception is a meld of black 3s, which can't include any wild cards). For instance, you could have a meld of 8-8-2. A meld must contain at least two natural cards, and cannot contain more than three wild cards.

Black 3s can only be melded as your very last play of a hand before going out.

A canasta is a meld which has seven or more cards of the same rank such as 8-8-8-8-8-8-8. Your team must make at least one canasta to win a hand. A canasta can contain up to three wild cards. If the canasta contains only natural cards, it is worth more points.

***Making the Initial Meld***

The first play your team must make to the table is your initial meld. Either you or your partner must play to the table, in one turn, one or more melds whose point value is equal to or greater than the initial meld value.

Your game score at the end of a hand dictates how many points you need for the initial meld in the next hand. At the beginning of a game, both teams always have an initial meld requirement of 50.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Meld Requirement</b>
0-1495	50
1501-2995	90
3000 or more	120
Negative score	15

This system gives the losing team a better chance of a comeback, since they can potentially play to the table earlier and “go out” earlier. A team with 1600 points must make an initial meld of 90, while the second-place team, with a score of 1250 points, only needs an initial meld of 50.

To figure out whether you can make an initial meld, add up the point values of any cards that you meld:

<b>Card</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
4, 5, 6, 7, and black 3	5 points
8, 9, 10, J, Q, K	10 points

A and 2	20 points
Joker	50 points

### ***Picking Up the Discard Pile***

At the beginning of your turn, you can pick up the entire discard pile in certain situations. To pick up the discard pile, you must be able to immediately use the upcard (the top card of the pile) in a meld (either adding it to an existing meld or making a new meld with it using cards already in your hand). You do not get to take the other cards in the pile until you use the upcard in a meld.

Normally, you can pick up the discard pile if you can use the upcard in an existing meld or in a new meld; to use the upcard in a new meld you must combine it with at least two natural cards from your hand or with at least one natural card and one wild card from your hand.

However, if someone has discarded a 2 or joker to the pile, the pile is considered *frozen*. When the discard pile is frozen, you can only pick it up if you can use the upcard in a meld using at least two natural cards in your hand.

A pile stays frozen until someone picks it up.

**Important:** Before your team has made your initial meld, the pile is not shown as frozen, but you can only pick it up with two natural cards. You can never pick up a pile if the top card is a joker, 2, or black 3.

### ***Going Out***

Your team is qualified to go out (ending the current hand) if you have at least one canasta on the table. To go out, either you or your partner must play all of the cards in your hand to the table. The last card in your hand can either be melded or discarded; this is the only time in the game you are not required to discard at the end of your turn.

When you are ready to go out, you may, if you wish, ask your partner permission to go out. This gives you a way to find out whether your partner wants you to go out, or whether your partner still has a lot of points in his or her hand (that might be used to make canastas) and wants to continue to play. Asking for permission is optional, but your partner's answer is binding; you can only go out on that turn if your partner gives you permission.

**Note:** It is possible to go out without previously having placed any melds on the table. This is known as going out concealed and is worth extra points. You must be able to immediately play all of the cards in your hand to the table, making your initial meld and at least one canasta. You can discard one card to the discard pile if necessary. Going out concealed is very difficult to do, because you don't get any help from your partner.

## ***How the Game Is Played***

At the beginning of the game, one card is flipped to the discard pile. If that card is a 2, joker, or red 3, another card is flipped on top of it and the pile is frozen. Before play begins, any red 3s in players' hands are automatically played to the 3 pile on the board and replaced with new cards.

On your turn, you either draw a card from the draw pile or pick up the discard pile. See "Picking Up the Discard Pile" earlier in this chapter. If you pick up the discard pile, the top card of the pile is automatically played to the appropriate card pile. If the pile was frozen, you must then also play two natural cards to that pile; if you don't, you won't be able to take the pile.

Next, meld cards to the table, if you want to. (The first play your team can make is the initial meld.) You may be able to undo melds, if you need to; see the in-game help for details. At the end of your turn, discard a card by dragging it to the discard pile. You must always keep at least one card in your hand at the end of a turn, unless you are going out.

Play proceeds with the player on your left. Continue playing until one team goes out or the deck runs out. If you're ready to go out, you can go out by laying down all your cards (one card can be discarded, if desired.) If you wish, you can ask your partner for permission before you go out. You can ask for permission after you draw cards but before you play them.

If a player draws the last card in the deck, special conditions apply. If the next player cannot take the discard pile, the hand ends immediately. However, if that player can play the top card of the discard pile to one of his or her team's melds, the player must take the discard pile and play that card. If the player can take the discard pile with a card in his or her hand, he or she can choose to either take the pile or end the hand. In any of these cases, the hand ends, and neither team gets points for going out.

## ***Scoring***

Each card you play to the table is worth a certain number of points. These points count towards your initial meld requirement, and are scored at the end of the game. (Note: Any red 3s on the table don't count towards the initial meld points.)

Scoring occurs at the end of a hand, after one team has gone out, or if the deck runs out of cards and someone ends the hand. The team that went out gets points for going out, and each team scores points for all the cards they've melded to the table (including the cards in canastas) and any bonus points (points for any red 3s and any mixed or natural canastas). Then, any cards remaining in team members' hands (including the partner of the person who went out) are subtracted from each team's score.

