3~4人 30~45分 10歳以上

Cat in the box

A trick-taking game where the color of the cat is undetermined until observed

Place each cat inside a box-like chamber that cannot be observed from the outside. You cannot have more than 1 cat inside a single chamber, and you cannot observe or record its color before securing the subject in the chamber.
The color of the cat is unknown. Each cat is guaranteed to be unique, thus there is a quantum convergence. As soon as the cat is observed, their color is determined, and its uniqueness is preserved.

“Cat in the Box” is a trick-taking card game.
The cat cards do not have a predetermined color. Their color is determined when the card is played.
You can declare any color, however, they must be a unique combination of color and value. If the color and value combination has already been declared, you must choose a different combination!
Play by the rules of quantum mechanics and enjoy the peculiar nature of these strange cats!

Game components

■Cat Cards 40 cards

*5 each with values [1] to [8]

■Research Sheets 1 set

*A sheet is created by laying out 4 cards

■Player Cards 4 cards

■Player Tokens 48 tokens

*12 each of 4 symbols(Ψ / ℏ / p / E)

■Round's Start Player Card 1 card

■Color Helper Cards 4 cards

*This is an optional component. You can play without these if everyone is familiar with the rules. See p16 for details on how to use these cards.

Use all the above when playing with 4 players.

When playing with 3 players, you will not use Cat Cards with values [7] and [8] (there are 10 of them, denoted by the 4 symbol), 1 Player Card, and one set of player tokens (12 tokens of a symbol). Return these components to the box.

Game setup

In a game of “Cat in the box” you will play a number of rounds equal to the number of players (3 rounds when playing with 3 players, or 4 rounds when playing with 4 players). At the end of the last round, the player with the highest total score is the winner.

- Each player sits around the table.
- Each player takes all 12 Player Tokens of a symbol and a Player Card. Place these in front of you. Place the Player Card so that the side with the 4 symbol is face-up when playing with 4 players, or flip it to the other side when playing with 3 players.
- Create the Research Sheet using the 4 research sheet cards, and place these at the center of the table where everyone can see. (Place it so that the side with the black background is face-up when playing this game for the first time. Once you are familiar with the rules, try playing with the other side with the purple background face-up.)
- Grab a pencil and paper to record each player’s score.

Now you are ready to start the game! The first round of the game starts with a player who has most recently seen a cat. That player takes the Round’s Start Player Card and places it in front of them.

Game rounds

Each round consists of the following 3 phases.

1 : Prepare phase

2 : Trick phase

3 : Score phase

The round is over at the end of the Score Phase. Continue playing the number of rounds equal to the number of players. After finishing the last round, the winner of the game is determined.

1 : Prepare phase

① Deal out Cat Cards

Shuffle the deck of Cat Cards. Deal a hand of 10 cards face-down to each player. Each player looks at their hand secretly and chooses 1 card face-down. Place the chosen card face-down near the Research Sheet. These 3 or 4 cards are not used in this round.

② Bid

After examining your hand, each player bids **how many turns (tricks)* you will win this round.** Starting with the start player going clockwise, each player covers a number on their Player Card (1・2・3, or 1・3・4 when playing with 3 players) with their Player Token to indicate the bid. For example, if you think you will only win 1 trick this round, then cover 1 with your Player Token as shown on the right. Proceed to the Trick Phase once everyone has finished bidding.

2 : Trick phase

In this phase, you will play multiple turns called Tricks. **There will be up to 8 tricks unless a paradox happens earlier (see P.11 about paradox).** When the phase ends, proceed to the Score Phase.

■Playing a trick

The Start Player will play first. They choose a card from their hand and play it face-up in front of them. They can choose any card that they can declare a color for, as described below. When playing, they must **declare a color.**
Every other player, in clockwise order, must now play a card from their hand.

[Declaring a color: For the Start Player]

You must declare the color of the card you just played (the color is either Red, Blue, Yellow, or Green).

