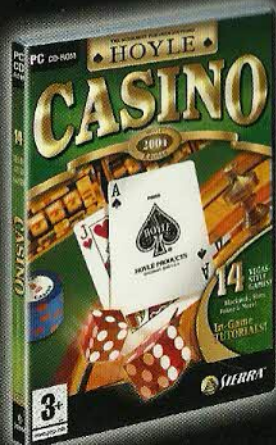


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## INSTALLING HOYLE® CARD GAMES

### *Running the Installer*

Insert the CD. If the installer screen appears, see *Using the Installer* below. Otherwise, double-click **My Computer** on your PC desktop. Then double-click **Hoyle Card Games**. This will launch the installer.

### *Using the Installer*

Once the installer is open, click **Install Hoyle Card Games** (or **Install Hoyle Games Demo** to install the demo). This will run the install Wizard, which will guide you through the rest of the installation process.

### *Starting the Game*

Insert the CD. If the AutoPlay screen appears, click **Play Hoyle Card Games**. Otherwise, click the Windows **Start** menu, point to **Programs**, point to **Hoyle®** and point to **Hoyle Card Games**. Then, click the **Hoyle Card Games** icon.

### *Installing Games for Handheld Devices*

**Hoyle Card Games** also comes with games for Palm OS® Handhelds and Pocket PC devices. Click **Install Hoyle Games for Handheld Devices** from the install Wizard.

1. Select the type of handheld device you have, and uncheck any games you do not want installed.
2. Click **Install**.
3. Click **OK** in any windows that pop up, until the installer returns you to the main install screen.

The games will now install onto your Palm OS Handheld the next time you perform a HotSync® operation, or on your Pocket PC the next time you perform an ActivSync® operation.

**For successful installation on a Palm OS Handheld**, you must first have Palm™ Desktop Software installed on your computer. Please refer to the instructions that came with your Palm OS Handheld for help with installing Palm Desktop Software and performing a HotSync operation.

**For successful installation on a Pocket PC**, you must first have ActiveSync® 3.1 or higher installed on your computer. Please refer to the instructions that came with your Pocket PC device for help with installing ActiveSync software and performing an ActiveSync operation.

## BRIDGE

Contract Bridge is played by four people in two partnerships with a standard 52-card pack. The cards in each suit rank from ace (the highest) to the 2 (the lowest). The suits rank in this order: spades, hearts, diamonds, and then clubs.

Cards are dealt one at a time, face down, clockwise until each player has received 13 cards.

The bidding or "auction" stage comes next, beginning with the dealer. The various things you can do are known as "calls":

**Pass:** You may pass rather than make a bid.

**Bid:** This is your declaration that you intend to win a certain number of "odd" tricks (odd meaning more tricks than six; the first six tricks are called "the book"). You must either name a trump suit or choose "no-trump." The lowest possible bid is one, the highest is seven. (There are 13 tricks in all, but remember that the first six don't count in this process.) For example, you might say "one diamond," "one no-trump," "four spades," and so on.

Your bid must "overcall" or top the preceding bid (if any). This is also called making a "sufficient" bid. Overcalling a bid means you must name a higher number of odd-tricks and/or a higher-ranking denomination: no-trump (high), spades, hearts, diamonds, and then clubs. One spade will overcall one heart; two clubs will overcall one spade; two diamonds will overcall one no-trump; etc.

**Double:** You can double the last bid, so long as one of your opponents made that bid, and no one has yet called a double. What a double does is to double the value of tricks taken. However, if the bid doubled was for, say, three spades, any player in the rest of the bidding could overcall it with three no-trumps, four clubs, etc., thereby canceling the double. A particular bid can be doubled only once.

**Redouble:** A player may in turn redouble the last bid, if a) the bid was made by that player or by that player's partner; b) if the bid has been doubled by an opponent; and c) if the bid hasn't already been redoubled. This further increases the scoring values, but, like the double, it can be canceled by a higher bid. A particular bid can be redoubled only once.

The auction begins when any player makes a bid. If all four players pass the first time around, the cards are thrown in and the next dealer in turn deals. When a bid, double, or redouble is followed by three consecutive passes, the auction is closed. The suit named in the final bid is the trump suit for that hand (if the final bid was a no-trump, the hand will be played without trumps). The player who first bid the suit (or the no-trump) is the "declarer." The number of odd-tricks named in the final bid is that player's "contract."



The player to the declarer's left leads the first card. The declarer's partner then places his or her hand face-up. This hand, and declarer's partner, are called the "dummy." The declarer's partner takes no further part in the hand. The declarer selects the cards to play from the dummy hand.

The object of play is to win tricks. A player is required to follow suit if possible. A trick is won by the highest trump, or, if no trumps come out, by the highest card of the suit led. The player that wins a trick leads the next. Play continues until all 13 tricks have been taken.

## Keeping Score

Bridge score sheets are halved by a horizontal line. The "trick score" goes below the line; all other scores (usually called the "honor score") go above the line. If the declarer fulfills the contract, winning as many or more odd-tricks than the contract called for, he or she scores below the line for every odd-trick named in the contract. Any trick won by the declarer in excess of his or her contract is called an "overtrick" and is scored above the line.

When a side has scored 100 or more points below the line ("trick points"), it has won a "game." A game may require more than one hand to decide the outcome. The next game begins with both sides back to zero.

A side that has won a game is said to be "vulnerable." A vulnerable side receives increased bonuses in some cases and is subject to higher penalties if it does not fulfill a contract.

Games are played best two out of three. When one side wins two games, they have won the "rubber." All points scored by both sides, both above the line and below the line, are then added up. The side that has the greatest number of points wins the difference between its score and its opponents' score.

## The Contract Bridge Scoring System

### Trick points (scored below the line by declarer)

Each odd-trick bid & made in ♦ or ♣	20
Each odd-trick bid & made in ♥ or ♠	30
First odd-trick bid & made in NT	40
Subsequent odd-tricks, NT	30

*If bid was doubled, multiply trick score by two.*

*If bid was redoubled multiply by four.*

### Overtrick points (scored above the line by declarer)

Each trick over contract in ♦ or ♣, undoubled	20
Each trick over contract in NT, ♥, ♠, undoubled	30
Each trick over contract in any suit:	
Doubled	100 (200 if vulnerable)
Redoubled	200 (400 if vulnerable)

### Undertrick points (scored above the line by defenders)

#### Not vulnerable

First undertrick	50
First undertrick, doubled	100
First undertrick, redoubled	200
Second and third undertrick	50
Second and third undertrick, doubled	200
Second and third undertrick, redoubled	400
Each subsequent undertrick	50
Each subsequent undertrick, doubled	300
Each subsequent undertrick, redoubled	600

#### Vulnerable

First undertrick	100
First undertrick, doubled	200
First undertrick, redoubled	400
Each subsequent undertrick	100
Each subsequent undertrick, doubled	300
Each subsequent undertrick, redoubled	600

### Bonus points (scored above the line by declarer)

Making doubled contract	50
Making redoubled contract	100
Small Slam (6 odd-tricks bid & made)	500 (750 if vulnerable)
Grand Slam (7 odd-tricks bid & made)	1,000 (1,500 if vulnerable)

#### Rubber Bonus:

If the opponents won 1 game	500
if the opponents won no games	700

### Honors points (scored above the line by either team)

Four trump honors in one hand	100
Five trump honors in one hand	150
Four aces in one hand (NT contract)	150

## Bridge Strategies

A proper bid provides substantial information to your partner, as his or her response should to you. Unfortunately, you are also conveying the same information to your opponents, just as their bidding provides some guide to you as to how you should play your hand to make the bid or defend against your opponents' bid.

Effective bidding of necessity is based on an understanding of what "points" are. The two kinds of points are high-card points and distribution points. When counting high-card points, each ace counts four points, each king counts three points, each queen counts two points, and each jack counts one point. When counting distribution points, being void in a suit counts three points, having a singleton in a suit counts two points, and

having a doubleton in a suit counts one point. In reaching your total points you cannot count both high-card points and distribution points for the same card.

The general rule in bridge is that if you have 13 points (combined high-card points and distribution points), you should find a bid somewhere, even if it is in a four card minor suit. Opening bids are invariably on your longest suit. If suits are of equal length, bid the highest ranking suit.

Generally if it is the first (opening) round and your hand has only 11-12 points (combined high-card and distribution points) and you do not have a fairly strong biddable suit (for example, five or six cards headed by at least two face cards and a singleton or doubleton in the other suits) then the appropriate bid would be a pass.

When responding to the opening bid, if you have some strength in a suit your partner has bid, always raise. Strength can be defined as at least six points in your hand and three cards in your partner's suit. Any suit of five or more cards is always biddable.

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.

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.

The partnership playing a trump contract should be in command of the trump suit. Decades of Bridge experience have demonstrated that the partners playing the contract should have at least eight trumps between them (the best distributions are 5-3, 4-4, and even 6-2).