### **Card values**

4, 5, 6, 7, and black 3	5 points
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8, 9, 10, J, Q, K	10 points
A and 2	20 points
Joker	50 points
Red 3*	100 points each

### Other scoring

Mixed canasta	300 points each
Natural canasta**	500 points each
Going out	100 points
Going out concealed***	200 points
Going out before the other team has melded:	varies, see below

*The other team loses 100 points per red 3 owned by the team, or 800 points if the team owns all four red 3s.*

\* A canasta made with all natural cards (no wild cards)\*\* (800 if your team has all 4 red 3s)\*\*  
 Going out without having made an initial meld on a previous turn.

### Strategies

The main reason for making melds is to work with your partner to make canastas. Canastas are worth a lot more points, so focus on making them instead of a number of small melds.

Be careful not to meld too many cards. Having a small hand is a big disadvantage, because you are less likely to be able to pick up the discard pile. However, if your partner has already laid down a meld, it is usually a good idea to play any cards you can to it, so that you can get closer to having a canasta. If you can make a canasta, you should always do it.

Except when making the initial meld and taking the discard pile, avoid adding wild cards to piles (unless you want to finish a canasta). Wild cards are stronger in your hand, since they can be used to make canastas and freeze the pile.

If you have more than three cards you can meld, try just melding three of the cards, holding the others back. This gives your partner a chance to play cards to that meld, but leaves cards in your hand that can potentially pick up the discard pile. It also may let you make a surprise canasta!

Keep track of the discarded cards. If the other team takes the pile, you will want to remember what cards were in it so you can discard safely. Keeping track of discards also gives you an indication which cards the other team are short of.

If you have no choice but to discard a card that lets the other team take the discard pile, stick to low cards (4, 5, 6, 7) whenever possible, since these give the other team less points, and leave more points in your hand for melds.

### ***Strategies for Taking the Discard Pile***

A key strategy to Canasta is getting the discard pile and preventing your opponents from getting it, whenever possible. But consider how many cards are in the pile. It is often not worth showing the other team what cards you want by taking a small pile with four or less cards.

Black 3s are valuable discards, since they protect the discard pile. Hold on to them until the discard pile is large or something you particularly want to defend.

When the discard pile is not frozen and is full of cards the other team wants, try making safe discards, such as cards that your team already has a large meld of (since you know the other team probably can't meld them). Or discard cards you've already seen the other team discard, or discards they have passed up before.

If the other team has more melds on the table, consider freezing the discard pile, so that you can safely discard cards that your opponents have large melds of.

If the discard pile gets really big, restrain yourself from melding, so that you have more chances to get the pile.

If you're holding cards that the opponents can meld (and you can't), try to discard them when the discard pile is frozen, or when it is small.

### ***Strategies for Going Out***

If you're in a weak position—the other team has melded most of the card ranks, so there are no safe discards, for example—consider going out to minimize your losses.

Asking your partner to go out is sometimes a good way to find out whether your partner can make more canastas. But don't forget that your partner's answer is binding!

If you ask your partner to go out and your partner tells you no, play as many naturals on your turn as possible, holding on to wild cards and at least one safe discard. This gives your partner more opportunities to play cards and make canastas. Holding on to the wild cards means that you are more likely to be able to go out next turn.

If your partner asks you to go out, and you say no (because you have cards left to play), be sure to play as many wild cards as you can on your next turn, and any natural cards that you can use to make canastas (or large melds which your partner could potentially make into canastas). Be sure to keep one card that you can discard safely on your next turn (so that the player to your left can't go out before your partner)!

If all other things are equal, and the other team has three red 3s and the fourth red 3 hasn't been drawn, consider going out as soon as possible. If that team gets the last red 3, they'll get 500 more points! Likewise, if your team has three red 3s, and the fourth red 3 hasn't been drawn, consider postponing going out until you get that last red 3.

## **Cribbage**

Cribbage pops up in recorded literature early in the 17th century. Frederic Grunfeld in *Games of the World* traced it to an English card game called *Noddy*. (No one knows how Noddy was played, but in the 1600s, the word meant a "fumbling, inept person," so the reader is welcome to draw a conclusion from that.) Noddy was the only card game of that era that used a board for scoring, and, as there are no other contestants for the title, we can say with some assurance that this long-forgotten card game probably inspired Cribbage.

### ***How the Game Is Played***

Cribbage is a game for two to four players; since Hoyle Card Games uses the two-player version, we'll confine ourselves to that. The game uses the standard 52-card pack. The cards in each suit rank from the king (the highest) down to the ace (the lowest). In *counting* or numerical value, the king, queen, jack, and 10 each count for 10 (and so are called *tenth* cards), the ace counts as one, and the other cards are face value.

The game operates on the principle of matching combinations of cards: pairs, three or more of a kind, flushes, *runs* (sequences), and groups of cards that add up to 15. Players score points for matching both during and after play (after play, points are totaled for combinations in hand). The first person to score 121 points is the winner.

