

Color Gangsters

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Introduction

On an island in the Pacific, the animals have been fighting for power for ages. Color Gangsters is a trick-taking game in which you compete for territories of the island. Each territory has a different condition. If you acquire three territories in a line, you will be the boss of the island!

Components

- 50 playing cards (5 colors, numbered 1-10)
 - The color can be seen from the back
 - Each card shows the eating habits of the animal (meat, plants, or both)
- 6 color trump cards (1 for each color, plus 1 “no trump”)
- 11 number trump cards (numbered 1-10, plus 1 “no trump”)
- 16 territory tiles
- 1 Winner tile, 1 Loser tile
- 25 markers (5 each in 5 colors)

Setup

- Each player chooses a color and takes the markers of that color. Return the playing cards and color trump card of any unused colors to the box.
- Shuffle the number trump and color trump cards separately. Reveal the top card of each deck. These will be the trumps for the first round.
- Randomly place 9 territory tiles in a 3x3 grid, returning the others to the box. If the 3-pawprint tile is selected, place it in the center of the grid.
- Shuffle the playing cards and deal 10 to each player. The front of the cards should not be shown to other players, but the colors of the cards should always be visible.
- Each player selects 2 cards from their hand and gives them face-down to the player on their left. Then, looking only at the colors, each player selects one of the cards they have been given to add to their hand and discards the other.

(Tip: For the first game, you can skip this draft. Simply deal each player 9 cards and discard the remaining cards face-down.) The player who speaks the most gang-like language will lead the first trick. (Or choose with any method you like.)

Gameplay

There are 4 steps to each trick, and a maximum of 9 tricks:

1. Card play
2. Determine winner and loser
3. Acquire territory tiles and update trump
4. Check for end of game

Card play

Each player plays one card, starting with the leader and proceeding clockwise. The leader may play any card. All other players must play the same color as the leader if possible; if they do not have that color, they may play any card. (“Must follow”)

Determine winner and loser

Rank the cards played according to the following priority:

- A. Trump number and trump color. This is the strongest possible card.
- B. Trump number and lead color.
- C. Trump number and any other color. (If multiple, a card played earlier is stronger.)
- D. Trump color (high to low)
- E. Lead color (high to low)
- F. Any other color (high to low; if tied for number, a card played earlier is stronger.)

The Winner and Loser tiles are assigned to the strongest and weakest cards, respectively.

Examples

In all these cases, 7 is the trump number and blue is the trump color.

1. Red 10, Red 2, Red 1, Red 6
No one played the trump number, and everyone followed the lead color, so all cards fall into category E. P1 wins because 10 is high, P3 loses because 1 is low.
2. Red 10, Red 2, Yellow 2, Green 2
P1 and P2 are category E as before. P3 and P4 did not follow the lead color, but also did not play trump number or color (F). P1 wins because 10 is high. P3 and P4 played the same number, but P3 played first, so P4 loses.
3. Red 10, Red 2, Blue 2, Green 7
P1 and P2 are category E as before. P3 played trump color but not number (D). P4 played trump number in another color (C). P4 wins because trump number always takes priority. P2 loses because 2 is low.

Acquire territory tiles and update trump

The winner places one marker on a tile whose condition is satisfied by the current trick.

- You may only place one marker, even if you satisfy multiple tiles.
- You may place on a tile that already has markers from other players. (Do not remove them.)
- You may not place on a tile that already has your own marker.
- You may not place if you have no markers remaining, or satisfy no tiles.

The winner may replace either the number trump or color trump with the next card from that deck. (They may also choose not to.) If the deck is empty, that trump cannot be changed again.

Check for end of game

- If a player has placed markers on 3 tiles in a line (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal), that player wins immediately.
- Otherwise, if all players are out of cards, the players whose markers are on tiles with the most total pawprints wins. If there is a tie for pawprints, the player with the most markers wins. If this is a tie, the players share victory.

If the game is not over, discard all played cards. The player with the Loser tile is the leader for the next trick.

Appendix: List of territory tiles

1 pawprint

- My card is odd
- My card is even
- My card is 1-5
- My card is 7-9
- My card eats meat (has the symbol for “meat” or “meat/plants”)
- My card eats plants (has the symbol for “plants” or “meat/plants”)
- My card is the same color as my markers
- My card is not a trump (considering both color and number)

2 pawprints

- All cards in the trick eat meat
- All cards in the trick eat plants
- All cards in the trick are the same color
- The total of all cards in the trick is odd
- The total of all cards in the trick is even
- I won 2 tricks in a row

3 pawprints

- The difference between the highest card played and the lowest card played is exactly 5

(Blank tile: Any conditions you come up with!)