

KILL DOCTOR LUCKY

FREE EDITION

A pre-mystery board game for 3-8 players

Welcome to the J. Robert Lucky Mansion, a rambling country estate seven miles north of nowhere. It's a stormy midsummer's evening, ten seconds after midnight. And someone's just shut off the lights.

You have hated Doctor Lucky for as long as you can remember, and you've been secretly awaiting this perfect chance to take the old man out. Maybe he destroyed your dry cleaning business; maybe you think he's the king of the vampires. Perhaps he's the only person standing between you and the family fortune. Or maybe his cat just keeps peeing in your shrubs. Whatever your reason, it's good enough to push you over the edge. And now you absolutely can't wait to put the old bastard away.

And, though you don't know it, everyone else in the house wants to kill him too.

Take a deep breath. Remember why you're here. And then start sneaking around in the dark. If you run across a weapon, grab it. If you bump into Doctor Lucky, give him what for.

Trying to kill Doctor Lucky is pretty easy, as long as no one's looking. But they don't call him "Doctor Lucky" for nothing. He's got an uncanny knack for slipping out of harm's way. Don't despair; after enough tries, you're guaranteed to wear the old codger down. You just need a clever plan, a good bluff, and a little more luck than everyone else.

So gather in the drawing room and get cracking. Somebody's going to kill Doctor Lucky tonight, and it might as well be you.

This is the free print-and-play version of Kill Doctor Lucky, based on the 2002 "Director's Cut." It includes the complete original 1996 game plus new variations, commentary from the author, and flavor text on the cards. Look for the full-color boxed edition of Kill Doctor Lucky from Paizo Publishing, and other cool stuff at cheapass.com.

Components:

Kill Doctor Lucky requires the following components:

Game Board

Deck of 96 cards

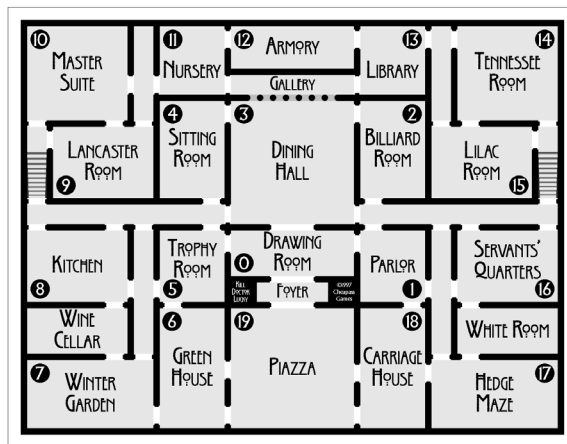
Pawns for Every Player

One Pawn for Doctor Lucky

About 30 **Spite Tokens** (pennies, stones, etc.)

The Board: The game board is 17 x 22 and is included as a single PDF file. You can print the board using a large-format printer at your local copy shop, shrink it to a single page for a handy travel size board, or use Acrobat's tiling function to print the file as multiple pages. Or you can simply use the board design as a blueprint, and make your own board out of carved wood or Lego blocks. You would not be the first.

There are several alternate boards available for Kill Doctor Lucky, but the following summary describes the basic Lucky Mansion shown here.



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Games

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Yes! I gave Cheapass Games \$_____ for this game!

To learn more, read the last page of this document, or visit www.cheapass.com.

Dr. Lucky's mansion has 32 "rooms," including 24 named rooms, 6 hallways and 2 stairways. (The stairways and halls count as "rooms.") When you try to kill Dr. Lucky, you must be alone in a room with him. You must also be out of sight of the other players.

Sight lines work like this: if a player can stand in one room and look straight (perpendicularly) through any number of doorways into your room, he can see you. So, for example, someone standing in the Kitchen can see (and be seen by) people in the Master Suite, the west stairs, the two adjoining hallways, the Trophy Room, the Wine Cellar, and the Winter Garden.

You can't see diagonally through doors so, for example, someone in the Foyer can't see into the Carriage House.

The Gallery overlooks the Dining Hall. It's a musician's gallery, like a balcony. You can see through that partial wall, but you can't walk through it. The Gallery can see (and be seen by) every room straight down to the Piazza, plus the Nursery, the Master Suite, and the Library.

To Begin:

Start all the players in the Drawing Room. Give the deck a quick shuffle.