Cribbage also uses a "cribbage board," a rectangular panel with rows of holes that form a sort of track. At one end, or in the center, you'll find three additional holes, called *game holes*. Each player has two pegs, which are placed at the start in the game holes. After each hand, the player advances a peg an appropriate number of holes (one hole per point) away from the start (assuming that that player scored any points). The player's second score is recorded by placing the second peg an appropriate distance ahead of the first. For each subsequent score, the peg in back

jumps over the peg in front. The distance between the two pegs always shows the amount of the last score. This method holds math mistakes to a minimum.

Each player receives six cards, dealt one at a time. After looking over the hand, each player *lays away* two cards face-down. The four cards laid away, placed in one pile, form the *crib*. The crib, also called the *kitty*, counts for the dealer (the dealer always has an advantage in this game). The non-dealer therefore tries to lay away *balking cards*— cards that are least likely to create a score in the crib.

To begin play (called *pegging*), the dealer turns up the top card of the stock. This card is called *one for the starter*. If this card is a jack, the dealer immediately *pegs two* (advances his peg two spaces), traditionally called *two for his heels*.

The non-dealer begins the play by laying a card from his or her hand face-up on the table, announcing its value. The dealer does the same (each player discards to his or her own pile). Play continues in the same way, by alternate exposures of the cards, each player announcing the new total count. The total may not be carried past 31. If a player adds a card that brings the total exactly to 31, he or she pegs two. If a player is unable to play another card without exceeding 31, he or she says “Go,” and the second player must play as many cards as possible up to but not more than 31. The player who plays the last card under 31 scores a point. The discard process begins again from zero.

After the hands have been emptied, the totals of any matches in the discards (including the starter card) are counted and added to each player’s score. The non-dealer scores first. The dealer then scores and also scores the crib. Any jack of the same suit as the starter card scores one point (*for nobs*).

One game option is called Muggins, which means that if your opponent forgets to claim any points, you’re allowed to yell “Muggins!” and claim the points for yourself. (The knowledge of who or what a Muggins is has long been lost to us. The word is also used in a form of Dominoes, though with a different meaning.)

These are the most usual point scores:

### **In Play**

#### **In Play**

Total of 15	2
Pair	2
Three of a kind	6
Four of a kind	12
Run of three or more	1 per card
Turned-up jack	2
Go	1
Total of 31	2

## In Hand

Total of 15	2
Pair	2
Three of a kind	6
Four of a kind	12
Run of three or more	1 per card
Flush (four cards)	4
Flush (five cards)	5
Nobs	1
Double Run of Three*	8
Double Run of Four*	10
Triple Run*	15
Quadruple Run*	16

\*A Run is a sequence of cards such as 6-5-4. A Double Run of Three means one duplication in a sequence of four: 6-6-5-4. A Double Run of Four is one duplication in five cards: 7-6-6-5-4. A Triple Run is one triplication in a sequence of five: 8-7-6-6-6. A Quadruple Run is two duplications in a sequence of five: 8-8-7-7-6.

## Strategies

If you're just beginning at Cribbage and you're not sure what to discard, here's a prescription for improving your play—focus first on building your hand. Begin by looking for combinations of 15. 5s are especially prized because a third of the deck is made up of cards with a value of ten (10s and face cards), making lots of easy 15s. Any sequential cards are good (runs are easy to get and score relatively well). Combinations of 7 and 8 are very powerful, because in addition to scoring potential on runs, they also add up to 15. Pairs score easy points and are often (not always) worth keeping.

After considering the hand you'd like to keep, turn your attention to the crib. If it's your crib (i.e., you dealt), see if you have two good cards that can't be easily joined to the rest of your hand. If you do, discard them.

If it's your opponent's crib, be cautious about giving away cards that could be easily turned into big points. Avoid giving any 5s or any of the card combinations already mentioned (15s, sequences, and pairs).

### ***Advanced Strategies***

Since the highest points are obtained when scoring the hands, it is easy to think that pegging one or two points at a time during play is small potatoes. However, all other things being equal, a good pegger will usually win at Cribbage. It's a case of the tortoise and the hare—slogging it out for the little points really adds up.

## Gin Rummy

In 1950, the United States Playing Card Co. conducted a survey of American cardplayers and discovered that the Rummy family of card games was our favorite family game. And why not? As David Parlett wrote in *The Penguin Book of Card Games*, “Rummy is deservedly popular because it is easy to learn, fast to play, suitable for all ages, playable by any number, and as suitable for gamblers as for missionaries—though perhaps not both at once.” Gin Rummy is the most sophisticated member of the oldest branch of the Rummy family tree—the one in which the object is to be the first to “go out.”

### ***How the Game Is Played***

Gin Rummy is played by two people with the standard 52-card pack. The cards in each suit rank from the king (the highest) down to the ace (the lowest). Each face card counts as 10, each ace counts as one, and the other cards are their stated values.

Each player receives 10 cards in the deal. The first card always goes to the non-dealer. The rest of the pack is placed faced-down; this is the *stock*. The top card of the stock is turned up and placed beside the stock. This is the *upcard*.

The non-dealer begins play by taking the first upcard or refusing it; if the non-dealer refuses the upcard, the option of taking it or refusing it passes to the dealer. If the dealer also refuses, the non-dealer draws the top card of the stock.

