

# Peeper

*Rules rewrite version 1.0 by Nathan Morse*

## Components

- 64 tiles:
  - 4× tiles numbered 1–15 (one of the 1 tiles is marked: 1)
  - 4× X tiles

## Goal

Each player starts the game with 100 points. Keep as many of your 100 points as possible, by purging tiles from your hand each round.

## Gameplay

### General rules

The X tiles are wild, and can represent any value from 1–16 — yes, sixteen. Thus, a solitary X is considered to be higher than any single number tile.

Peeper is what is known as a *climbing game* or a *ladder game*, the concept of which is that someone plays a pattern (takes one step up a ladder), then other players play identical but ever higher patterns (climbing up the same-sized rungs on the ladder). As with many climbing games, players may play special patterns, called *bombs*, to transform the rest of the climb up the current ladder. In climbing games, the standard short-term goal is emptying your hand. In Peeper, the only scoring is based on the tiles you still have in your hand when someone has emptied theirs.

If you have fewer than five tiles when it is your turn, you must inform the other players of how many tiles you have left. (Remember that Peeper is designed to be playable by people who can't just look at the number of tiles you have. If everyone can count everyone's tiles, you can forgo this rule.)

### Deal players' hands

Turn all the tiles face-down, and mix them. Each player takes a specific number of tiles (Don't let anyone else see your tiles' faces), depending on the number of players:

- 2–4 players    16 tiles each
- 5 players      12 tiles each
- 6 players      10 tiles each

Set any leftover tiles aside, unseen. You will mix them back in with the rest when setting up the next hand.

## Play

The player with the marked **1** starts the round, or *hand*; if nobody has the **1**, each player looks at one of the leftover tiles, and the one with the highest-numbered leftover starts.

The start player leads the *trick* by playing a *valid pattern* (see below) face-up, then subsequent players in clockwise order either *pass* or play the same pattern with a higher value. If everyone else passes after someone's play, then that player — the last one who played — may choose any valid pattern from her hand, and play it face-up for people to follow. These tricks continue until someone plays her last tile, which interrupts the current trick, and ends the hand. At this point, scoring occurs (see below).

### Valid Patterns

#### single

*play example:*

**1**

1-of-a-kind

**4**

**6**

**10**

**X**

**X** can be used as a wild

#### pair

*play example:*

**2 2**

2-of-a-kind

**5 5**

**11 11**

**12 X**

**14 14**

**X** can be used as a wild

#### straight of three or more tiles

*play example:*

**1 2 3 4**

e.g. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

**3 4 5 6**

**9 X 11 X**

**X** can be used as a wild

#### straight pairs of three or more values

*play example:*

**3 3 4 4 5 5**

**7 7 8 X 9 9**

e.g. 6, 6, 7, 7, 8, 8

**X** can be used as a wild

#### bomb

*play example:*

**1 1 1**

3-of-a-kind

**6 6 6**

**7 7 7**

**X X X**

**X** cannot be used as a wild,  
but it can be part of an **X** bomb: **X X X**

#### big bomb

*play example:*

**4 4 4 4**

4-of-a-kind

**X X X X**

**X** cannot be used as a wild,  
but it can be part of a big **X** bomb: **X X X X**

When following a pattern, your play must match the pattern exactly. For example, if I lead with a **straight** of 4 tiles, you can't play a **straight** of 5 tiles; you can only follow with a **straight** of 4 tiles, covering a higher range of 4 values. So, normally, the pattern the first player plays is followed until nobody can (or wants to) play a higher version of that same pattern. You are welcome to pass, whether it is because you can't play, or just don't want to; also, you are completely allowed to jump back in and play later in the same trick. Usually this simply allows other players to empty their hands more, but you may have strategic reasons for doing so; either way, the choice is yours!

*Example: Amy leads with **straight pairs**: 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4. Brittany has 4 X 5 5 6 6 7 7 in her hand, but she has better uses in mind for the X, and she actually has all four 5s; she passes, confident she can rid her hand of these tiles in a more powerful way. Chris plays 11 X 12 X 13 13 14 14. David passes. Amy passes. Brittany realizes she has 13 13 14 14 15 15 X X, and decides to play it, fearing the hand will end sooner than she'd hoped, and wanting to take the lead. Chris, David, and Amy all pass. Brittany leads with a new pattern.*

Bombs are not only valid patterns, but can also be used to change the current pattern to **bomb**, or **big bomb**. A **bomb** of 1 1 1 beats any **single**, **pair**, **straight**, or **straight pairs**, and as with any other pattern, a **bomb** can be followed by a **bomb** of a higher value. Similarly, a **big bomb** of 1 1 1 1 beats any **single**, **pair**, **straight**, **straight pairs**, or **bomb**.