To determine who starts, and to place Doctor Lucky, the winner of the last game deals cards faceup, starting on his left. He deals only until someone gets a room card. That player will go first, and Dr. Lucky will start in that room.

Now reshuffle the deck, and deal a starting hand of six cards to every player.

How to Win:

Kill Doctor Lucky. Pretty simple.

You will accomplish this by being alone in a room with Doctor Lucky, when no one can see you, and making a murder attempt that succeeds. (Lots of them will fail.)

Doctor Lucky's luck is represented by "Failure" cards that everyone can play, which is why your early murder attempts will probably fail. But every attempt will earn Spite Tokens and pull Failure cards out of other players' hands.

On Every Turn:

On your turn you may do several different things, but some of them are mutually exclusive. You may take a step, play move cards, try to kill Doctor Lucky, and/or draw a card. You can't draw a card if you've played a card or made a murder attempt, and you also can't draw cards in an unnamed room.

Step 1, Movement:

You are allowed one free step in any direction, from one room to the next. Hallways and stairways count as rooms. For example, you can't step directly from the Kitchen to the

Trophy room. You must walk through the hall. You may also play as many Move and Room cards as you wish during this part of your turn. Move and Room cards work like this:

Move Cards: These cards can move you or Dr. Lucky any number of steps up to the number listed on the card. When you play one on Dr. Lucky, he steps like a normal player, not by following his room numbers.

Room Cards: These cards jump you or Dr. Lucky to a particular room, such as the Foyer. You may take your free step after playing a room card if it helps. For example, you could jump yourself to the Piazza, then take a step to the Foyer.

Step 2, Making a Murder Attempt:

Next, you may try to kill Doctor Lucky. To do this you must be alone in the room with him, and you must be out of sight of every other player. As mentioned above, players can see along straight lines (but not diagonally) through all the doorways and the Gallery wall.

You may play one Weapon card to improve the value of your murder attempt, though it's not required. Without the Weapon your attack has a base value of 1. This means you're trying to kill the old man with whatever is handy, or just poking him in the eye with your finger.

If you play a Weapon, your attempt has the base value of that Weapon. For example, a murder attempt with a 4-point Weapon has a base value of 4. The stronger your murder attempt, the harder it will be for your opponents to stop you.

Some Weapons have a higher value in particular rooms, such as the Billiard Cue in the Billiard Room. It takes planning and good luck to get full value out of those cards!

If you have any Spite Tokens (which are awarded for failed murder attempts) these add +1 to your attempt. So, a murder attempt with a base value of 3, if you had 4 spite tokens, would have a total value of 7.

You can't play more than one Weapon card in a murder attempt, and you can't make more than one murder attempt on the same turn.

Failure Cards: Once you've made your murder attempt, everyone else gets one chance to foil it by playing Failure cards, which represent the Doctor's seemingly inexhaustible luck. Starting with the player to your left, every player may play one or more Failure cards, or pass.

Foiling a murder attempt requires one Failure point for each point in the murder value. Failure cards are worth 1, 2, or 3 points each, and each player can play as many as he likes.

Declining to play Failure cards is an important strategy. The more Failures you can draw out of your opponents, the better your chances of making the kill. However, if you pass too much you may wind up ending the game prematurely, so don't get greedy!

Spite Tokens: If your murder attempt fails, you earn a Spite Token. These tokens will stay with you for the rest of the game, giving you a permanent +1 on all your subsequent murder attempts.

Even though your early murder attempts probably won't succeed, it's important to keep trying, because you force the Failure cards out of other players' hands, and build up your own spite for powerful murder attempts later in the game.

Two Discard Piles: Failure cards go into a different discard pile than the other cards. When the deck empties, you will reshuffle only the non-Failure cards to replace the deck. Once a Failure card is played, it's out of the game for good.

Step 3, Drawing:

Drawing a card means you've taken the time to snoop around the mansion for useful stuff. This means you can't draw a card if you did anything else on your turn aside from taking your free move. If you played a Move or Room card, or made a murder attempt, you can't draw.

Also, if you are standing in a room with no name (for example, on the stairs) you can't draw because there's nothing in those unnamed rooms to find.

After Your Turn:

Dr. Lucky moves by himself after every turn. When you are finished with your turn, move Dr. Lucky as described below. If Doctor Lucky moves into a room with a player, then that player's turn is next!

Dr. Lucky follows a predictable route through his mansion, stepping along the numbers unless he's lured off course by someone's card play.