From there, each player in turn draws a card, either the upcard or the top card of the stock, and then discards one card (the new upcard) face up on the previous discards.

The object of all this taking and discarding is to form your hand into matched sets (three or four cards of the same rank) or sequences (three or more cards in sequence in the same suit).

After drawing, and before discarding, a player may *knock* if his or her unmatched cards count 10 or less. The player who knocks lays down 10 cards, arranged in sets and with the unmatched cards segregated, then discards the eleventh card. If all 10 cards are matched, the player’s count is zero, and he or she is said to *go gin*.

If neither player has knocked by the time the 50th card has been drawn (and a following discard made), there is no score for either player for that particular deal.

The opponent of the player who knocked may *lay off* any of his or her unmatched cards that fit on the knocker’s matched sets, thereby reducing his or her own count of unmatched cards.

If the knocker has the lower count in unmatched cards, he or she wins the difference between the two players’ counts. Should the opponent have an equal or lesser count, the opponent is said to have *undercut* the knocker. The opponent then scores the difference (if any) in the counts, plus a bonus of 25 points. The knocker cannot be

undercut if he or she has gone gin. A player who goes gin scores the opponent's count of unmatched cards, if any, plus a bonus of 25.

The first player to accumulate 100 points wins the game. A 100-point bonus is added to the winner's score. Then each player adds 25 points to his or her total score for each hand won; this is called a *box* or *line* bonus. The winner wins the difference in total scores. If the loser did not score a point, this difference is doubled. A game like that is called a *shutout* or a *schneider*, and the loser has been *skunked*.

### **Strategies**

Although gaining three sets almost always assures you a knock, the clock is ticking fast, and the hand may end before you're ready. The important thing is that you beat your opponent to the punch, knock first and take the points derived from the other player's deadwood. Make it your overall goal to form two sets and retain a mix of lower cards (adding up to 10 or less). This is the fastest means of knocking first. However, to get to this point, you should understand the difference between the early and late phases of the game and the different strategies required during each.

You have the option here of taking the 3 of spades. This may appear to be a good choice as it gives you a combination pair, and it's a low card (low cards are better when counting deadwood). However, getting good combinations doesn't help that much because forming sets wins games of Gin Rummy. You should almost always draw from the stock, unless you can form a set or extend an existing set by taking the discard. In this case, you decide to draw, pulling an 8 of clubs.

The 8 of clubs doesn't help your hand at all, and you discard it. In this situation, it's obvious that keeping your jacks, queens, and kings is better than hanging onto the 8, because you have a pair of each. Even if you only had one king, you should probably keep that over the 8. Discarded face cards are very common, and your chances of matching a king via the discard pile are very high. For example, in this case your opponent is not likely to have a pair of kings (since you have two) and will probably discard a single king, so it doesn't end up as deadwood in his or her hand.

Your opponent takes the 8 and, not unexpectedly, discards a face card—the jack of diamonds.

You snap it up to form a set of three jacks. Now, your discard is more difficult. You have four very low cards and may want to hang onto them. However, with your low cards there is only one card that can complete a set, the 3 of clubs. Since it will be much easier for you to form a set with higher cards, you throw away the 4 of clubs.

Your opponent discards the 10 of spades. This card wouldn't form a set, so you ignore it. You draw from the stock, taking up the 2 of diamonds.

Now that the game has progressed several turns, you decide the time is right to rid your hand of kings and queens. Waiting up to six turns before getting rid of higher-ranking cards is normally an acceptable strategy, but with the 2 of diamonds added to your hand, all your

lower ranking cards are forming combinations, so you don't want to lose them. You dissolve your pair of kings by discarding the king of diamonds.

Your opponent discards another jack, which you take into your hand, adding to your set. Your discard this turn is more obvious, and your useless king goes into the discard pile. As an unmatched higher-ranking card, the king is now an encumbrance, and you should rid yourself of this excess baggage.

### ***Advanced Strategies***

The sharper Gin Rummy players can track the discards to help them avoid discarding good cards to their opponents. It also enables them to hold onto the best card combinations Jack = One point.

# Go Fish

## ***How the Game Is Played***

Each player gets five cards. If you are dealt a four of a kind, or get four of a kind during game play, those cards are removed from your hand, and you get a point.

Moving clockwise, players take turns asking a specific player for a given rank of card. If someone asks you for a rank that you have, the cards are taken from your hand. If you do not have any cards of that rank, your opponent must *go fish*, taking one new card from the pile of cards.

When it's your turn, select a player you think might have a needed card. Pick one card from your hand of the desired rank. If the player has the desired card, he or she must pass it over. If not, you must *go fish*. If you get the card you asked for, you get to go again.

If you run out of cards and there are still cards left, you get five free cards.

Play continues until all hands are empty and there are no more cards to draw from. The winner is the player with the most points at the end of the game.

## ***Strategies***

Winning at Go Fish takes luck, a decent memory, and a good sense of timing. The luck part we can't help you with. Ditto for a decent memory (actually, you can read the strategies section in Memory Match for some mnemonic aids). Try to remember what people have asked for in previous turns. This is especially important if someone has captured two cards of a specific rank. If you have the opportunity to ask for that rank, make sure you take it—you'll get a warm feeling when you lay down four cards.