When you're on defense, don't lead unsupported aces (an ace that has no king, queen, jack or 10 behind it) unless it's the suit your partner has bid. On the other hand, a singleton ace can be an excellent lead if you have several cards in the suit that is trump. By playing the ace immediately, you create a void in your hand, increasing the power of your trump cards.

Don't just count cards and points before you begin bidding—try to keep track of them as you play. The bidding, the opening lead, and the play will give you clues to the contents of your opponents' hands.

## CANASTA

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.

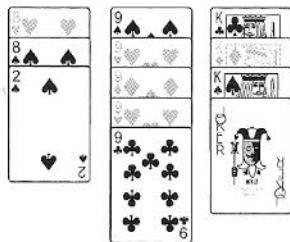


Fig. 1: Examples of Melds

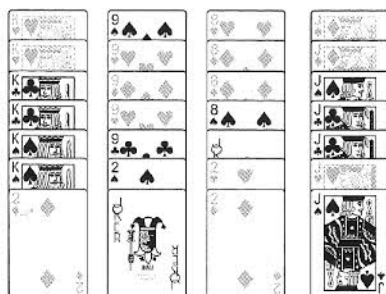


Fig. 2: Examples of Canastas

## 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.

Score	Meld Requirement
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:

Card	Point Value
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

Fig. 3 shows a hand that can make an initial meld, given an initial meld requirement of 50. There are two possible initial melds with this hand. You could meld the four queens ( $4 \times 10 = 40$ ) and the three 7s ( $3 \times 5 = 15$ ) for a total of 55, or you could meld the four queens ( $4 \times 10 = 40$ ) and the 2 (worth 20) for a total of 60.

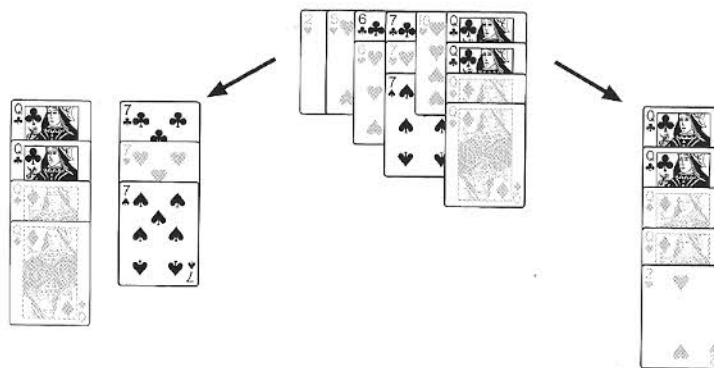


Fig. 3: Initial Melds Picking Up the Discard Pile

At the beginning of your turn, you can pick up the entire discard pile in certain situations (instead of drawing a card from the draw pile). 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. In Fig. 4, you can't pick up the discard pile, even though you have a meld of 10s, because you don't have two 10s in your hand.

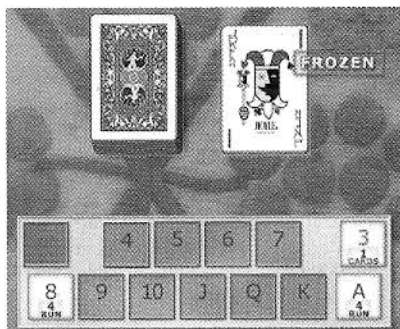


Fig. 4: Frozen Discard Pile

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.

## Playing the Game

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
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.

## Canasta Strategies

Canastas are worth a lot more points than melds, 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 (except to finish a canasta). Wild cards are stronger in your hand.

Keep track of the discarded cards. If the other team takes the pile, remember what cards were in it so you can discard safely. Keeping track of discards also indicates which cards the other team is short of.

Before taking the discard pile, 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 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.

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)!



## CRAZY EIGHTS

Crazy Eights can be played by two, three, or four players. The game uses the standard 52-card pack. When two play, each receives seven cards; when three or four play, each receives five cards. The remainder of the pack is placed face-down and becomes the "stock." The top card is placed face-up beside the stock and becomes the "starter." All of the discards are placed on the starter, forming the "talon" pile.

Play is clockwise. The first player lays on the starter a card of either the same suit or the same rank. The play continues in turn in the same way. Each card played (other than an 8) must match the top card of the talon pile in suit or rank.

A player unable to follow suit or rank must draw cards from the top of the stock until he or she can follow. A player may draw from the stock even if able to play without it. After the stock is exhausted, a player unable to play passes, and the turn passes to the left.

As the name of the game implies, all 8s are wild. An 8 may be played at any time, even if the player could legally play another card. If you play an 8, you designate a suit, and the next player must play a card of that suit or another 8.

Play ends when a player gets rid of his or her last card, if the game is "cutthroat" (as in *Hoyle Card Games*). In partnership play, the game ends when both players on one side have gone out. If the stock is exhausted and no one can play a legal card, the game ends in a "block." This is a no-win hand.

The player or side that goes out collects points for all cards remaining in the hands of the opponents: 50 for each 8, 10 for each face card, one for each ace, and the regular value for the remaining cards. If two players tie (in three-hand play), they split the winnings.

### *Crazy Eights Strategies*

A balanced hand is best, so you'll generally want to play cards from your longest suit.

Play your higher cards whenever possible; your 8s are the only exception. These cards are most useful at the end of the game, so don't play them except to avoid drawing from the stock. If someone gets down to their last card, and you have an 8, however, make sure you play the 8 immediately to avoid giving 50 points to the winner.

## CRIBBAGE

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

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.

## Cribbage Strategies

If you're just beginning at Cribbage and you're not sure what to discard, focus first on building your hand. Begin by looking for combinations of 15. 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).

When play begins, avoid leading with cards that allow easy points by your opponent, especially 5s. Any time that you lead with a 5, your opponent is likely to play a 10 or face card for an easy two points.

You can also try to create scoring opportunities by trapping your opponent. For example, if you lead with one card in a pair, your opponent may respond with a matching card in order to score two points. Now you spring the trap, playing your second card in the pair and pegging six points for three of a kind.

At the end of a game, if you are ahead and about to peg out (win), you can discard for a good pegging hand. This means you want cards that will allow you combinations of 15 on almost any card your opponent plays. For example, a 5, 6, 8, 9 isn't normally a great hand, but it gives you great odds of scoring two points on a 15.

The exception to this when you play the first card (i.e. when the other player deals), in which case it is more difficult to score. In this case, it's better to hold onto an ace or another low card to make sure you can play as the count approaches 31.

Conversely, if your opponent is about to peg out, play a low card so as to make 15 unreachable. If you're dealt an ace, keep it so they won't easily get the "Go" for a point.

## EUCHRE

Four people play in two partnerships. Euchre uses the standard 52-card pack, but with 28 cards removed (everything below the 9). **Hoyle Card Games** does not use the joker.

The rank of cards in each non-trump suit: ace (the highest), king, queen, jack, 10, 9 (the lowest).

The rank of cards in trumps: the jack of the trump suit (the Right Bower) followed by the jack of the same color (the Left Bower). For example, if hearts are trumps, they would rank as follows: the jack of hearts, jack of diamonds, and then the rest of the hearts. The trump suit always has seven cards; the next suit (same color as the trump suit) has five; and the "cross" suits (opposite color as the trump) each have six.

Five cards are dealt to each player. The pack is placed face-down, with the top card turned face-up. This card determines the trump suit for the deal.

The first player may either pass or accept the turned-up card as trumps. If the first player passes, the next player faces the same decision, and so on. As soon as a player accepts the turned-up card as trumps, the dealer discards a card. The discard is placed cross-wise under the undealt cards. The turned-up card belongs to the dealer in place of the discard.

If all players pass, the first player then has the right to name the trump suit, or to pass. (If the first player passes, the next player has an opportunity to name a trump suit, and so on.) The suit of the rejected card cannot be used for trumps. If all players pass a second time around, the cards are thrown in for a new deal.

The player who declares the trump suit has the right to play alone. The partner of this lone wolf lays his or her cards face-down and does not participate in the hand.

In play, players must follow suit of whatever card is lead (if able). A trick is won by the highest trump or by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads the next card.

The object is to win at least three tricks (of a possible five). If the side that called trumps fails this, it is "euchred." The winning of all five tricks is called "march."

In the traditional scoring, the side that called trumps wins one point for making three or four tricks; for making five tricks or march, they score two points. For the person playing alone: three or four tricks gain one point; march nets four points. If the side that called trumps is euchred, their opponents win two points. Four-hand euchre is usually played for a game of five points.

## Euchre Strategies

Don't be in a hurry to become the declarer and order up trump. While ordering up trump is a huge advantage, remember that if you can't take three tricks, your opponents get two points.