If Dr. Lucky is standing in a numbered room, move him into the next numbered room (19 leads back to 0). If he's not in a numbered room, move him to the highest numbered adjoining room. For example, if Dr. Lucky is in the Wine Cellar, move him into the Kitchen. If he is in the Foyer, he moves into the Piazza.

Note: When the Doctor takes his automatic move, he does not step through the intervening rooms. He jumps directly from one numbered room to the next.

Who Goes Next: Normally, the turn order passes to the left. But Dr. Lucky can activate a player by landing on him. This makes it possible to lie in wait for him, but it also makes it easy to lose turns if you get lost in a room that the Doctor never visits.

Dr. Lucky only changes the turn order when he takes his automatic move, not when he's moving for any other reason. If Dr. Lucky moves himself into an occupied room, the player standing in that room goes next. This is true even if that player just had a turn!

This means that, if you're clever, you can take several turns in a row, leading the old fool around the mansion. You

can use these extra turns to draw extra cards, but not to make multiple murder attempts. Since you can't move after a murder attempt, Dr. Lucky will always escape when you fail.

After the turn order is altered by Dr. Lucky, it proceeds forward from that position. It doesn't move back to the players who got skipped.

First Round Exception: At the beginning of the game, Dr. Lucky *does not* activate players by moving into them until each player has had one turn. (This used to be an alternate rule, but now it's standard.)

Multiple Players in the Room: If Dr. Lucky lands in a room occupied by two or more players, then the "my turn" status passes around the table, from the last active player to the left, until it hits one of the players in the room. This means that if you drag Dr. Lucky into an occupied room, one of the other players in that room, not you, will go next.

A Sample Turn:

There are 5 players, and it's player 1's turn.

Player 5 has just ended his turn, and Dr. Lucky has moved from the Master Suite into the Nursery (room 10 to room 11; see the diagram below).

Player 1 plays a Move-1 card to step from the Library into the Gallery. After this, he takes his free move, stepping into the Nursery.

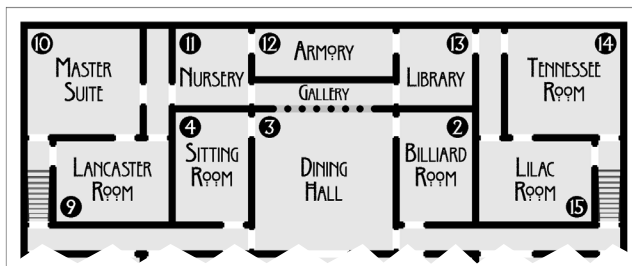
Now Player 1 tries to kill Dr. Lucky. There are no other players in the Nursery, and no one can see into the room, so the attempt is allowed. He plays the Billiard Cue Weapon card, which is worth 2 points outside of the Billiard Room, so it will take 2 Failure points to stop the attempt.

Player 2 has the first chance to stop the murder, but it's early in the game and he feels confident that others will be able to. He passes the chance to play a Failure, although he has several. So does Player 3.

Player 4 has watched Players 5's hand dwindle to 2 cards, and feels a little reluctant to leave even one Failure up to him. However, he has only one Failure point, and he plays it.

Player 5 also has only one Failure card left, and it's worth 3 points. Although it's overkill, Player 5 must play this F-3 card to stop the murder attempt from succeeding. He does, and Player 1's murder attempt fails.

After the turn ends, Dr. Lucky moves into the Armory (Room 11 to Room 12).



Strategy Hints:

What can be said that's not already scattered through the rulebook? Don't get caught in a room where Dr. Lucky never goes, especially in a game with 6 or more people. You will never get a turn again.

This doesn't just mean a room without a number. If you compare the arrangement of the players with their turn order on the table, you may see that there are parts of the mansion where you simply will never catch Doctor Lucky. If you have the foresight to figure this out before you get locked down, more power to you.

Learn to ride the Lucky Train. You can take turn after turn dragging the old man along his favorite connected rooms, drawing card after card. And make sure when you're all done that you are set up to do it again. People will hate you for doing this. Let them hate you. You are here to win.

If you can't hide, then watch. People tend to hang around in places where they have plans. If you keep an eye on them, they will never get to do what they want.

