

Hanabi

2 - 5 players (best 4 players)

playing time 25 minutes

- part of two decks
- 3 x 1 for each suit (use Aces and Jacks for 1s)
- 2 x 2, 2 x 3, 2 x 4 for each suit
- 1 x 5 for each suit
- 7 x Kings
- 3 x red 10s

Aim of the game

Hanabi is a cooperative game, i.e. a game where the players do not play against each other but work together towards a common goal. In this case they are absent minded firework manufacturers who accidentally mixed up powders, fuses and rockets from a firework display. The show is about to start and panic is setting in. They have to work together to stop the show becoming a disaster! The pyrotechnicians have to put together 4 fireworks, 1 diamond, 1 spade, 1 heart, 1 club), by making a series rising in number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) with the same suited cards.

Getting ready

Place the 7 kings face up in a countable fan above and to the right of the center area and the 3 red 10s face down above and to the left. Shuffle the 40 cards to make a deck and put them face down. Deal a hand of cards to each player:

Important :

The players should not look at the cards which are dealt to them! They pick them up so that the other players can see them but so that they cannot see them themselves (so back to front!) They are not allowed to look at their own cards at all during the game. This would dishonour them and taint their reputation as master pyrotechnicians!

The Game

The player with the most colourful clothing begins the game. The players then take their turn going in a clockwise direction. On his turn, a player must complete one, and only one, of the following three actions (you are not allowed to skip your turn):

Note : When it is a player's turn, his teammates cannot comment or try to influence him.

- 1/ Give one piece of information.
- 2/ Discard a card.
- 3/ Play a card.

If there are 2 or 3 players, each player receives 5 cards. If there are 4 or 5 players, each player receives 4 cards.

1. Giving a piece of information

In order to carry out this task, the player has to take a face up king and place it face down in a stack to the left of the face up kings. He can then tell a teammate something about the cards that this player has in his hand. Important : The player must clearly point to the cards which he is giving information about. Two types of information can be given:

Information about one suit (and only one)

Examples :

- « You have a diamond here » or
- « You have two clubs, here and here » or
- « You have two hearts, there and there ».

Information about a value (and only one)

Examples :

- « You have a card with a value of 5 here » or
- « You have two cards with a value of 1 there and there » or
- « You have two cards with a value of 4 there and there ».

Important : The player must give complete information : If a player has two clubs, the informer cannot only point to one of them!

Note: This action cannot be performed if there are no face up kings. The player has to perform another action.

2. Discarding a card

Performing this task allows a face down king to be flipped face up and placed with the other face up kings. The player discards a card from his hand and puts it in the discard pile (face up). He then takes a new card and adds it to his hand without looking at it.

Note : This action cannot be performed if there are no face down kings. The player has to perform another action.

3. Playing a card

The player takes a card from his hand and puts it in front of him. Two options are possible: The card either begins or completes a firework and it is then added to this firework. Or the card does not complete any firework : it is then discarded and a red 10 is turned face up. He then takes a new card and adds it to his hand without looking at it.

How the fireworks are made up :

There can only be one firework of each suit. The cards for a firework have to be placed in rising order (1, then 2, then 3, then 4 and finally 5). There can only be one card of each value in each firework (so 4 cards in total).

When a player completes a firework – i.e. he plays the card with a value of 5 – he flips a king face up. This addition is free; the player does not need to discard a card. This bonus is lost if all the kings are already face up.

End of the game

There are 3 ways to end the game of Hanabi :

The game ends immediately and is lost if the third red 10 is flipped face up.

The game ends immediately and it is a stunning victory if the firework makers manage to make the 4 fireworks before the cards run out. The players are then awarded the maximum score of 20 points.

The game ends if a firework maker takes the last card from the pile: each player plays one more time, including the player who picked up the last card. The players cannot pick up cards during this last round (as the pile is empty). Once this last round is complete, the game ends and the players can then add up their scores.

Score

In order to calculate their scores, the players add up the largest value card for each of the 5 fireworks. Example : 3 points + 4 points + 4 points + 5 points + 2 points for a total of 18 points.

Artistic impression is determined by the Firework Manufacturers International Federation reference scale:

Points	Overall impression
0-4	horrible, booed by the crowd...
5-8	mediocre, just a smattering of applause.
9-12	honourable, but will not be remembered for very long...
13-16	excellent, crowd pleasing.
17-19	amazing, will be remembered for a very long time!
20	legendary, everyone left speechless, stars in their eyes

Advice

Here are a few hints to help you. A player who is given information can rearrange his hand if he wishes to do so in order to put the cards concerned in an order which is easier for him to remember (on the left, on the right, further up or down). The players can look at the cards in the discarded pile at any time. If a player discards a card that he has no information about, he runs the risk of getting rid of a card which could be useful in completing a firework. Sometimes a player will have no choice and will have to discard a card that he knows nothing about. However there are several copies of the cards (except for the cards with a value of 5); so discarding one does not necessarily mean that the firework cannot be completed. Clearly identify a firework that you know you cannot complete: for example pulling out the last card in the series slightly. The cards of the corresponding colour could still be discarded to put blue tokens back in the box.

Communicating while playing Hanabi

Communication (and non communication) between the players is essential to Hanabi. If you follow the rules closely, you can only communicate with your teammates when you give them information when flipping a king. However you can play whichever way suits you best: set your own rules regarding communication. You could always allow comments like "I still don't know anything about my hand" or "So do you remember what you have in your hand?"