Try ordering up trump when your partner will take one trick on average. That means you want an assurance of at least two tricks yourself—and three is better. "Takers" (winning cards) are aces and the higher trumps (Bowers, ace, king).

Be sure you have an unbeatable hand before opting to play alone. Otherwise, let your partner help you out. Your odds of gaining extra points (for winning five tricks) are much greater with a partner.

Three trumps of any rank form a very powerful hand. You can quickly force out all the highest trumps and subsequently win a couple of tricks.

It's war when play begins. Fight for every trick as if your life depended on it. If you think you can take a trick, do so.

For example, imagine that you are First Hand (first player), and you have two decent cards (an ace and a low trump), and three garbage cards. If you play the queen (your trump), she will certainly go down at the hands of a superior trump. Save it for later.

If you play a garbage card, you will lose the trick and may never get the lead back. Your ace is the best option. It's like firing your derringer—you've only got one shot. If you play it now, you can force out all the hearts and (if you're not trumped) win the trick.

In the Old West, the fastest gun was always the most feared. The first to trump will often win a given trick. Because there are only five cards in each player's hand, you won't have much time to void your suits, so absolutely do not pass up any early trumping opportunities.

## GIN RUMMY

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."

### *Gin Rummy 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.

Early in the game, you should avoid drawing cards from the discard pile simply to form a pair. Getting good combinations doesn't help that much because forming sets wins games of Gin Rummy. You should almost always draw from the stock early in the game, unless you can form a set or extend an existing set by taking the discard.

When given a choice of discards, keep pairs. When given a choice between discarding a face card or another card, keep face cards. Discarded face cards are very common (since they add to deadwood in a player's hand), and your chances of matching a face card via the discard pile are very high.

Later in the game, be cautious of any face cards that don't form a set. Waiting up to six turns before getting rid of higher ranking cards is a common strategy.

Try tracking your opponent's discards to help you avoid discarding cards he or she can use. In addition, this helps you determine which cards you should hold onto, since your opponent is not interested in the type of cards he or she discarded. Remembering former discards can also help you realize what sequences or set are impossible for you, because a critical card has already been discarded.



## GO FISH

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.

### *Go Fish 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.

Timing refers to the best moment to risk everything, reveal your hand, and go for matches. This won't happen until the second half of the game. In the first half of the game, while most of the deck is in the stockpile, it is difficult to score points. You are better off hiding your hand from your opponents. Choose one or two cards in your hand, and keep asking other players for those cards every turn. When the stockpile gets low, most of the cards you need will now be sitting in the other players' hands. Start asking for cards, and keep asking. Often, the last three or four sets will be taken by one person, bringing the game to a sudden close.

## HEARTS

The usual number of Hearts players is four. 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 counts as 13. However, you could try to take ALL the hearts AND the queen. This is called "Shooting the Moon," and gives 26 points to each of your opponents.

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.

### *Hearts Strategies*

If you are dealt the queen of spades, and it is unsupported by other spades, pass it; otherwise you will likely be forced to play it. In some situations, keeping the queen is desirable. If you have a number of spades in your hand, you will not be forced to play the queen early, and you're almost guaranteed of passing off the queen to someone else.

Any other high spades (K, A) are also dangerous if they are not protected by several lower spades; you will likely be forced to play them and take someone else's queen. Discard them if possible.

Don't be nervous about keeping high cards in your hand. Keeping these in combination with low cards is not usually dangerous. Early in the game, it is unlikely you'll take a heart.

Guarded high-cards should be saved until later in the game, especially if they are hearts, to prevent someone from successfully Shooting the Moon.

## MEMORY MATCH

Cards are dealt face down into a grid layout. The object of the game is to find and remove all matching pairs of cards. Click on a card to turn it over, then click a second card. If the two cards are a pair, they are removed from the layout. If not, they are turned face down.

- If you find three pairs in a row without a miss, you get a bonus.
- If you turn over a wild card and any non-wild card, the wild card and both the non-wild card and its pair are all removed from the layout.
- When all pairs have been found and the board is empty, your score is displayed. Matched pairs, misses, bonuses, layout size, and deck difficulty all affect your score (choose "Getting Started" from the Game menu and go to the Scoring tab for more details).

### Memory Match Strategies

You can make your selections by following a pattern (e.g., top to bottom). This may help you to remember card positions. On the other hand, if you're playing head to head, you might want to avoid patterns, lest you inadvertently help your opponent more than yourself.

Some advanced techniques are described below:

**Naming:** Give permanent names to pictures (e.g., you name the female Greek image Aphrodite) to help remember them.

**Visualization:** You can lock an item into your memory through visualization and association. For example, if the spiderweb card shows up in a corner, remember this: cobweb corner (the alliteration of "c-c" also helps!). As another example, the card with lips can become "lower lips" or "upper lips" depending on its location.

**Chaining:** This method uses visualization, but links several items together. For example, if you turned over a row of cards depicting the Greek statue, flies, and a doughnut, you could remember it this way: "Aphrodite is bothered by flies that like doughnuts."

**Use an Acrostic:** A phrase or word derived from the first letter of other words is called an acrostic. For example, SAIDRO can be used to describe a row of these six cards: Symbol, Aphrodite, Insect, Doughnut, Rat, Old (woman).

As a final tip for the more casual gamers, if you think you might know the location of a pair, ALWAYS turn the card you're least sure about first. This method is definitely less embarrassing if you're wrong.

## OLD MAID

**Hoyle Card Games** uses a special animal deck containing ten different animal ranks (as opposed to 13), and one Troll card that serves as the Old Maid.

After the cards are dealt, each player discards, face-up, all of his or her pairs (never three or four of a kind). Then each player, on his or her turn, draws one card from the face-down hand of the player on his or her right.

If the drawn card makes a pair with a card in his or her hand, that player removes the pair. The player to the left then draws one card from the player on his or her right, and so on.

Eventually one player will be left with the troll, the "Old Maid." That ends the game, and the possessor of the Old Maid is the loser.

## PINOCHLE

Partnership Auction Pinochle is played with one 48-card deck of Pinochle cards and four players are grouped in teams of two. The players sitting opposite each other are partners. It is conventional to name the players North, South, East, and West. North and South are partners, as are East and West.

Each player receives 12 cards. The deck contains 12 cards in each of four suits—two in each of the ranks ace, 10, king, queen, jack, and 9. The rank of cards differs from normal custom—the 10 outranks everything (within its suit) except the ace.

**Bid:** The winner of the bid has the right to name the trump suit and gets to play the first trick. The minimum opening bid is 100 points, and the player to the dealer's left starts the bidding. Bids are made in multiples of 10 points. Each player must either bid at least 10 points higher than the previous bid or pass. When only one person has not said "pass," that person has won the bid. After the bidding is over, each player has the opportunity to meld.

**Meld:** There are three types of melds, and a card may belong to different melds as long as they are of different types. Each player places face-up on the table only those cards being melded.

### Sequences

A, 10, K, Q, J of the trump suit (Run) .....	150
K, Q in trump (Royal Marriage) .....	40
K, Q of any other suit (Common Marriage) .....	20

### Special

One jack of diamonds and one queen of spades (Pinochle) .....	40
Both jacks of diamonds and both queens of spades (Double Pinochle) .....	300
9 of trump (called the dix, pronounced "deece") .....	10

### Groups

One ace in each suit ("aces around") .....	100
One king in each suit ("kings around") .....	80
One queen in each suit ("queens around") .....	60
One jack in each suit ("jacks around") .....	40

The partners' separate melds are added into one total, but the team does not actually receive the meld points until they win a trick.

## The Play (Taking Tricks)

All players pick up their meld cards, and the bid winner plays the opening lead. Proceeding to the left, each player plays a card on the trick following these rules:

- If a player has a card of the same suit as the lead card, it must be played. If possible, the player must play a card with a higher rank than the card that currently controls the trick.
- If a player has no cards in the suit led, a trump must be played if possible. If the trick already contains trump, the player must beat it with a higher trump if possible.
- If a player cannot follow suit and cannot play a trump, any other card may be played.
- If someone has already trumped, later players who can follow suit may play any card of the suit led, because no card of the led suit can beat a trump.

The highest trump wins the trick. If no trump was played, the highest-ranking card of the suit led wins the trick. If there is a tie for highest-ranking card, the trick is won by whichever of the equal cards was played first. The trick winner leads to the next trick, and so on until all 12 tricks have been played.

In the trick-taking phase of the game, the aces, 10s, and kings are worth 10 points each, and so are called "counters." Queens, jacks, and 9s are not worth points (although they can win tricks); thus they are called "non-counters." The team that wins the final trick gets an additional 10 points.

**Scoring:** Each side adds up the points it won in tricks and adds the points from its melds (if it has won at least one trick). Bidder's opponents add their total into the accumulated score. If the bidder's team wins at least the amount of the bid, they add the amount won to the accumulated score.

If they don't make the bid, they subtract the bid from their accumulated score.