Variations:

Starting Positions: To jump start the game, mix up the starting positions. Shuffle the deck and deal cards to each player until everyone has received either (1) a room card, or (2) a weapon card that mentions a particular room. Everyone starts in that room, rather than the Drawing Room. Do the same for Doctor Lucky, then reshuffle and begin.

Starting Hands: Though the basic rules call for starting hands of 6, it's more reasonable to vary the starting hand size by the number of players. For 2 or 3 players, start with hands of 8 cards. For 4 or 5, use 7 cards. For 6 or 7 players, start with 6-card hands. If you have 8 or more players, start with hands of 5.

Super Spite Tokens: This is the original rule for the Spite tokens: As well as adding a +1, they are also playable as Failure cards. When you spend Spite as Failure cards, you must hand the tokens you spend to the player whose murder attempt you are foiling.

This turned out to be less good than we thought, which is why they currently have their "permanent +1" ability only.

Killing Other Players: It's been suggested a hundred times, so we thought we'd give you our definitive best answer for how to kill other players. It goes like this:

You can try to kill another player as long as you are in the same room with them, and no one else, including Doctor Lucky, can see you.

Starting on the murderer's left, other players (including the victim) can play failure cards.

Along with his Failures, the victim can play a Weapon card as a counterattack. This starts a new murder attempt

on the original murderer, but *does not nullify the original attempt*. This can result in a double-kill. Uninvolved players can play Failure cards on either murder attempt, in turn.

If counterattacked, the original murderer can counter-counterattack, and so on.

Killing another player does not win you the game, but you do get all of his cards.

Killing Other Players Option: If you don't like games where people can be eliminated before the end, then you may allow a deceased player to reenter the game in the Drawing Room with a hand of five cards. This happens when that player would normally get a turn, i.e., only when the player to his right finishes a turn without Dr. Lucky activating someone else. This still means that the dead player might never get a turn, but at least he's "playing."

Kill Doctor Lucky and his Dog: This is a favorite variant from the Cheapass Web Site, and also part of Paizo's full-color edition of the game. It was submitted by Michelle Elbert, Bill Maxwell and Jams "Diego" Pinkerton.

Use a pawn to represent Dr. Lucky's dog, and start it in the room with Dr. Lucky. The dog is loyal to Dr. Lucky, and will therefore follow Dr. Lucky around the house. (The Doctor is not so loyal to his dog.) The dog moves after Dr. Lucky takes his normal move, and he takes the shortest route to his master. This means that while Dr. Lucky warps from numbered room to numbered room, his dog can only move one space at a time.

When choosing between two routes of equal length, the dog will use the "smell test," going into the room that the Doctor was most recently in. If the smell test fails, just flip a coin.

The dog counts as a witness, so you can't kill Dr. Lucky if the dog is watching. You can, however kill the dog if the only witness is Dr. Lucky. Players can play Failures on this.

Move and Room cards don't affect the dog. If the dog is in the Gallery (Board 1) and can see Dr. Lucky from there, he will just stand there and bark until Dr. Lucky moves out of sight.

If the dog is killed, tip it on its side and leave it there. Have a moment of silence for the dog whenever anybody enters the room.

Dog Option: If you're playing that you can kill other players, Dr. Lucky will counterattack anyone who has tried (successfully or not) to kill his dog, but only after the main murder attempt fails. Dr. Lucky's attack is treated just like any other player attack, and the Doctor rolls over the top card of the deck to try to get a weapon. Without a weapon the attack has a value of 1. You can't counterattack Dr. Lucky, and failure-playing starts with the murderer.

And More: If you've got a variation of your own, we'd love to read it. If we like it, we might even make it part of these rules. Our contact info is found at www.cheapass.com.

Hi. This is James Ernest and this is the commentary track from the 2002 Director's Cut of *Kill Doctor Lucky*.

This game concept came from the idea of everyone in the house wanting to kill the host, which was the plot of a short story that I wrote in college called "The Butler Wore Black." I was thinking about that story on a drive across Seattle in Spring 1996, and I came up with the title "Kill Doctor Lucky."

The following week, my friend Jordan Bojar went to the GAMA trade show (GAMA is the Game Manufacturer's Association), and he bounced the idea of "Kill Doctor Lucky" off Darwin Bromley, the head of Mayfair Games. Darwin said he'd probably buy a game called Kill Doctor Lucky, and that was enough to inspire me to finish it. Sadly, it took me another ten years to sell a game to Mayfair, and it wasn't this one.

