

Love Letter

3 - 8 players (best 4-6 players)

playing time 20 minutes

- part of one deck
- 30 coins / token / poker chips or monopoly money

Online versions

<https://netgames.io/games/love-letter/>

https://tabletopia.com/games/love_letter_z-man

<https://en.boardgamearena.com/gamepanel?game=loveletter>

In person play with cards

Love Letter 2 Edition (2 - 6 players)

21 Cards

"0. Spy" x2. = 2 Jokers

"1 Guard" x5 = 3 Aces + 3 Jacks

"2 Priest" x2

"3 Baron" x2

"4 Hand Maid" x2

"5 Prince" x2

"6. Chancellor" x2

"7 King"

"8 Countess"

"9 Princess"

Classic Love Letter (2 - 4 players)

16 Cards

"1 Guard" x5 = 3 Aces + 2 Jacks

"2 Priest" x2

"3 Baron" x2

"4 Hand Maid" x2

"5 Prince" x2

"7 King"

"8 Countess"

"9 Princess"

Love Letter Premium (5 - 8 players)

32 Cards

"0. Jester" x1. = 1 light Joker
"0. Assassin" x1. = 1 dark Joker
"1 Guard" x8 = 4 Aces + 4 Jacks
"2 Priest" x2 = 2 black deuce
"2 Cardinal" x2 = 2 red deuce
"3 Baron" x2 = 2 black trey
"3 Baroness" x2 = 2 red trey
"4 Hand Maid" x2 = 2 black four
"4 Sycophant" x2 = 2 red four
"5 Prince" x2 = 2 black five
"5 Count" x2 = 2 red five
"7 King" x1 = 1 black seven
"7 Constable" x1 = 1 red seven
"8 Countess" x1 = 1 black eight
"8 Dowager Queen" x1 = 1 red eight
"9 Princess" x1 = 1 black nine
"10 Bishop" x1 = 1 red ten

Setup

1. Take the top card of the deck and set it aside **facedown** without looking at it. If you are playing a two-player game, take three more cards and set those aside **faceup**.
2. Deal each player one card from the deck as their starting hand.

Playing the Game

Love Letter is played over several game rounds in which you enlist the allies, friends, and family of the Princess to carry a letter of intent to her.

The card in your hand represents the person who currently carries your letter, but this can change during the round as you draw and play cards.

To win a round, you must either have the highest-value card at the end of the round or be the only player left in the round.

Player Turn

Take turns in clockwise order. On your turn, draw one card from the deck. Then, choose and play one of your two cards, resolving its effect.

The played card stays in your play area **faceup**, and you keep the other card in your hand.

Out of the Round

Some card effects knock you out of the current round; a competing suitor has ensured that your letter cannot be delivered.

When this happens, **discard your hand faceup in front of you** (without resolving card effects).

Until the next round, **you cannot be chosen for card effects, and your turn is skipped**. Flip over your reference card to the broken seal side as a reminder.

Played and Discarded Cards

It is important that everyone knows which cards have already been played and which cards are left in the deck, so any played or discarded cards **must always be visible to everyone**.

End of a Round

The round ends in one of two ways: when the **deck runs out** or when only **one player is left in the round**.

Deck Runs Out

After any turn, if the deck is empty, all players still in the round reveal and compare the cards in their hands.

If you have the highest-value card, you win the round and gain one favor token; your letter was successfully delivered to the Princess.

If there is a tie, all tied players win the round and each gains one token.

One Player Left

If you are the only player still in the round (all other players are out of the round due to card effects), the round immediately ends; you win and gain one favor token.

Starting the Next Round

To start a new round, shuffle the character cards, set some aside, and deal each player one card). **The player who won the previous round** takes the first turn.

If there was a tie in the previous round, randomly decide among the tied players who takes the first turn.

Winning the Game

The game ends when one player has enough favor tokens to win (based on the number of players — see table below). Multiple players can simultaneously win the game.

Players	2	3	4	5	6-8
Number of tokens to win	6	5	4	3	3

Card Effects

10: Bishop Discarding the Bishop allows you to name a number and a player. If the player has that number in their hand, you get a Token of Affection. If this would give you enough Tokens to win the game, then you win immediately and the game ends. If you gained a Token of Affection from this effect, then the player whose card you effectively revealed with the Bishop may discard their card (but doesn't apply its effects, unless it is the Princess, see page 8) and draw a new one. At the end of a round, despite his impressive 10, the Princess still beats the Bishop when comparing the values of cards in players' hands. He is considered to have a value of 10 for all other game effects, however.