The side that first reaches 1,000 points wins a game.

## Doublepack

This version of Pinochle uses a larger deck (80 cards), which allows for a greater scoring potential in the melds (see the in-game help for a Doublepack scoring table). There are no 9s in the Doublepack deck. Each player is dealt 20 cards to start. 3,550 points are needed for a win.

## Partnership Pinochle

This game is like Partnership Auction, but there is no bidding. The last card is dealt face up and sets trump. Players (taking turns starting left of the

dealer) can exchange the 9 of trump for the upcard, and receive 10 points for doing so. After this, the dealer takes the original or exchanged upcard. If the original upcard is a 9, the dealer picks it up for 10 points. However, the dealer cannot meld the 9 in this case.

### **Four-Handed Pinochle**

This game is like Partnership Pinochle, but there are four individual players and no teams.

### **Two-Handed Pinochle**

This two player Pinochle game is quite different from the others. The object of the game is to win tricks and subsequently meld certain combination of cards that have a scoring value. The deck is a standard 48-card Pinochle deck.

Each player receives 12 cards, non-dealer first. The next card is turned up and placed on the table; it is the trump card and determines the trump suit. The remainder of the pack, the stock, is placed face down.

The non-dealer leads the first trick. If a trump is led, it wins the trick unless the opponent plays a higher trump. If any other suit is led, the card led wins unless the opponent plays a higher card of the same suit or a trump. The leader may play any card, and the follower may play any card; there is no requirement to follow suit or to play a higher card to win the trick. The trick winner then has the option of melding. After each trick, both players draw a card from the top of the stock to restore their hands to 12 cards with the trick winner drawing first. The trick winner leads the next trick.

Upon winning a trick, and before drawing from the stock, a player may meld any combination of cards having value (see Partnership Auction Pinochle melds above). The meld is formed by placing the cards face up, where they remain until played in a trick or until the stock has been emptied.

Melding is subject to the following restrictions:

1. Only one meld may be made in a turn.
2. For each meld, at least one card must be taken from the hand and placed on the table.

A card once melded may be melded again only in a different class, or in a higher-scoring meld of the same class. If a player has melded a Royal Marriage and later adds the ace, 10, and jack of trump for a run, he scores an additional 150 points. If a player has melded a Pinochle and later adds another Pinochle for a Double Pinochle, the player only scores an additional 260 points, instead of 300. (If the first Pinochle had already been broken up, only 40 points would be scored for the second one.)

If a player has won a trick and has the dix (9 of trump), the player may do one of the following:

1. Score 10 points by exchanging the trump card for his dix (dix trade) if no player has already done a dix trade.
2. Meld the dix for 10 points and lose the chance to do a dix trade with that card.

The winner of the 12th trick, after a possible final meld, draws the last card of the stock, which is shown to the opponent. The opponent draws the trump card (or the dix, if an exchange has been made). Each player picks up any meld cards on the table put them back in their hands. The winner of the 12th trick now leads and the rules of the play for the final 12 tricks are as follows:

1. The follower must follow the suit to the card led, if able.
2. The follower must try to win the trick by playing a higher card of the suit led, or by trumping, if able.
3. There is no melding during the last 12 tricks.

Melds are scored when they are made. Scores for cards taken in tricks are added to each player's score as the tricks are won. A player receives 11 points for each ace, 10 points for each 10, four points for each king, three points for each queen, and two points for each jack taken in tricks. The player who win the last trick gets a 10-point bonus. The player who reaches 1,000 points first wins the game.

### **Pinochle Strategies**

As in most bidding games, it is important in Pinochle (Partnership Auction and Doublepack) not to overbid. The cost of overbidding is high; you lose all points gained during the current round, plus your bid is subtracted from your score.

To avoid underbidding and overbidding, estimate your bid by evaluating the worth of your hand. The traditional method of evaluating your hand assigns the following values to your cards: each ace counts for 20 points; each 10 counts for 10 points; each trump over three cards counts for 20 points; and melds count for additional points.

Don't hesitate to bid the full value of your hand. It will allow you to choose trump, which empowers your hand during play (particularly when you're long in one suit).

When melding begins, look for marriages first, because they're the easiest to spot. The jack of diamonds and the queen of spades (forming Pinochle) are a slippery pair and can be hard to see—make sure you're thorough when looking for points.

Winning at Pinochle is a team effort. If it appears that your partner will win the trick, play a "counter" (king, 10, or ace) to boost your score. The



ace is your only usual exception to this; only play an ace as a counter if it's not a winner anymore (e.g., the suit has led three times).

Conversely, if your opponent is going to win the trick, throw a "non-counter."

If you're leading, you can play a queen to force your opponents to play counters. This strategy is made even more effective if you think your partner will win the trick.

## PITCH

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, Gax has 9 points and Roswell has 10 points. If Gax wins High and Low, and Roswell wins Jack and Game, Gax wins the game, because Gax gets 2 points for High and Low, making 11, and Roswell 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.

### Pitch Strategies

Bid based on the strong cards in your starting hand. If you have an 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.

## POKER

Any number from two to eight can play. The object of the game is to put together a better "poker hand" than the other players. These are the rankings of poker hands, from highest to lowest:

Five of a kind .....	Only possible with a wild card
Straight flush .....	Five cards in suit and in sequence
Four of a kind .....	Four cards of any rank; one extra card
Full house .....	Three of a kind plus one pair
Flush .....	Five cards of the same suit
Straight .....	Five cards in sequence
Three of a kind .....	Three cards of the same rank; two extra cards
Two pairs .....	One pair and one pair; one extra card
One pair .....	Two cards of the same rank; three extra cards
High card .....	Any hand not meeting the above specs

The players bet to see who has the best hand. Each deal is a separate game, as its result doesn't affect any other deal. All the bets are placed together, forming the "pot." The object is to win the pot, whether by actually holding the best hand or by inducing other players to "fold" (drop out) and leave the pot to be taken, uncontested, by a single player still willing to bet.

The opportunity to bet passes clockwise from player to player. Once a player folds, the turn skips him or her and continues with the next player still in the action.

After betting is completed, each player can discard up to three cards, which the dealer immediately replaces. A second round of betting ensues, followed by a showdown; each player who has not previously folded shows what's in his or her hand. The highest-ranking hand at that point wins the pot.

In each betting interval, you can do one of four things:

- Fold:** Leave the hand
- Call:** Place in the pot only enough chips to stay in play for that betting interval
- Raise:** Place in the pot enough chips to call, plus additional chips
- Check:** A "bet of nothing," only possible when no previous player has made a bet in that betting interval.  
Checking allows a player to stay in the pot without risking additional chips.

When two players have hands of the same type, the higher-ranking hand is determined as follows:

- If each player has a straight flush, a flush, a straight, or no pair, the hand with the highest card wins.
- If each has five of a kind, a full house, four of a kind, or three of a kind, the hand composed of the highest-ranking matches wins.
- If each player has two pair, the highest pair wins. If each has the same higher pair, the hand with the higher of the two lower pairs wins. If each has the same two pairs, the hand with the higher fifth card wins.
- If the players have exactly identical hands, they split the pot.

## Poker Strategies

The power of a particular Poker hand (e.g., three 5s) is determined in part by the number of opponents you face. On average, if you're one of four Poker players, you'll win one of four hands, and three 5s is a great hand. If you're one of seven players, you'll only win one of seven hands, and three 5s is only a good hand.

In the default game, you're playing as one of eight. To win against such a large group, you'll need a pretty good hand to put the kibosh on all of them. More than likely, at least one of the others will have a high pair, two pair, or three of a kind. This fact makes it very hard to win by bluffing.

If you only have an "ace high" to start with, your hand is pretty weak. In a seven-player game, you're not going to win unless you draw a Pair (an ace or other card). You can always scare some people out by betting high, but chances are you'll just be losing money. Try to hold down the bet by checking. However, if you do decide to bluff, try to do it when you're one of the last to bet. Otherwise, your bluff may be wasted against an opponent with a good hand who takes your bet and raises it.

If you have a decent hand, such as a pair of kings, a little bluffing is warranted. You may not win with your two kings, but it might be helpful to drive some competitors out. You can often do this by betting a little more.

Keep tabs on which player or players are doing the most betting. It will help you evaluate their hands when it's time to draw new cards.

The observant Poker player will watch others' play with a keen eye. If a player draws one card, they most likely have two pair (a strong hand), or they might be going for a straight or a flush. The only tip-off for you that might indicate a two pair is whether they were betting heavily. With a strong hand, they probably raised the pot at least once. With a near-straight or a near-flush, they might have tried to keep the bets down by checking or calling.

If a player draws three cards, the best possible hand he or she had before drawing is one pair. Keep that in mind.

If a player draws two cards, it is a more difficult play to interpret. This player has three of a kind or is bluffing.