This hand contains six points (A, J, J) and at least the minimum three cards in spades, hearts, and diamonds. If your partner bid one club, however, your hand is too weak, and you should pass.

Any suit of five or more cards is always biddable.

## ***Bidding No-trump***

A bid of no-trump is best when you have 15 high-card points, and your hand's distribution is balanced, meaning a 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2 combination. You should also have all suits stopped, meaning you have the A, the K-Q, the Q-J-10, and/or the J-10-9-8 in each suit. These card combinations will prevent your opponents from taking a run of tricks in one suit. Most of the time, however, you'll have to make do with "probable" stoppers, such as K-x, Q-J-x, Q-10-x, or even Q-x-x.

## ***Playing***

If you're the defender and you can't decide what to lead, here's an old bit of Bridge lore: when in doubt, lead the fourth-best card from your longest suit. This is called

leading from length. It's considered the standard way to lead in a no-trump contract, and it's a safe way to proceed in a suit contract.

Typically, an unbalanced hand is more suitable to play a trump contract. A balanced hand is good for a no-trump contract. Whenever a player has a balanced or an unbalanced hand, it is very common for more than one of the other hands to have a similar distribution, and it's something to plan for in the play of the hand.

## Hearts

The concept of turning games around and letting the losers win and the winners lose has been applied to most of the card-game families. It seems to work best with the family of trick-taking games. Hearts (also known as *Omnibus Hearts*, *Black Maria*, and *Black Lady*) is the most successful example of a trick-avoidance game. Marilyn Simonds Mohr noted its international reputation—the only game of its type to ascend to those heights. The United States Playing Card Co. reports that Hearts is the second-favorite card game among American college students (Spades is number one).

### ***How the Game Is Played***

The usual number of Hearts players is four (three, five, and six may also play, but we won't consider those variants here). It's every man (or woman) for himself. Hearts uses the standard 52-card pack. The cards in each suit rank from the ace (the highest) to the 2 (the lowest). There are no trumps.

The deal rotates clockwise, as does the play of the cards. The entire pack is dealt, one card at a time. Players may discard three cards by passing them to the player on their left. (You must pass these cards before you can look at the ones you'll be receiving.) The player with the 2 of clubs opens the game. In *Hoyle Card Games*, passing can rotate or be dispensed with, and the player to the dealer's left can open.

Whichever card is led first, the other players must try to follow suit. A trick is won by the highest card in the suit led. The winner of a trick makes the next lead.

The object of play is to avoid taking hearts in tricks, as each heart counts as one point against the player taking it. The queen of spades (*the Black Lady or Black Maria*) counts as 13. However, you could try to take *all* the hearts *and* the Black Lady. This is called *Shooting the Moon*, and, if you pull it off, you hand your opponents a whopping 26 points each.

Hearts cannot be led until they've been *broken*, that is, thrown into a previous trick by a player who couldn't follow suit. When a player equals or breaks 100 points, the game is over, and the player with the lowest score at that time is the winner.

### ***Strategies***

The queen of spades rules the game of Hearts. To ignore the queen is to court humiliation and risk defeat. Consideration of the queen should begin before play starts, during the passing phase. Any high spades (Q, K, A) are dangerous if they are not protected by several lower spades.

However, it can be fatal to be short on low cards in a particular suit, especially later in the game. Using the last example, say a few hands have passed, and you still have the 8, 10, queen, and king of clubs. After the ace and 9 are played, you happily throw down your queen, and the top player takes the trick with the ace.

However, the player to your right threw down the jack of clubs. You now have the three highest clubs (8, 10, K). What happens after that could be destructive. Players will be running

out of clubs, and next time someone leads in clubs, they'll paint you with hearts or stick you with the queen of spades.

Guarded high-cards should be saved until later in the game, especially if they are hearts. This will help to prevent someone from successfully Shooting the Moon. If the player who receives your discards likes to Shoot the Moon, you may wish to pass them a low heart. This may discourage them from making the attempt in the first place.

## Pitch

Pitch (also sometimes known as Setback or High-Low-Jack) is the most popular of a number of similar games originating from the game All Fours, a seventeenth-century English game. The name All Fours is a reference to the four points players try to take: High, Low, Jack and Game. The goal of all fours is to take “all four” of these points. The original All Fours incorporates some of Euchre’s elements, including offering a turned up suit as trump.

### ***How the Game Is Played***

Pitch is a trick-taking game using a standard 52-card deck; each player is dealt six cards. Each player can bid on the value of his or her hand and plays to take tricks and get points. Although one player wins the bid and tries to take all the points, all players can get points by taking key cards. The goal is to be the first player to reach the winning score (7, 11, or 21).

### ***Bidding***

You can bid on the value of your hand. Possible bids are two, three, four, or smudge (smudge is really a bid of five).

For two, three, and four, you are bidding how many of the points below you can win. For smudge, you have to win all the points below, and take all six tricks in the round.

**High:** You win the trick which has the highest available card in the trump suit.

**Low:** You win the trick which has the lowest available card in the trump suit.

**Jack:** You win the trick which has the jack of the trump suit.

**Game:** You get the most game points in the round. All 10s are worth 10, aces are worth 4, kings are worth 3, queens are worth 2, and jacks are worth 1. Other cards aren’t worth anything.