The color of the card is not determined until you declare the color. Place your token on one of the cells in the Research Sheet matching the color and the value of the card you played.

For example, if you have the [Ψ] Player Tokens and you play a [4] and declare [Yellow], then place your token as shown below. Once the cell is covered, no other player may play a [4] and declare [Yellow] for the rest of the round.

[Conditions for declaring a color] (For the Start Player)

You must declare a color meeting the following conditions.

①The combination of the color and the value of the card has not been previously declared (In other words, the **corresponding cell on the Research Sheet is not covered with a Player Token**)

②The color you are declaring isn't covered up with your token on your Player Card (more on this later)

③ The color you are declaring is not [Red]. However, **if there is already a token on the Red [1] - [8] cells on the Research Sheet (shown in red dotted lines above),** then you may declare [Red]. Additionally, if there is no other valid color to declare with any of the cards in your hand, then you may declare [Red].

[Declaring a color: For every other player]

Every other player when playing their card must also declare a color.

You can declare any color if you meet the conditions, **but typically you will declare the same color as the start player**. (Think of this as the **must follow rule** if you are familiar with the rules of other trick-taking games.)

For example, when playing with 3 players, if the first two players with [ℏ] and [p] tokens played cards [2] and [6], and if they both declared [Yellow], then the Research Sheet will look like below.

Now, no players can declare [2], [4], or [6] of [Yellow] for the rest of this round.

You may declare a different color than what the start player declared. In such a case, **you must place your token on your Player Card on the "color declared by the start player"**.

Notes:

If the corresponding cell on your Player Card already has your token on it, then you do not place another token. Also, you will never cover up all 4 color cells of your Player Card. In other words, you may not declare colors in such ways that would cover up all 4 color cells of your Player Card.

In the previous example, if the player with [p] tokens played a [1] and declared [Red], then the Research Sheet and that player's Player Card will look like below.

By doing this, you may declare different colors than the color declared by the Start Player. However, **you may no longer declare the color that is covered up on your Player Card** for the rest of this round.

[Conditions for declaring a color] (For every other player)

You must declare a color meeting the following conditions.

①The combination of the color and the value of the card has not been previously declared (In other words, the **corresponding cell on the Research Sheet is not covered with a Player Token**)

②The color you are declaring isn't covered up with your token on your Player Card (more on this later)

There is no other condition. You may declare [Red] at any time.

[Winning a trick]

After everyone has played a card, the player who played the **"strongest card"** wins the trick. If you win a trick, take all the cards played in this trick, and place them face-down in front of you. (Make sure you don't mix these cards with your hand). **You are now the start player for the next trick and will be playing the first card.** (Don't pass the Round's Start Player Card). Each trick continues in this manner until the Trick Phase is over.

As you win many tricks, you will have stacks of cards in front of you. Keep each stack separate so you know how many tricks you've won at the end of the round.

Example: If you've won 3 tricks

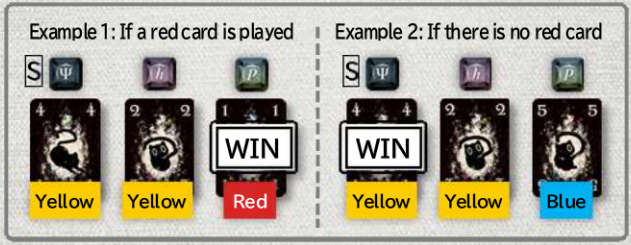
[Card' s strength]

First, **check if anyone played a red card**. If there is, then the player who played the highest red card is the winner.

For example, if Yellow [4], Yellow [2], and Red [1] were played, then the player who played Red [1] is the winner. If Yellow [4], Red [2], and Red [1] were played, then the player who played Red [2] is the winner.

If no one played a red card, then the player who played the highest card of the same color as the start player is the winner. For example, if Yellow [4], Yellow [2], and Yellow [6] were played, then the player who played Yellow [6] is the winner.