If you are dealt a good opening hand, your strategy should change. For example, if you have three 10s, consider a lower bet, perhaps raising once. This is like "dangling a worm" in front of your opponents and trying to make them bite. If you bet too high, it's the equivalent of splashing in the water; you'll scare away the fish. After the second round of betting starts, you can afford to bet a little higher.

If you start winning some hands and getting ahead, you have the option of betting higher. While risky, this is likely to drive a couple people out; they just can't afford to hang in unless they have a great hand. Fewer opponents, of course, will improve your odds of winning.

## SKAT

Skat is a three player trick-taking game that uses a 32-card deck consisting of four suits of A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7. Each player is dealt 10 cards, and two cards are dealt to a separate pile called the skat.

Depending on the contract that is being played, cards are ranked in a special order; in most contracts, the four jacks (ranked ♣J, ♠J, ♥J, ♦J) are the highest trumps and the remaining cards rank A, 10, K, Q, 9, 8, 7.

In Skat, you try to win hands by taking enough cards of certain values (or, in a Null contract, by taking no tricks). Whether you score points for winning depends on your *game value*, which is a formula based on the type of hand you played, the types of cards you started with, the type of contract you bid, and more.

The game ends after a certain number of hands, or when one player reaches a certain number of points.

### Bidding

Bidding occurs between three players identified as Forehand, Middlehand, and Rearhand. Rearhand is the dealer, Forehand is the player to his or her left, and Middlehand is the player to Forehand's right. (After each hand, the deal rotates clockwise.)

In bidding, Forehand is considered senior to Middlehand, who is in turn senior to Rearhand. A senior bidder need only match the bid of a junior bidder when bidding, and does not need to increase it, where a junior bidder always needs to **increase** the bid of a senior bidder when bidding.

Players bid (or match) numbers based on the possible game values they think they can achieve (see the next section).

If all players pass without bidding, the game is usually redealt, but some players play an optional game called "Ramsch" at this point. Ramsch is essentially a "loser takes all" game where the player who takes the most card points loses. For more on Ramsch, see the in-game help.

### Calculating Your Game Value

The *game value* is calculated after each hand. To score points, you must bid a number equal to or greater than your final game value. The game value uses the formula below:

$$\text{game value} = \text{multiplier} \times \text{base value}$$

The *multiplier* and *base value* are described below.

**multiplier =**

+1 pt for each matador (see "Understanding Matadors")

+1 pt for game (you always get this point)

+1 pt for hand (you get this point if you play without the skat)

+1 pt for schneider (see "Optional Announcements")

+1 pt for schneider declared (see "Optional Announcements")

+1 pt for schwarz (see "Optional Announcements")

+1 pt for schwarz declared (see "Optional Announcements")

+1 pt for open (see "Optional Announcements")

**base value =**

diamonds = 9, hearts = 10, spades = 11, clubs = 12, grand = 24

Possible game values for Suited and Grand contracts are 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 30, and so on. It is usually best to bid the minimum bid you can make (and still beat others' bids); there is no benefit to bidding high.

*Example:* if you plan to play a regular game (you play with the skat), your hand is "against" 2 matadors, and you don't think anyone will get schneider or schwarz, your probable game value is +2 for matadors (against), +1 for game =  $3 \times 11$  (for bidding spades) = 33. So you would not want to bid above 33.

For Null contracts (contracts where you are playing to lose every trick), you can bid any number, but the only game values you can achieve are 23 (Null contracts), 35 (Null hand contracts), 46 (Null open contracts), and 59 (Null open hand contracts). See "Scoring in Null Contracts" for details.

For information on the Suited, Grand, and Null contracts, see the "Picking a Contract" section later in this chapter.

### Understanding Matadors

The term "matadors" describes how many trumps you have or don't have, **in an unbroken sequence**, starting with the highest jack, ♣J. Matadors include both cards in your original hand and cards in the skat. Cards in the skat count towards your matadors even if you don't get to see the skat!

Matadors are either "with" you or "against" you. If you have the ♣J, you are "with 1 matador," plus however many trump you have in sequence. If you don't have the ♣J, you are "against 1 matador," plus however many trump you **don't have** in sequence.



### Examples:

#### With matadors

If you have ♣J but no ♠J, you are with 1 matador.

If you have ♣J and ♠J but no ♥J, you are with 2 matadors.

If you have ♣J, ♠J, and ♥J, but no ♦J, you are with 3 matadors.

And so on...

#### Against matadors

If you have ♠J but no ♣J, you are against 1 matador.

If you have ♥J (but no ♣J or ♠J), you are against 2 matadors.

If you don't have any jacks, and your highest trump is an ace, you are against 4 matadors.

And so on...

### Winning the Bid

The winner of the bid is the "declarer." The other two players (the "defenders") become a team to try to keep the declarer from making his or her bid.

If you're the declarer, you decide whether or not to pick up the skat. If you pick up the skat, you can exchange cards between your hand and the skat, laying down two cards from your hand. Picking up the skat lets you improve the cards in your hand.

Note: If you pick up a skat that contains a jack that decreases the number of matadors you have (thus reducing your chance of making your bid), you can opt to resign the game. See the in-game help for details.

Alternately, you can choose to play a *hand* game where you don't pick up or look at the skat. A hand game is worth more points towards your score. But whether you play with the skat or without, the cards in the skat still count towards your card points.

### Picking a Contract

The declarer must pick a game contract. There are three different types of contracts you can choose to play:

**Suited (diamonds, hearts, clubs, or spades):** The suit you specify becomes trump, and jacks serve as the highest trumps in that suit. Trump cards are ranked in this order: ♣J, ♠J, ♥J, ♦J, followed by A, 10, K, Q, 9, 8, 7 of the chosen trump suit. The other suits are also ranked in the order A, 10, K, Q, 9, 8, 7. Therefore, if you chose a contract of hearts, trump cards would be these cards, ranked in this order: ♠J, ♠J, ♥J, ♦J, ♥A, ♥10, ♥K, ♥Q, ♥9, ♥8, ♥7

**Grand:** The four jacks are the only trump cards, and serve as their own suit. They are ranked in the same order as in a Suited contract. Other cards are ranked in the order A, 10, K, Q, 9, 8, 7.

To win a hand in a Suited or Grand contract, you must take at least 61 card points; you lose if your opponents get 60 or more points. See "Taking Tricks" for details.

**Null:** There are no trumps, and cards are ranked in a different order than in the other two contracts: A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7. To win a hand in a Null contract, you must lose every trick. (If you win a single trick, the hand ends immediately.)

### Optional Announcements

If you're the declarer, and you are playing a hand game (you did not pick up the skat), you can make one of four optional announcements: *schneider*, *schwarz*, *open*, or *null open*.

**Schneider:** You will take at least 90 card points in the hand.

**Schwarz:** You will win all the tricks in the hand.

**Open:** You will win all the tricks in the hand, and must play with all of your cards exposed to the other players.

**Null open:** The only announcement you can make in Null contracts. You will lose all the tricks in the hand, and must play with all of your cards exposed to the other players.

Note that an announcement of *schwarz* implies an announcement of *schneider*, and an announcement of *open* implies an announcement of both *schneider* and *schwarz*.

**Important:** If you get *schneider* or *schwarz* during the game without declaring them, you'll still get game points for them, but announcing them beforehand gets you more game points (and costs you more game points if you don't achieve them). Losing the hand (or failing to achieve the game value you bid) means these points count against you.

### Taking Tricks

The Forehand player leads the first card, and each player plays a card to the middle, in clockwise order. You can lead any card. When playing to a trick, you must follow suit if possible. In a Grand contract, if a jack is led, you must play a jack if you have one. If you can't follow suit, you can play any card.

When playing a Suited contract, it's important to remember that the jacks are members of the named suit, not their original suit. Therefore, if playing a Suited diamonds contract, if diamonds are led and you have no diamonds but you have ♠J, ♠J is considered a diamond in this hand and you must play it. Conversely, if spades were led, and you have no other spades, you could not play ♠J, since ♠J is no longer considered a spade.

A trick is won by the highest card led, or if a trump was played, by the highest trump. In a Null contract, if the declarer wins a single trick, the game stops immediately.

The player who won the trick leads a card, and play continues until all cards have been played. After scoring the hand, the deal (and the position of each player) rotates clockwise.

### Scoring in Suited and Grand Contracts

In Suited and Grand contracts, how you score (if you're the declarer) depends on whether or not you win the hand **and** whether or not your game value is greater than or equal to the amount you bid. See the online help for extensive information on scoring.

To win the hand, you must get 61 or more card points (for a standard game), or 90 or more card points if you bid schneider. If you declared schwarz or open, you must also win every trick to win the hand.

There are 120 possible points in a hand. The point values for each card are as follows: **A** = 11 points, **Q** = 3 points, **10** = 10 points, **J** = 2 points, **K** = 4 points, **9,8,7** = 0 points.