Each player in turn bids or passes; bidding always starts at two. Bidding only lasts one round (each player only gets one chance to bid or pass). If all players pass, the cards are redealt and bidding starts again.

Note that since not all cards are dealt every hand, ace and 2 aren’t always the high and low card (sometimes a queen may be the High and a 4 the Low, for instance). And there may not be a jack in any given hand (since only 24 of 52 cards are dealt in a hand).

### ***Scoring Points***

All points scored go to the player who scored them, but the pitcher must try to get the points he or she bid.

If you are the pitcher, and you win your bid, you get the number of points you took, even if this is higher than the bid. For instance, if you bid two, and took High, Low, and Jack, that player gets 3 points.

But if you lose your bid, you are *set back* (lose) the number of points you bid, even if you made some of the bid. For instance, if you bid three, and get High and Low (but not Jack or Game), you lose 3 points, since you did not make all of your bid. If other players get the points you bid, they score those points. In this example, if another player got Jack and Game, he would get 2 points.

It is possible for two or more players to tie for Game (both receiving the same amount of total game points); in this case, no player gets that point. And again, if there is no jack dealt, no one gets the Jack point.

Note that you must bid smudge to get the fifth point for winning smudge. Merely getting all six tricks and High, Low, Jack, and Game will still only give you 4 points if you didn't bid Smudge. If you bid Smudge, you must get all 4 points and win all the tricks, or you lose 5 points.

Bids are always scored in the order High, Low, Jack, and Game. Scoring stops when one player reaches the winning score. (This breaks any ties in the game.) For example: in a game played to a winning score of 11, Linda has 9 points and Chris has 10 points. If Linda wins High and Low, and Chris wins Jack and Game, Linda wins the game, because she gets 2 points for High and Low, making 11, and Chris thus never gets his 2 points for Jack and Game. (This means in a close game, the person who's behind can win if he or she wins the right bids.)

### ***Taking Tricks***

The player who won the bid (called the pitcher) plays a card to the board; the suit of this card is used as trump.

Each player must play trump if he or she has it (trump is shown in the upper right corner). The player with the highest trump card wins.

The player who won the first trick leads the next trick with any card. Each player, in turn, plays a card. If you have a card of the suit led, you must either follow suit or play a trump card. If you don't have a card of the suit led, you can play any card (trump, or any other suit).

**Important!** In Pitch, you can always choose to play trump, even if you can follow suit. If you don't have a card in the suit played, you can play any card, including trump.

The trick is won by the player who played the highest trump card, or, if there's no trump, the player who played the highest card of the suit that was led. The winner of each trick leads the next trick, and may lead any card.

### ***Strategies***

Bid based on the strong cards in your starting hand. If you have the Ace and a 2 or 3, a bid of two is a strong bet. If you have an ace and king, and other high cards, try bidding four. And an ace, king, and 2 is an excellent bid of three.

Be careful about bidding based on holding a jack, unless you have other cards in that suit to protect it (ideally higher cards); there's no guarantee you'll keep a jack in your hand if you don't have supporting cards—and someone else is likely to get that point. Watch out for your 10s! 10s are worth a lot of points towards the Game bid, so be careful you don't give them away too easily. If you know you're likely to lose a trick (because it's been trumped or an ace has been played), you might want to sacrifice a face card instead of a 10.

# Rummy 500

## ***How to Play Rummy 500***

Rummy 500 is played by two people with the standard 52-card pack. Each player receives a hand of 13 cards, and the rest of the pack is placed face down; this is the stock. The top card of the stock is turned up and placed beside the stock in a discard pile. In Rummy 500, all discards are available to draw, not just the top one; the discard pile is fanned out so that each card is visible.

There are three phases to a turn:

**1 Drawing:** You can either draw the top card of the stock, or draw from the discard pile. When drawing from the discard pile, you can take the top card, or you can take a card farther down in the pile, but there are some restrictions:

If you take the top card of the discard pile, you must play it to the table in the current turn. You can change the game options to not require you to play this card; in this case, if you draw this card, you must discard a different card.

If you take a card farther down in the discard pile, you must be able to play that card to the table in the current turn, and you must also take all the cards above that card in the discard pile into your hand. The card you have to meld that turn will be raised slightly in your hand as a reminder.

**2 Playing cards to the table:** This is optional. You can move sets and sequences, called melds, from your hand to the table; this is known as melding. You can also play cards that extend existing melds (either yours or your opponent's). You get points for each card you play to the table. You can meld as many cards as you like.

**3 Discarding:** You must end your turn by discarding a card to the top of the discard pile. The exception to this rule is if you have melded all the cards in your hand (ending the hand); in this case, no discard is necessary.

The hand continues with each player taking a turn until one player has played all of his or her cards to the table (discarding if necessary), ending the hand. The hand can also end if all of the cards in the stock are drawn, and the person whose turn it is does not want to draw from the discard pile (or cannot); that player passes, ending the game.

You play multiple hands until one player reaches 500 points or more at the end of a hand; that player wins the game. In the event of a tie, further hands are played until there is a single winner.