The game took about two weeks to write. I spent an evening with game designer Dave Howell hashing out a bunch of mechanics that didn't work (Do you need a motive? Is there a wandering detective?) and spent another few days working with my playtesters, especially Rick Fish, who has a co-design credit.

At the time I was writing a whole set of board games for Cheapass Games, which was getting ready to launch in late 1996. Some other game ideas from that same period were **Get Out**, **Huzzah!**, and **Bleeding Sherwood**. All these games are out of print now. We knew even then that Kill Doctor Lucky was the best of the pack, which is why I released it first.

Cheapass Games was intended to be a publishing venture that I could start very cheaply, so I wrote a set of games for which the players could provide their own spare parts. This idea was based on a concept called **Chief Herman Games** that I'd pitched to Wizards of the Coast about a year before. The Chief Herman Games would have been full-color games and the line would offer a "bits pack," a collection of pawns, dice, stones, money, and stuff that you needed to play the games. Then you could buy the individual games a lot cheaper, and buy the bits box only once. They didn't buy the idea, but I thought it was good.

When I first released **Kill Doctor Lucky**, I put "2-8 Players" on the package. I've pretty much decided that the 2-player game is so different that it's not really fair to rate this game for 2, and 8 is pushing it in the other direction. However, there are alternate boards that are good for up to 10 players.

The original rules described two types of turn: one "snooping" turn in which you could take one step and draw, and a second "doing something" turn in which you could play cards, move, and try to kill Dr. Lucky, but you didn't draw a card. I like the idea of multiple turn types, but on reflection this game doesn't really have that. In this draft, the rules are simplified into a single turn type, with some restrictions. You simply can't draw if you did anything besides take a step.

Even though **Kill Doctor Lucky** is one of my most successful games, I can't help tweaking the rules because I know there are weak spots. For one thing, the midgame tends to stagnate until the Failures run out, especially in a group that has decided never to make a murder attempt. Players also hate being skipped, and while I do think the jumping turn is necessary to this game, I should have tried harder to explain to new players how to avoid being skipped. Stay out of the hallways, kids!

I think the "Spite tokens" variant, which is now part of the core rules, addresses my main peeve with this game, namely that there's not enough incentive for early murder attempts, and the game always lasts until the Failures run out. With Spite tokens in the game, you always want to earn Spite and so you'll be glad to make a murder attempt even when you know it will fail. Consequently, the Failures tend to get played out faster, and the game ends faster.

I tweaked some of the game's mechanical quirks in the 2000 sequel, **Save Doctor Lucky**, which is set on a sinking ship. That game tends to end more quickly, because the ship is sinking. And as that happens, the board shrinks.

To save Doctor Lucky, you have to be in sight of the other players (not out of sight as in this game), and this becomes easier as they are eventually all crowded into the upper decks. I also consolidated the Move and Room Cards, since parts of the board were disappearing, and a Room Card for the lowest deck would have become useless early in the game.

The "sinking ship" mechanics in **Save Doctor Lucky** won a "coolest game mechanic" award from **Games Unplugged** magazine in 2000, the only year they've given that award. That was also the year that I won "nicest game designer," so it's not surprising that they had to stop giving the awards. Their credibility was shot.

Despite the slight improvements and customized artwork (by the accidentally uncredited Damon Brown), **Save Doctor Lucky** remains a distant second to **Kill Doctor Lucky** in terms of popularity. It's apparently just more fun to kill Doctor Lucky than to save him.

Other expansions to this game have included a new board for **Kill Doctor Lucky**, based on a castle in Canada that asked us not to use their name; an expansion for **Save Doctor Lucky** set on the fictional **Moon Base Copernicus**, and the **Doctor Lucky Ambivalence Pack**, which contained two new boards: a burning building in case you want to save him, and a non-sinking cruise ship in case you want to kill him. As of this writing, there are also full-color editions of **Kill Doctor Lucky** and **Save Doctor Lucky** available from Paizo Publishing.



Kill Doctor Lucky was designed by James Ernest and Rick Fish, with help from Dave Howell, Toivo Rovainen, E. Jordan Bojar, and the unsinkable Cheapass Games guinea pigs. Published by Cheapass Games, Seattle WA: www.cheapass.com.

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Free? Seriously?

Tell me a little more about that.

Okay, here's the deal. If I made a great game and sold it to you for ten bucks, I'd probably keep about a dollar. If I sold it to a big game company, they'd probably make a nicer version for thirty bucks, and I'd still get about a dollar.