9. Princess If you either play or discard the Princess for any reason, you are immediately out of the round.

8. Countess The Countess has no effect when played or discarded. You must play the Countess as the card for your turn if either the King or a Prince is the other card in your hand. You can still choose to play the Countess as the card for your turn even if you do not have the King or a Prince. When you play the Countess, do not reveal your other card; the other players will not know if you were forced to play it or chose to play it. The Countess's effect does not apply when you draw cards for other effects (Chancellor).

8: Dowager Queen When you discard the Dowager Queen, choose another player still in the round. You and that player secretly compare your hands. The player with the higher number is knocked out of the round. In case of a tie, nothing happens.

7. King Choose another player and trade hands with that player.

7: Constable its effect applies not when discarded, like most cards, but when you are knocked out of the round with it in your discard pile. Should this happen, show

the Constable, then claim a Token of Affection. If this would give you enough Tokens to win the game, then you win immediately and the game ends.

6. Chancellor Draw two cards from the deck into your hand. Choose and keep one of the three cards now in your hand, and place the other two facedown on the bottom of the deck in any order. If there is only one card in the deck, draw it and return one card. If there are no cards left, this card is played with no effect.

5. Prince Choose any player (including yourself). That player discards their hand (without resolving its effect) and draws a new hand. If the deck is empty, the chosen player draws the facedown set-aside card. If a player chooses you for the Prince effect, and you are forced to discard the Princess, you are out of the round.

5: Count When the round ends, if it is necessary to check the number in the players' hands to determine a winner, the Count will increase that number by 1. Note that this stacks, so if you have both copies of the Count in your discard pile, the number will increase by 2. In this case, the cards with a number of 8 —the Countess and the Dowager Queen—would beat the Princess. If increasing the number of the card in your hand with the Count would result in a tie for highest number in a player's hand, then resolve ties normally, by adding the numbers of the cards in the discard pile of each tied player and comparing the totals.

4: Sycophant When you discard the Sycophant, choose a player (including yourself). Then, as long as the next card played has an effect that chooses one or more players, it has to at least choose the player you chose with the Sycophant.

4. Handmaid Until the start of your next turn, other players cannot choose you for their card effects. In the rare case that all other players still in the round are "protected" by a Handmaid when you play a card, do the following: ♠ If that card requires you to choose another player (Guard, Priest, Baron, King), your card is played with no effect. ♠ If that card requires you to choose any player (Prince), then you must choose yourself for the effect.

3. Baron Choose another player. You and that player secretly compare your hands. Whoever has the lower-value card is out of the round. If there is a tie, neither player is out of the round.

3: Baroness When you discard the Baroness, you can look at the hands of either 1 or 2 other players. Do not reveal them to any other players.

2. Priest Choose another player and secretly look at their hand (without revealing it to anyone else).

2: Cardinal When you discard the Cardinal, choose exactly 2 players (you may include yourself), who will switch hands. Then, once the hands are switched, you may look at one of them without revealing it to any other players. If less than 2 players still in the round can be chosen, (eg. due to Handmaid or Sycophant), this card is discarded without effect.

1: Guard When you discard the Guard, choose a player and name a number (other than 1). If that player has that number in their hand, that player is knocked out of the round. If all other players still in the round cannot be chosen (eg. due to Handmaid or Sycophant), this card is discarded without effect.

0. Spy A Spy has no effect when played or discarded. At the end of the round, if you are the only player still in the round who played or discarded a Spy, you gain one favor token. This does not count as winning the round; the winner (even if it is you) still gains their token. Even if you play and/or discard two Spies, you still gain only one token.

0: Jester When you discard the Jester, choose another player—ideally, the one you believe is most likely to win the round. It's helpful to place the Jester token provided in the game near the player you chose, so everyone remembers your choice. If you're correct, and your chosen player does win the round, you gain a Token of Affection. If this would give you enough Tokens to win the game, then you win immediately and the game ends.

0: Assassin This is a card whose effect only applies while it is in your hand. If another player chooses you when playing a Guard, then regardless of what number that player named (even 0!), when you reveal the Assassin (to all players), the Guard's player is eliminated from the round, while you are not. Of course, all other players will now know that you have the Assassin in your hand. It would be both improper and dangerous to keep consorting with such an unsavoury character, so after you've resolved the Assassin's effect, you must discard him and draw a new card. If the deck is empty and you cannot draw a card, then draw the card that was removed at the start of the round.