## ***General Strategies***

Success in Rummy depends largely on keeping track of the discards. From this you'll know which of your own combinations are still "alive" and you'll be able to guess which combinations your opponent is holding.

Pay attention to sequences when considering what cards to draw or discard. For example, it is easy to miss an ace-low sequence (A-2-3 or A-2-3-4), because the ace is always sorted as a high card in your hand.

Later in the game, intimidate your opponent—keep a vigilant eye on your opponent's score, and try to keep your score slightly ahead to keep him or her from ending the game. Also watch your opponent's hand size at the end of the game: you don't want to be surprised by the other player going out when you have a full hand of cards (especially high ones) near the end.

Know when to lose gracefully. If you're dramatically behind on points in the current hand, but you can go out, consider going out early even if this means losing; since you're playing several games to 500 points, think long term. Prolonging the hand when you're losing and your outlook is bad gives your opponent a chance to make the outcome even worse for you.

Your ace strategy should vary throughout the game. Early in the game, it is worth holding onto aces, since the potential 15 points you could score (for a set or ace-high sequence) are very valuable. Near the end of the hand, discard aces that are not sure things. At 15 points a pop, it is too much of a risk to hold onto them near the end of the hand.

If your opponent's score is nearing 500, try to end the hand at an appropriate time, if you can. Don't be afraid to go out early if you don't have a fantastic hand and your opponent won't win the game. Maybe the next hand will be the monster hand you need to mount your comeback.

## Spades

Spades was most likely developed simultaneously with Whist as a simpler form of that game. Whereas Whist was replaced by Bridge, nothing ever came along to replace Spades. According to the United States Playing Card Company, Spades ranks as the number-one card game among American college students.

### ***How the Game Is Played***

Spades is played by four people in two partnerships. The cards rank ace (the highest) to the 2 (the lowest). Spades are always trumps. Each player receives 13 cards. Bidding and play proceed in a clockwise direction. In the bidding phase you declare the number of tricks you intend to win; in the playing phase you try to win those tricks. The object of the game is to fulfill the total bid by the partnership.

You may choose to bid *Nil*, meaning you intend not to win any tricks. Before you even pick up your cards, you may bid Double Nil. This is the same as a Nil bid, except all rewards and penalties are doubled. If one or both players in a partnership bid Nil, their bids are scored independently, then combined to determine the partnership's score.

You must follow suit if you can, otherwise you may take the trick with a trump or discard something from a non-trump suit. Spades cannot be lead until they've been *broken* (until they've been used to trump an earlier lead). A trick is won by the highest trump or by the highest card of the suit led.

If you make your bid, you receive 10 points for each trick in the bid, one point for each trick above the bid. A Nil bid counts for 100 points if you succeed, 100 against if you fail. Double Nil is 200. The game is to 500 points.

Not all Spades games use *bags*, but ours does. Every point in excess of your total bid counts as one bag. If you collect 10 bags, you lose 100 points.

### ***Strategies***

Try to estimate the number of tricks you'll take as accurately as possible. Count kings and aces as one trick each. The value of your lower-ranking trumps depends on the presence of voids, singletons, or doubletons in your off-suits (non-trumps).

If you have a similar hand, but a singleton (one club) instead, you can expect to take two tricks with your low trumps. With three trumps and a void in one suit, you might take three tricks. Additional trump cards above three are worth one trick each on average.

If someone else is bidding Nil, that will make it easier for you to win tricks, and you might consider adding one trick to your estimation. In a perfect world, the total amount of tricks bid in each hand of Spades should equal 13, since there are 13 tricks to be won.

If you are the third or last player to bid, consider how the other players have been bidding. If the bid count is low, you may want to include marginal cards (such as a pair of queens) as one trick.

Bid Nil, obviously, if you're pretty sure you won't be taking any tricks. Some danger signs to look for in your hand are a suit of three or fewer cards that contains any high-cards.

The exception to this is when you have a void or a singleton in a suit. In this case, there's a good chance you can dump the king harmlessly before you take a trick.

If you have a hand that's long in spades (four or more), it is very unlikely you can carry out a successful Nil bid (those spades will be the implements used to dig your grave). You're bound to win a trick, costing you 100 points.

Your strategy during play should depend somewhat on the total bid for tricks that will be taken. If the total bid is very high (12 or more tricks), you need to be aggressive. Fight for tricks, throw off low cards whenever possible. Avoid taking any tricks from your partner. By doing so, you may prevent your opponents from fulfilling their contract. Also, with a high total bid, it is unlikely you'll be taking many bags for your team, no matter what.

Spades is like Hearts in one respect: sometimes it's better to lose tricks. If the bid is low (10 or less), you should avoid taking any tricks you hadn't counted on.

What if the total bid for tricks is exactly 11? In this case, base your play on other factors. If you have accumulated only a few bags, try to win the tricks at first. Change this strategy as circumstances dictate. You can increase your options in later tricks by playing your middle cards early.

Another tactic you can use when trying to make your bid is to watch your partner's plays closely. If he or she inadvertently loses a trick that's normally a win (for example, if your partner gets trumped early), try to make it up by taking one trick above your own bid.

