



Wild Jacks

Objective

To practice addition and subtraction while building flexible number sense.

Players use their cards to make a *target number* in as many ways as possible. Jacks are “wild” and can be used as any number.

What You'll Need

One deck of playing cards (remove kings and queens)

Paper and pencil for keeping score and drawing pictures to figure out the total

Directions

1. Remove all the Kings and Queens from the deck of cards. Shuffle the remaining cards.
2. Each player gets five cards. Place the rest of the cards face down in a pile – they’ll be used again in later rounds.
3. Create the target number by having one player turn over two cards from the deck and adding them together to make the target number.
 - Example: If the cards are 7 and 10, the target number is 17.
4. Each player takes a turn trying to make the target number using any combination of their five cards by adding or subtracting.
 - Jacks are wild and can represent any number.
 - Example:
 - $4+3+10=17$,
 - $8, 10, 1: 8+10-1=17$).
 - If a player can make the target number, they keep the cards used and place them in a score pile.
 - If a player cannot make the target number, they keep no cards for that round.
5. After their turn, each player places any unused cards into a discard pile.
6. Each player now has two piles:
 - A score pile (cards used to make target numbers)
 - A discard pile (cards that they couldn’t use)
7. Start a new round. Each player take five new cards from the deck and repeats the steps above with a new target number.
8. After 3-5 rounds have been completed, players count only the cards in their score pile (not the cards in their discard pile). The player with the most cards wins the game!

Game Variations

Easier

- Use fewer cards per player (3 or 4 instead of 5)
- Allow players to only use addition.

Challenge

- Make larger target numbers by turning over three cards instead of two