*Example: Brittany leads with a pair: 3 3. Chris plays 6 6. David plays 7 7. Amy plays 15 15, trying to stop everyone's slow purge of tiles; she is also hoping to lead the next trick. Brittany passes; she is hoping to time a surprise attack just right to take the lead. Chris plays a bomb: 8 8 8, with a serious look of satisfaction. David looks even more satisfied in following the bomb with 9 9 9. Amy passes. Just the moment Brittany wanted: She plays a big bomb of 5 5 5 5. Chris, David, and Amy all pass, grumbling. Brittany leads with a new pattern.*

There are two other special plays you can make, and you can make them regardless of turn order. If someone plays a **single**, and you have a **pair** of that same value, you can call "**mine**", and play the pair to win the trick; however, if someone plays **mine**, and you have the fourth tile of that value, you can call "**return**", and play that fourth tile to win the trick. The only thing that can beat a **mine** is a **return**. In climbing games, bleeding off singles is usually a slightly boring necessity; **mine** and **return** make it a riskier, more suspenseful prospect.

**Valid Disruptive Patterns**

<b>mine</b>		2-more-of-a-kind	<b>X cannot</b> be used as a wild, but it can be part of an <b>X mine: XX</b>
play example:	1	[skipped]	[skipped] "Mine!" 1 1
play example:	X	[skipped]	"Mine!" XX

<b>return</b>		4th-of-a-kind	<b>X cannot</b> be used as a wild, but it can be used as an <b>X return</b>
play example:	10	[skipped]	"Mine!" 10 10 [skipped] "Return!" 10
play example:	X	[skipped]	[skipped] "Mine!" XX "Return!" X

*Example: Brittany leads with a single: that lone 4. She knows this is safe, because Amy played the other two earlier. Chris is less attentive when he plays his 10. Brittany shouts, "Mine!" and plays 10 10. Note that she did this out of turn, and quite legally. Amy (also legally out of turn) quietly declares, "Return," puts down the fourth 10, and leads with a new pattern. There is no answer for a return, so Amy didn't need to wait for people to pass.*

**Scoring**

As soon as someone has emptied her hand — Don't even finish the trick! — scoring occurs. Each player loses 1 point for each tile she has left. The original rules fail to explain what ends the game, but I would suggest that the game ends when someone has lost all their points, at which point the player with the most points wins. In the event of a tie for the win, only those players play one more hand. Everyone excluded from this round is automatically ranked below the tied players, no matter how many points the tied players lose in this tie-breaker round.

If the game has not ended after scoring, mix the remainder of your hands with the discards and any tiles set aside, and start a new round.

## Chance Variant

At the start of a hand, after you look at all your tiles, you may proclaim, “**Chance!**” if you think you have a high chance of emptying your hand first. This means that you will lead, rather than the player with the marked **1**. This also allows the other players to collude against you. The scoring at the end of the hand is as follows:

- If you win, +30 points for you, and the other players get –10 points each.
- If you lose, –30 points for you, and the other players get +10 points each.

If someone called, “**Chance!**” then you may answer with, “**Double-Chance!**” if you think you can empty your hand before the **chance** player. In this situation, only the two of you will play, and the other players will simply be spectators for the hand. The scoring at the end of the hand is as follows:

- If the **chance** player wins, +30 points for her.
- If the **chance** player loses, –50 points for her.
- Each spectator gets +10 points.

The original rules are very terse, but it certainly seems that there is no risk of the **double-chance** player losing points; however, if the **double-chance** player doesn’t have a strong chance to beat the **chance** player, he might be better off scheming with the other players, rather than relegating them to spectating — and guaranteeing them +10 points each. Either way, if the **chance** player wins, she gets +30 points. If you have a very strong hand, though, you could make her get –50 for losing, instead of –30!