If an opponent bids Nil, you will need to make sure that he or she takes one trick. To do this, play the lowest cards possible, and don't worry about fulfilling your contract (assuming the total bid is low, which is probable). Save your low cards specifically for trying to stick the Nil bidder.

# Fun All Year Long

Family fun and traditions can make each month throughout the year exciting and entertaining. Use the following suggestions as a starting point to begin and build on traditions for your family.



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Beginning new traditions and family activities is the easy part but sticking with those new traditions is the hard part. The key is finding activities that are fun, and getting each member of the family involved.

## Fun All Year Long:

1. Holiday Traditions
2. Family Night
3. Activities
4. Community Involvement



Today is the perfect time to brain storm a list of activities for your family to engage in all year long. Get a large piece of paper and get everyone involved in listing activities.

Everybody gets to choose at least one activity that is most exciting for them. Make sure to think about the cost and time commitment involved with each of the activities.

1. Give everyone plenty of time to think about ideas to present to the family.
2. Think about talents, interests, and skills of each family member. Plan for all ages to interact.
3. Use a large poster board to brain storm ideas.
4. Give everyone their own colored strips of paper to write down ideas and then draw the slips randomly.
5. Use a large calendar to plan. Have small calendars for each family/individual so they can fill out their calendar and leave with the schedule. Include everyone's birthday, anniversary or other special days on the calendar.

1. **Holiday Traditions** - What does your family do on traditional holidays. Do you have traditions that have been passed down and that you want to pass on to the next generation. Don't be afraid to alter or begin something new and exciting. ex. Handmade gifts at Christmas, draw names, hand crafted wrapping paper; pink milk and heart pancakes for Valentines day; scavenger hunts for Easter; mystery dinner for Halloween; etc.

2. **Family Night** - Pick a night and make a commitment to get together each week. Consistency is the key. Choose the same day of the week and the same time. Make sure to include both food and fun, and be creative. Activities don't have to be expensive. Food, Food and Food.

Be Creative

Have Fun

Include Everyone

Be consistent - Folks will miss - Gather regardless.



3. **Activities** - Once a month choose a large activity. Pick a place to go, something to see or experience. You may have to change the day and time to accommodate the activity. You may not be able to schedule around everybody, do the best you can.

Scavenger Hunts

Arts, Entertainment, and Sports

Restaurants

Parks

Trips

New Skills, How to.....

Game night

Pajama Run

Individual appreciation day for each family member

#### 4. **Community Involvement**

Collect Free items all year long and schedule a family outing to deliver to the charity of your choice

Pick a holiday and serve at a community dinner as a family.

Take advantage of community publications with local and statewide activities.

Adopt a family or child for the year

Join a local nonprofit board

# Frisbee Golf Official Rules

Frisbee golf is an outdoor activity that can be played at parks, cookouts or anywhere you have enough space and a frisbee. Official frisbee golf courses can be located at the beach or at local parks. They can have obstacles such as water hazards and out-of-bounds area. You can even play frisbee golf in your backyard: all you need is a frisbee and a basket.

## 1. Teeing Off

2. On a frisbee golf course, each "hole" has a section marked off as the tee. To tee off, a player must make their first throw with at least one of their feet within this tee area.

## 3. Holes

4. The holes in frisbee golf are not holes at all. Instead, these are baskets that are placed in certain areas on the frisbee golf course. To complete the hole, you must land the frisbee in the basket.

## 5. Penalties

6. If the frisbee gets stuck in a tree or other obstacle two meters above the ground, you have one point added to your score as a penalty point and your frisbee is thrown from the ground at that location.

## 7. Par

8. Unless otherwise labeled on the frisbee golf course, the standard par for a frisbee golf hole is three throws.

## 9. Aces

10. If a player manages to throw a frisbee into the basket on his first throw, it is an Ace. This is the equivalent of a hole in one in golf.

# FARKLE RULES

You will need: 6 dice, paper and pencil

How to play: Each player must score 500 points in one turn to 'get on the board'. If a player 'farkles' before reaching 500 their turn is over and they pass the dice to the next player. Once a player has gotten on the board they can quit at any time during their turn, regardless of how many points they score during that turn.

Play to 10,000. Once someone scores 10,000 (or more) the remaining players have one last turn. There are ways you can vary the game at this point. If someone beats the original player who reached 10,000, they can be declared the winner, or if you want to continue playing, let each player have one more turn, each time anyone beats the high scorer.

How to score: Players begin by rolling all 6 dice. In order not to 'farkle' each roll in a turn must come up with something that 'counts'. Scoring dice are set aside and contribute their score for that turn. If a player decides to continue rolling during their turn they use the remaining dice. If at any time 'all' the dice produce points the player has the option to begin again with all six dice. This still counts as one turn and should they 'farkle' (roll and come up with nothing that scores) they will lose any points accumulated turning that turn. Once points are recorded they cannot be lost.

What counts:

All six dice the same.....	1,000
3 pair.....	1,000
A straight (1 through 6).....	1,000
3 ones.....	1,000
One.....	100
Five.....	50
3 of any number equals that number times 100 (except ones they equal 1000) i.e.	
3 twos.....	200
3 threes.....	300
3 fours.....	400
3 fives.....	500
3 sixes.....	600

Have fun, play fair and take a risk now and then!