In Suited and Grand contracts, you need 61 points to win a hand, and getting 90 points gives you the schneider bonus. Card points are irrelevant in Null contracts.

If you win the hand and your game value is greater than or equal to your bid, your game value is added to your score. If you lose the hand and your game value is greater than or equal to your bid, twice the game value is subtracted from your score.

If your game value is less than your bid (regardless of whether you won or lost), you lose twice the amount of the lowest possible game value that would have fulfilled the contract you bid. Example: You bid 23, and you played diamonds, but at the end of the hand, your game value was only 18. Possible game values of a diamonds hand (which has a base value of 9) are 18 (9 x 2), 27 (9 x 3), 36 (9 x 4), and so on. The lowest game value that would allow you to make your bid is 27, so you would lose 54 points (27 x 2). If you bid 30 in the same hand, you would have needed a game value of 36, so you would lose 72 (36 x 2).

### Scoring in Null Contracts

If you win a Null contract (by not taking any tricks), you get a flat score of 23 points for regular Null contracts (played with the skat), 35 for Null hand contracts (played without the skat), 46 for Null open contracts (played face up with the skat), and 59 for Null open hand contracts (played face up without the skat).

If you lose a Null contracts (by taking one trick), you lose twice your bid. For Null you lose 46, for Null hand you lose 70, for Null open you lose 96, and for Null open hand you lose 118.

### Skat Strategies

Try to calculate exactly how many game points you will get with your hand: you should be able to figure out your maximum possible game value. Bid conservatively. Bidding higher than you need to just increases your risk. Never bid based on what you think you might get in the skat.

Bid a Suited contract when you have at least six trumps, or when you have four or more trumps (with at least one jack) and a strong supporting hand. The fewer trumps you have, the more important it is that you have strong cards in your supporting suits.

A good Grand hand has at least two jacks and a long run of at least one suit with the ace and 10, or a hand with at least one jack and all four aces. Ideally, a Grand is also supported by a void (no cards) in another suit. A good Null hand contains the 7 of each suit that you have.

Here are some strategies for putting cards in the skat: Don't ever put trump cards in the skat. If you have any suits that only contain one card that's not an ace, put it in the skat to "void" yourself in that suit. In a Null contract, put away cards higher than 7 or 8.

If you are the declarer and have a long run of trump, lead trump as often as possible. Lead in order from your highest to your lowest, if you're sure of winning. Otherwise, consider leading a low point card in a suit you're trying to void.

If you're the defender, guard aces and 10s closely. Always give the declarer a king or other face card in preference to one of these high point value cards. If the other defender plays a card you know will win the trick, throw your aces and 10s (or other high point cards) onto the trick.

## SOLITAIRE

There are fifty different Solitaire games in **Hoyle Card Games**, including one-deck games, two-deck games, and arcade solitaire games (fast-paced games involving a time limit). All games are played by one player, except for Bowling, which can be played by up to four players. Rules for the Solitaire games are found in the in-game help.

Most Solitaire games involve playing cards from the tableau (card layout) to one or more foundations. Foundations are often (but not always) built up from ace to king, in suit. Sometimes cards can be moved around the tableau; cards are usually moved in sequences, often by suit.

### Solitaire Strategies

Strategies for the Solitaire games are described below. Note that many games have game options you can change to make the games easier or harder; within a game, click Solitaire Settings on the Options menu to see what options are available.

#### One Deck Games

**Aces Up:** It is always good to play cards to the Foundation. Move aces to empty columns when possible.

**Baker's Dozen, Bristol:** Move out your aces to the Foundations as soon as possible, and get your lower cards out from under higher cards. Play cards of the same suit on your columns to make it easier to move them to Foundations as the game develops. In Baker's Dozen, uncovering cards is desirable.

**Baroness:** When there is more than one card combination you can remove (or two identical cards you can remove in combination with another card or cards), check to see if either will reveal cards you need to remove other cards; if so, remove that combination first.

**Beleaguered Castle:** Many of the tips for playing Klondike (see below) apply for this game as well. Try to empty out columns, so you can move kings that cover needed cards.

**Bowling:** When first placing cards, be sure you leave gaps between them unless they're consecutive. (e.g., leave a gap between a 4 and a 6).

**Betsy Ross, Calculation:** Figure out what cards you'll need to play to the foundations early. Avoid covering up these cards. Don't lay a card over any lower card of the same rank. Consider reserving a column just for kings.

**Canfield, Eagle Wing:** Play cards from the reserve before playing cards from the Waste pile whenever possible. Get your cards to the Foundations at every opportunity.

**Clock:** There are no choices to make in Clock, so you'll just have to hope that the cards are laid out to come out correctly. Making Clock come out is a very rare occurrence.

**Cribbage Square:** When placing the cards, remember what card combinations go best with others. Keep 7s and 8s in rows or columns, 5s with 10s and face cards. Try to score on double runs (e.g., 4, 5, 6, 6) and on 15s.

**Eight Off, Flower Garden, Four Free, Seahaven Towers:** Work to get the aces and low cards out of the columns and over to the Foundations. When you find a move, perform it mentally to see where you end up. Then compare it to your other possible moves to see which one does the most good. This is important, because you can end up limiting your options if you're not careful. Try to empty columns to increase your mobility.

**Eliminator:** Every empty Foundation can be used to avoid a dead-end. Therefore, try to use as few Foundations as possible. Look for runs of cards in suit, especially for the longest run in the first moves of the game.

**Euchre:** You want to be able to choose a trump suit so that there will be a good chance your hand will win at least three tricks. If you choose the trump suit of the upcard, keep in mind that this card will be the first card played by the deck.

High trump cards and aces of other suits should have good chances to win tricks. Low trump cards may also win tricks if you are void in other suits. During play, if you don't have a sure winner but have low trump cards, throw away weak singleton non-trumps so you can later trump that suit.

**Fortress, Shamrocks:** To decide on the starting card for the Foundations, look at the top half of the columns to see which cards are most prevalent. If there are a lot of cards of similar rankings (e.g., 5s, 6s, and 7s), pick the lower rank (5s in this example) for the Foundations, since you're building up. Build up the Foundations evenly.

Since any card can be placed in an empty column, you will increase your options if you can pile lots of cards in relatively few columns. In Shamrocks, stay away from building columns upwards (e.g., 3, 4, 5 with 5 on top), as you won't be able to move the lower card to the Foundation.

**Four Seasons:** Since you can fill empty spaces at any time, wait to fill a space with a card you'll need soon, rather than filling it right away. Note that you can lift any card from a Tableau pile to "peek" under it and see what card (if any) is underneath.

**Gaps:** You'll have big trouble if you leave a gap to the right of a king. Ditto if you allow a gap to shift to the far right end of a row.

**Golf:** Before playing, check to see which card sequences will permit the highest number of cards to be moved to the Foundation. Save your 2s and queens as insurance against an ace or king that turns up from the stock.

**Klondike:** Before your first play, flip the card from the stock to see what's available. However, don't play any cards from here except as a last resort. Make it your intention to uncover the cards hidden beneath the columns (if you can get these out, you will usually win). Whatever play creates the most card movement between columns (thus, building sequences) and results in flipping a hidden card will be the best move you can make.

Before making a move, mentally forecast where it will end up. If it ends up at a dead end, look for something else.

**La Belle Lucie:** Check to see what top cards in the columns can be moved to the Foundations first. Once you've exhausted these options, free up other cards that can be moved to the Foundation. Any sequence of two cards of the same suit on a column are stuck (the higher card on the bottom can't be moved), so you should avoid building sequences in columns except when it frees up a card for the Foundation. Once you are forced to build a sequence on a column, go ahead and stack up any additional available cards.

**Nestor:** Match pairs from the Tableau before taking cards from the Reserve. Take cards that will unlock additional pairs. Never match a pair from the Reserve; this doesn't help you at all. Just wait until they can be matched with a cards from the Tableau.

**Penguin:** Strategy for Penguin is similar to Four Free. Uncover low cards as soon as possible, and move them to the Foundations.

**Poker Square:** Try to build straights and flushes in one direction (vertically or horizontally) and build pairs, three of a kind, four of a kind, etc. in the opposite direction. Pairs and two pairs are worth so few points that, toward the end of the game you should avoid forming these combinations, unless you have no choice.

**Pyramid, Scorpion:** First, try to match cards from the tableau. Then match them with cards from the Stock if possible. In Pyramid, save the cards in the Reserve until you no longer have any plays.

**Slide:** Before sliding any cards, look carefully at your grid to see if there are any easy matches (three slides or less) Be sure you're not wasting many moves on low-ranking cards, especially late in the game when you're scoring on bigger multipliers. You only have 12 moves, so make them count.

**Spiderette, Yukon:** As in Klondike, your best moves are those that uncover hidden cards, so play accordingly. Because there is no redeal in

Spiderette, complete all possible moves in the Tableau before choosing cards from the Stock.