The rest of your money would go to printers, distributors, retail stores, and freight companies. And most of those guys don't know anything about what makes a great game.

Mass-producing entertainment is a gamble. It's a convoluted way for creators to protect their intellectual property, by selling it in a way that is prohibitively expensive to counterfeit. And it's getting a little old.

Why do you pay \$30 for a board game? The story goes like this: the retail price of a game covers the cost of manufacturing it, and there is no way you could make your own copy for that price, to say nothing of the hassle of finding little wooden men in six colors. So, it's worth \$30 because it costs \$30, *QED*.

But the value in a board game isn't the manufacturing cost. It's the play value. Unfortunately, this means that some games are priced way out of whack with what they are worth. And because the big gamble doesn't always work out, some of your money helps pay for the stuff that goes straight to the dump.

I've decided to try a different gamble. I'm giving my games away for free. This way, you can read the rules, make a copy, and even play the thing, before you decide what it's worth.

If you do like my games, I hope you will send me some money. But I'm also hoping you will share this experiment with your friends. You are my sales force, my marketing department, my demo team.

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How to Make The Boards and Cards:

Making your own boards and cards for Kill Doctor Lucky is simple. Here's how I do it. If you're an expert, you can ignore these hints and do it however you like.

The Board:

Cheapass game boards were originally produced as segments: we took a large page (in this case, 17 x 22) and cut it into pieces that would fit into our envelopes and boxes.

In the case of Kill Doctor Lucky, this meant that the original game board shipped as eight fragments, which had to be taped, glued, or held together with prayer.

We felt this technique was better than folding, rolling, or packaging the boards in a very flat 0.25 x 18 x 23 box.

But the free version of Kill Doctor Lucky comes as handy, portable electronics, and it's up to you to make a game board out of them.

Method 1: Large Format Printing

Your local copy shop may be able to handle output on the scale of 17 x 22. If so, and if the cost is reasonable, we suggest taking the file to them.

Think about how you will store the board, and decide whether you want to print it on paper that will roll up, fold up, or store flat in that place where you keep all the big flat things in your house.

Method 2: Travel Version

It's not so terrible to reduce the board by 50% and print it on a single sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper. Despite taking up much less space, the game is perfectly playable at this size.

In this case, you can make a more durable board by printing the artwork on a full-sheet mailing label, and affixing it to a stiff piece of cardboard.

Covering the board with a clear sheet of contact paper will protect it even more.

Method 3: Tiled Version

You can print your artwork in tiled sections, by selecting the "Tile all pages" option in Acrobat. This will create board segments similar to what Cheapass Games used to produce, except that you will have to trim them so that they can be reassembled into a single board.

Method 4: Blueprint

You can take the basic measurements from the board artwork and make your own board using whatever materials you like. Just remember that the placement of the doors and walls is very important, so make sure that your new board has all the right sight lines and connections.

Printing the Cards:

You can print the 6 sheets of cards on plain white paper and cut them with a guillotine cutter. You may find that your printer can't handle the sheets at 100% (since they do go all the way to the edge). In this case, reduce them until you can see the crop marks all around the edges of the cards.

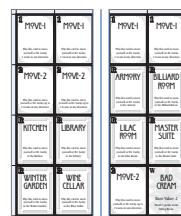
You can use any kind of card stock for the cards. We suggest 110-lb index, which you can find in a variety of pastel colors at your local office supply shop. It has a nice smooth finish and stands up to a lot of shuffling.

The card backs are optional.

Cutting the Cards:

It can be challenging to cut these cards well. There are 96 of them and they are pretty small. Here is a method for cutting them on a simple guillotine paper cutter.

Make the first cut vertically, down the center of every sheet, hitting the crop marks as closely as you can.



Next, cut the cards horizontally, again through the center of the sheet. You should now have four quadrants of four cards each. Each quadrant should have two rough edges.



Your cutter should have some kind of backstop that lets you set the cutting depth. Set it for the width of the cards, and trim all of your quadrants into vertical strips. These strips should contain two cards and one rough edge.



Finally, set the backstop for the height of the cards, and make the final cut. This is the most critical dimension to keep consistent, since this the edge that you grip when shuffling the cards. It's more important that the cards are all the same height, not that you hit the crop lines perfectly. (And by now, the crop lines are gone anyway.)