You will never win a trick if you play a non-red color that is not the same color as the start player. For example, if Yellow [4], Blue [5], and Blue [6] were played, then the player who played Yellow [4] (the start player) is the winner.



■“Paradox” and the end of the trick phas

If no “Paradox” occurs before playing 8 tricks, then the phase is over. Proceed to the Score Phase.
In this case, all cells in the Research Sheet are filled (except for [7] and [8] when playing with 3 players), and each player has 1 Player Token left.

[Paradox]

During the round (before finishing 8 tricks), **if you have no cards with an open cell on the Research Sheet, in other words, if there is no legal card to play**, then you have just caused a “Paradox”.
If there is a card you can play, then you must play it, whether you like it or not. “Paradox” won’t happen until there is absolutely no card to play.
If you have caused a “Paradox” then reveal your hand to other players. Players should check the Player Card and the Research Sheet to make sure that there is no legal card to play.

If there is a “Paradox” then the Trick Phase is immediately over, thus **no one wins the current trick in progress**. Proceed to the Score Phase. (Keep any tokens that were placed on the Research Sheet during this trick).

Example of a Paradox

It is now a player with p tokens' turn. The cards in his hand are

[1] [3] and [6]. All cells for [3] and [6] have been filled up. Yellow [1] is empty but he has a p token on the yellow cell of his Player Card, so he cannot declare [Yellow].
Since there is no legal card to play, he shows his hand to other players. He has caused a Paradox!
The trick Phase is immediately over. Players proceed to the Score Phase. (In this example, players completed 6 tricks.)

3 : Score phase

All players except the player who caused the Paradox scores points for this round.
If all 8 tricks were completed without causing a Paradox, then all players score points.

1. Tricks you've won

Gain 1 point for each trick you won (in other words, 1 point for each face-down stack in front of you).

2. Bonus points from your bid

If the number of tricks you've won matches the number of tricks you've bid for (the number covered up on your Player Card), then gain a **bonus point equal to the largest contiguous cells covered up by your Player Token on the Research Sheet** (diagonals aren't considered adjacent).

Example: if you've won 1 trick

You won 1 trick this round, and you've bid for 1 trick. The Research Sheet looks like below.

In this case, you score:

1. For the tricks you've won → 1 point

Since your bid was for 1 trick and you won 1 trick, so:

2. Bonus points from your bid → largest contiguous cells covered up by your Player Token on the Research Sheet

Take a look at the Research Sheet. The largest area with your token (as shown by the red dotted lines) has 3 contiguous cells, so you gain 3 points.

* It is possible to gain 5 or 6 bonus points depending on how you play your cards.

If the round ended because of a Paradox, then the player who caused the Paradox must

3. Lose points for each trick you've won

Lose 1 point for each trick you won (in other words, lose 1 point for each face-down stack in front of you).

You will not gain points from the trick you've won nor gain bonus points from your bid. (Thus, you will at best lose 0 points.)

Preparing for the next round

Return all Player Tokens on the Research Sheet to their owners. Take all tokens on your Player Card as well.

The player with the Round's Start Player Card passes the card to their left player. That player will be the first start player in the next round.
The game is over after playing a number of rounds equal to the number of players.

At the end of the game, the player with the highest total score is the winner. In the case of a tie, the player who scored the most point during the last round of the game is the winner. If there is still a tie, those players share the victory.

Credits

Thank you for purchasing a game of Ayatsurare Ningyoukan. If you have any questions about the rules, please contact us on our website.

Ayatsurare Ningyoukan website (Japanese)
https://ayatsurare.tokyo/

Game Design: Yokouchi Muneyuki (Tsuneji Tsuguto),
Art Design: Inoue Osamu

How to use the Color Helper Cards

Give 1 Color Helper Card to each player. This card is used to indicate the color of the card you play.
For example, if you play a card and declare the color [Blue], then place the Color Helper Card as shown below.

Player Helper Card helps to identify the color of the card you play and make it easier for all players. It has no effect on the gameplay rules, so use these at your discretion.