**Strategy:** It is critical to avoid placing a card on a stack that contains another lower-ranking card of the same suit. Place lower cards on top of higher cards generally. Ideally, if you can get four consecutive cards of one rank together (e.g., four jacks), that will help later. If you can get three or four consecutive cards of one rank together, begin placing cards of the next lowest rank right on top of these. This game is easier to manage if you place lower cards on one side and move up to the higher cards on the other side.

**Triplets:** In order to win, your first set must determine all your subsequent sets (e.g., if you select a 3, 4, 5, try to obtain a K, A, 2, a 6, 7, 8, and so on). Try to pull one card from each rank before taking a second card from any rank, and take all your second cards before third cards, etc. When you have options in your selections (e.g., two 9s are available), take the one that covers a card you'll need to match in the next few plays. Avoid taking the bottom card in a pile unless there are no other cards of the same rank available elsewhere.

## Two Deck Games

**Aces and Kings:** Move cards from ace Foundations to king Foundations (or vice versa) to make it possible to play different cards to the Foundations. For instance, moving a jack from a queen (on the king Foundation) to a 10 (on the ace Foundation) makes it possible to play a queen to the Foundations, instead of a 10. If you can choose between moving a card with the same rank from the Reserve piles or the Tableau piles, it is usually better to move it from the Reserve piles, since that frees up other cards you might need.

**Alhambra:** Be sure not to miss any possible plays to the Waste pile, since this is the only way to move cards between piles. If you have a choice to play two identical cards on the Reserve piles, "peek" under the piles to see which cards are underneath to decide which card to play.

**Batsford:** This game is the same as Klondike except for the number of cards and columns used and the ability to place three kings in a Reserve pile. The Reserve pile is most useful to get kings out of the Stock pile, since there is no redeal; it's usually best not to move kings from the Tableau to the Reserve pile unless really needed. Be sure to get kings out of the Reserve pile out at the earliest opportunity, since the pile can only hold three kings, and there are eight in the pile.

**Colorado:** Remember that you can lift any card from a Tableau pile to "peek" under it and see what card (if any) is underneath. In general, try to place cards on tops of piles of cards of the same suit. Then, when you remove a card from a pile, you might be able to use the card under it. Try

not to cover up cards that you'll need soon. If two of the Tableau piles hold the same card (rank and suit), you might want to cover one of those piles with a card, since you are unlikely to need both cards at the same time.

**Forty Thieves:** This is a very difficult game to finish, since you can only build the Tableau columns down in suit. As much as possible, try to free up the aces. When given a choice of two identical cards to play to a Foundation, play a card that will let you free up better cards underneath.

**Mount Olympus:** It may take some time to get used to building down the Tableau by twos in suit; make sure you don't miss any plays before you flip over a new card (to quickly check these, right-click each card to automatically move it). As with Forty Thieves, when given a choice of two identical cards to play to a Foundation, play a card that will let you free up better cards underneath.

**Red and Black:** Building to the Tableau sets you up for building to the Foundations, so careful building is imperative. Remember when moving cards on the Tableau that you can only move one card at a time, so if there are multiple cards in a sequence, you should move the highest cards first. (In other words, if you have a red 9, a black 8, and a red 7 on three different columns, move the black 8 onto the red 9 first, then move the red 7 onto the 8; if you move the red 7 onto the black 8 first, you won't be able to move the 7 and 8 onto the 9.)

Whenever possible, play all of the cards in a column, since empty columns get filled by the upcard of the Stock pile; this gives you more cards to play with on the Tableau.

**Spider:** See Spiderette in the "One Deck Games" section.

**Sultan:** Since you can fill the empty Tableau piles at any time, you might want to wait to fill a pile with a card you'll need soon, rather than filling it right away.

**Terrace:** Critical to the success of this game is picking a good initial card to start the Foundations. Look at the Reserve pile to see which cards will be available soon, and which won't. For instance, if there are two 5s buried deep in the Reserve pile, 5 (or 4, or 3) may not be a good choice as a starting rank for the Foundations.

## Arcade Games

**3 Towers:** If possible, choose cards in the Tableau that form long sequences, because you get more points that way. Otherwise, choose cards that maximize the number of other cards in the tableau that will become exposed.

**Best 21:** Try to form piles of 11, since cards with the value 10 are the most common. Of course, you'll want to use your aces on piles of 10 or 20.

**Fast 21:** Use the same strategies as for Best 21. Also, if you don't have a good place to put low cards, keep them in a separate hand to try to form 5-card Charlies.

**Pick 2:** When possible, remove pairs instead of sequences, since you get more points for pairs. Choose pairs and sequences in such a way that favorable cards will become exposed.

**Sum 11:** Be on the lookout for all the different ways cards can add up to 11: 5-6, 7-4, 8-3, 9-2, 10-A, 6-3-A-A, and so on. Remove cards in such a way that as many other cards as possible are exposed.



## SPADES

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 a card from a non-trump suit. Spades cannot be led until they've been "broken" (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.

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

### *Spades 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). For example, if you have three low trumps and one doubleton (such as two clubs), you can expect your trumps to take one trick.

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. This will help you to avoid acquiring bags from overbidding.

A 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.

# TAROT

Tarot is a trick-taking game typically played with four players. Tarot uses a 78-card deck consisting of the four customary suits (spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs) with 14 cards in each suit, ranked in this order: R (roi), D (dame), C (cavalier), V (valet), 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

The deck also includes a 21-card trump suit (the "picture" cards numbered 1-21), and a special card called the *excuse*. The excuse, the 1 of trump, and the 21 of trump are special cards known as *bouts* (Fig. 1). Bout is pronounced "boo."



Fig. 1: The Bouts

Each player is dealt 18 cards, and six cards are dealt to a separate pile called the *chien*. The object of the game is to get points by making your bid (or by preventing others from making their bids). The game ends when one player reaches a certain number of points, or after a certain number of hands.

## Bidding

A round of bidding starts the game. Each player in turn can either pass or increase the bid. Once a player has passed, he or she can't bid again. If all players pass, the cards are redealt, and the deal rotates counter-clockwise.

You only want to bid if you think you can take sufficient card points during a hand. The amount of card points you need depends on what cards you manage to take.

There are four possible bids: *Prise* (bid value of 1), *Garde* (bid value of 2), *Garde Sans* (bid value of 4), and *Garde Contre* (bid value of 6):

**Prise (take):** You get to pick up the *chien*, taking the cards into your hand and then discarding six cards.

**Garde (guard):** The same bid as *Prise*, but at increased stakes (you gain or lose two times the points).

**Garde Sans (guard without):** No one sees the *chien*, but the *chien* counts for you.

**Garde Contre (guard against):** No one sees the *chien*, but the *chien* counts for the defenders.

In addition to these bids, players may be able to make one or more special declarations:

**Chelem (slam):** You're declaring that you will take all the tricks. This is a risky declaration; you win 400 points if you get *chelem*, but lose 200 points if you don't. If you happen to take all of the tricks without getting a *chelem*, you score 200 points anyway. Only the taker can make this declaration.

**Poignée:** You have a *single poignée* (10 or more trumps), a *double poignée* (13 or more trumps), or a *triple poignée* (15 or more trump). You must show the *poignée* to the other players before playing. If you hold the excuse, it can be counted towards your *poignée*, but only if you don't have enough trumps otherwise.

A single *poignée* is worth 20 points, a double is worth 30 points, and a triple is worth 40 points. Note that you can declare *poignée* as either taker or defender.

**Misère:** This declaration is not always used in the game. If you're dealt a hand with no court cards (R, D, C, or V) or no trumps, you can declare *misère* (whether you're the taker or defender). Declaring *misère* adds 30 points to the declarer's score, and deducts 10 points from the score of the other three players, regardless of the outcome of the hand. (This is independent of the normal hand scoring.)

## Winning the Bid

The player with the highest bid is the "taker," and the three other players become a team (the "defenders") to try to keep the taker from making his or her bid.

If you are the taker and bid *Prise* or *Garde*, you show the *chien* to the other players and then pick up the *chien*, taking the cards from it into your hand. You must then lay down six cards from your hand; these cards are laid face down and will count for you at the end of the game.

You cannot lay down any trump cards, any *bouts*, or any R (roi) cards. (In the rare case where you have so many trump in your hand that you must put trump back in the *chien*, the trump cards must be shown to the defenders.)

If you bid *Prise* or *Garde*, you can bid *chelem* after picking up the *chien*. This is also when other declarations (*poignée*, *misère*) can be made; you can declare these two anytime prior to playing a card to the first trick.

If you bid *Garde Sans* or *Garde Contre*, no one gets to look at the *chien*; the *chien* cards count towards your taken cards (for *Garde Sans*) or the defenders' taken cards (for *Garde Contre*).

## Taking Tricks

Play starts with the player to the dealer's right (unless the taker declares chelem, in which case he or she leads); each player plays a card to the middle, in turn. Play is counter-clockwise.

You can lead any card. You must follow suit if possible (or play the excuse).

The excuse can be played at any time, regardless of the card led. If the excuse is led, it is ignored, and the second card played is considered the lead for the trick.

If you can't follow suit and you hold a trump card, you must play it (or play the excuse). If you can't follow suit and don't hold trump, you can play any card (including the excuse).

**Important:** When you play a trump card, you must always **overtrump**: you must, if possible, play a trump card higher than the highest trump card played so far. (If you don't have a higher trump card, you can play any trump card.)

The excuse cannot win a trick unless it is played in the last trick (see "Special Game Situations" for details). However, the team that played it gets points for the excuse, regardless of which team won the trick. If the team that played the excuse won the trick (because another team member played a winning card), that team gets the full 4.5 points for it. But if the team who played the excuse lost the trick, that team still gets 4 points for the excuse (and it still counts as one bout for that team), while the team who won the trick gets 0.5 points (the value of the lowest card in the game) in exchange.

The trick is won by the player who plays the highest card of the suit led, unless a trump card was played, in which case the player who played the highest trump card wins the trick.

The player who won the trick leads the next card, and play continues. The hand ends when all cards have been played, and then scoring occurs. The deal rotates counterclockwise, and play continues until the game ends.

## Special Game Situations

In the rare case that a player is dealt the 1 of trump and no other trump cards (and is also not dealt the excuse), the game is redealt, since that player has such a weak hand and it is very difficult for him or her to win the 1 of trump whether declarer or defender.

Special situations also apply if the excuse is played in the last trick of the hand. The excuse is taken by the player who wins the trick, either taker or defender (scoring its full 4.5 points, and counting as one bout for that player's team); no points are given for it in exchange. If the excuse is led as the first card in the last trick, and the team that led it has won the previous

17 tricks, the excuse wins the trick. (This latter rule is a matter of fairness: it allows a player to get a chelem even if he or she holds the excuse.)

Another special situation: if a player has taken the first 16 tricks (is trying for a chelem), and takes the 1 of trump on the next to last trick, and the excuse on the last trick, that player gets the *petit au bout* bonus (see the next section) in addition to the chelem bonus, even though the 1 of trump was not played on the last trick. This lets a player who holds both the 1 of trump and the excuse make a chelem and still get the *petit au bout* bonus. (Note that it is also possible for a player to make a chelem, play the excuse in the last trick, and win the 1 of trump in that last trick from a defender. In this case, the player gets the *petit au bout* bonus for taking the 1 of trump in the last trick, as usual.)

## Winning a Hand

There are 91 card points possible in a hand. Most cards (1-10 of any of the four suits, and most of the trump cards) are only worth one half point (0.5). The other cards are worth points as follows: Bouts = 4.5, R (roi) = 4.5, D (dame) = 3.5, C (cavalier) = 2.5, V (valet) = 1.5.

The points you need to win a hand depend on how many of the bouts you manage to take. If you take 3 bouts, you need 36 card points to make your bid. If you take 2 bouts, you need 41 card points to make your bid. If you take 1 bout, you need 51 card points to make your bid. And if you take 0 bouts, you need 56 points to make your bid.

If either the taker or one of the defenders takes the 1 of trump on the last trick, they receive a special 10 point bonus known as the *petit au bout*. See the next section for more information on *petit au bout*.

## Scoring

In Tarot, you score points depending on how much you exceeded, or didn't exceed, the points you needed to win.

The basic formula for scoring in Tarot is:

$(25 + [\text{Card points gained or lost}] + [10 \text{ or } -10 \text{ points for petit au bout, if any}]) \times (\text{Bid value of } 1, 2, 4, \text{ or } 6)$

+ (20, 30, or 40 points for any poignées declared)

+ (400, -200, or 200 points for a chelem, if any)

The different parts of the score are explained in detail below.

**Card points gained or lost:** The difference between the points the taker made and the points the taker needed to make.

**Points for a petit au bout:** +10 points if the *taker* got petit au bout and made his or her contract, or if the *defenders* got petit au bout and the taker didn't make his or her contract. -10 points if the *defenders* got petit au bout

and the taker made his or her contract, or if the *taker* got petit au bout and the taker didn't make his or her contract.

**Bid value:** A multiplier based on your bid: x1 for Prise, x2 for Garde, x4 for Garde Sans, and x6 for Garde Contre.

**Points for a poignée:** 20 points for a single poignée (10 trump), 30 points for a double poignée (13 trump), and 40 points for a triple poignée (15 trump). If a defender declared poignée, the points are also added to the score, since the game is then worth more.

**Points for a chelem:** +400 points if the taker declared chelem and got it. +200 points if the taker got chelem without declaring it. -200 points if the taker declared chelem and didn't get it, but won the hand. +200 points if the taker declared chelem and didn't get it but did **not** win the hand. (Points are added in this case as a penalty, since three times the base score will be deducted from the taker's score.)

If the taker wins the hand, he or she gets three times the base score added to his or her cumulative score, and each defender gets the base score subtracted from his or her score.

If the taker fails to win the hand, he or she gets three times the base score subtracted from his or her cumulative score, and each defender gets the base score added to his or her score.

For scoring examples, see the in-game help.

## Tarot Strategies

If you are considering bidding and you are low in bouts, make sure you have a lot of trump and your suited cards are very strong: roi (R) cards are especially useful, as are roi (R) & dame (D) combinations, and dame (D) & cavalier (C) combinations. A secondary consideration is how many trump you hold. If you have eight or more trumps, it is usually worth bidding; otherwise, consider the strength of the trump you hold and the supporting cards. It's usually not good to bid unless you have at least five trump, not including the excuse.

When you're the taker, try to take other players' trump by leading cards from your longest suit (ideally a suit with one or more of the cards R, D, C, or V). Lead the lowest trump possible to try to draw out trump. In general, do not play your highest trump until you need to. If you don't have the 1 of trump, try to get it with the following strategy: first lead one or two of your lowest trumps to try to shake out others' trumps, then lead your highest trumps (if you have the 21, 20, and 19, lead them in order).

If you hold the excuse, it can be useful to play it when you don't want to play a trump card, and it may be worth holding back for this reason.

When forced to overtrump, always play the lowest trump possible (with the exception of the 1 of trump). This keeps higher trumps in your hand for later.

When you're the defender, try to draw out as much of the taker's trump as possible. Two ways to do this: 1) Lead low cards in suits that you know the taker is already void in (the taker has played all his or her cards in that suit), and 2) Lead cards from your longest suit (the suit you have the most cards in), since the taker is likely to be void in those suits.

As the defender, it's also useful to play valuable cards whenever you see one of your partners is going to take a trick; don't hold back a roi (R), dame (D), or other high card if you can play it to a partner's trick.

Another defender strategy: if you have seven or more trump (or six or more strong trump), lead your low trump whenever possible to get the taker to play his or her trump. (If you have only a few trump, however, save them to take tricks that have high point values.)

And one last strategy for the defender: if you hold the 21 of trump, and you suspect one of your partners has the 1 of trump (perhaps due to the taker's low bid), lead the 21 as soon as possible to give your partner a chance to play the 1 of trump.

## WAR

War is played between two players. They split a standard 52-card pack. Each of the combatants turns up a card. The player whose card is higher (suits don't matter) wins both cards and places them at the bottom of his or her pack.

Play continues until a pair is turned up, at which point you declare "War." The two cards of the pair are placed in the center, and each player plays three cards face-down ("W-A-R") and a fourth face-up ("spells War!"). The player who plays the higher face-up card wins all the cards in the war, unless the two cards again form a pair—in that case, you must have another war. (A player with insufficient cards remaining to fill out this procedure puts down as many cards as he or she has left. The opposition matches this number.) The object of the game is to win all the cards.

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<http://www.sierra.de> - <http://www.coktel.de>  
For French speaking territories please refer to French Customer Support  
Opening Hours are 0900 to 2100 - Inc. Saturdays and Bank Holidays

## The PEGI age rating system:

Age Rating categories:

Les catégories  
de tranche d'âge:



**Note:** There are some local variations!

**Note:** Il peut y avoir quelques variations en fonction du pays!

Content Descriptors:

Description du contenu:



For further information about the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) rating system please visit:

Pour de plus amples informations concernant l'évaluation du système d'information de jeu Pan Européen (PEGI), vous pouvez consulter:

Para obtener más información sobre el sistema de calificación de juegos (PEGI), por favor visite:

Per ulteriori informazioni sul sistema europeo di valutazione delle informazioni del gioco (PEGI) vi preghiamo di visitare:

Für weitere Informationen über das europäische Spiel-Informationen Bewertungs-System (PEGI) besuchen Sie bitte:

<http://www.pegi.info>

## NOTES