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Rummy: Understanding the Rules and Starting a Game

Rummy: Understanding the Rules and Starting a Game



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Rummy is a **card game** in which you try to improve the hand that you're originally dealt. You can do this whenever it's your turn to play, either by drawing cards from a pile (or stock) or by picking up the card thrown away by your opponent and then discarding a card from your hand.

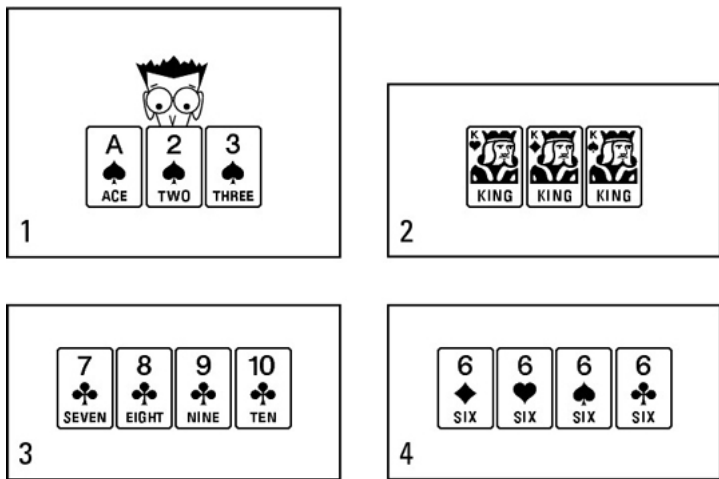
You can play Rummy with two or more players (for six or more players, you need a second deck of cards). You'll also need a paper and pencil for scoring. Learn how to play Rummy and other basics including rules, scoring, and how to win!

The objective of Rummy

Your aim is to put (or meld) your cards into two types of combinations:

- Runs: Consecutive sequences of three or more cards of the same suit
- Sets (or Books): Three or four cards of the same rank. If you are using two decks, a set may include two identical cards of the same rank and suit.

This figure shows some legitimate Rummy combinations.



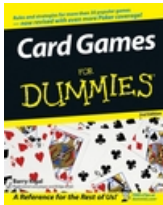
Legal runs follow the same suit; legal sets consist of the same rank.

This figure shows an unacceptable combination. This run is illegal because all cards in a run must be of the same suit.

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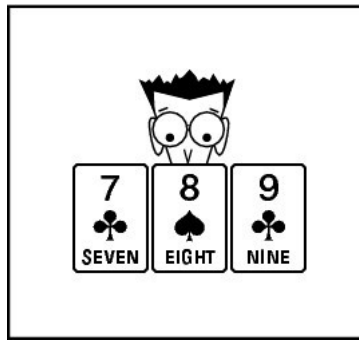
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An illegal Rummy run.

**REMEMBER**

In most Rummy games, unlike the majority of other card games, aces can be high or low, but not both. So, runs involving the ace must take the form A-2-3 or A-K-Q but not K-A-2.

The first person who manages to make his whole hand into combinations one way or another, with one card remaining to discard, wins the game.

How to play Rummy

Follow the rules and instructions below to understand how to play Rummy from start to finish:

- 1 Each player is dealt a certain number of cards from the deck. When playing Rummy with two, three, or four players, each player gets **ten cards**; when playing with five players, each player gets **six cards**. With more than five players, you must use two decks of cards and a hand of **seven cards**. The two-player game can also be played with seven cards each.
- 2 Designate a scorer and a dealer at the start of the game. Then, the dealer deals out the hands and puts the undealt cards face-down on the center of the table as **the stock**, placing the top card, turned upward, beside the stock as the first card of the discard pile.
- 3 The player to the left of the dealer plays first. She can either pick up the card on the discard pile or the top card from the stock. If she can put some or all of her hand into combinations, she may do so. If not, she discards one card from her hand, face-up onto the discard pile, and the turn of play moves to the next player.
- 4 The next player can either pick up the last card the previous player discarded or the top card from the stock. He can then **meld** some or all of his cards down in combinations. The play continues clockwise around the table. When the stock runs out, shuffle the discard pile and set it up again.

Other Rummy rules and tips

Now that you know the objective of the game and the basic instructions to play, here is a small list of additional Rummy rules and common tips to abide by:

- You cannot pick up the top discard and then throw the card back onto the pile.
- If you pick up two cards from the stock by accident and see either of them, you must put the bottom card back, which gives the next player an additional option. She can look at the returned card and take it if she wants it. If she doesn't want it, she puts it back into the middle of the stock and continues with her turn by taking the next card from the stock.
- When you pick up a card from the stock that you don't want, don't throw it away immediately. Put the card into your hand and then extract it. No player, regardless of

skill level, needs to give gratuitous information away.

Rummying with wild cards

You can play Rummy with wild cards by adding Jokers to the deck, or you can make the 2s or some other number wild.

You can substitute the card represented by a wild card when it is your turn to play. So, if a combination including a Joker, standing in for the King of Clubs is put on the table, the next player can put in the King of Clubs and pick up the Joker for use elsewhere.

If you put down two eights and a joker, you do not have to announce which eight the joker represents, but with a run such as 5-6-Joker, the assumption is that the joker represents the 7.



TIP

When playing with wild cards, you may not want to put combinations containing wild cards down immediately; you don't want to give another player the use of a wild card by way of the substitution. Of course, if you feel obliged to put down the set or run, try to ensure that the card your wild card replaces has already been played in some other set or run.

About the Book Author

Barry Rigal was born with a deck of cards in his hand. Having started with the children's games, Whist, Rummy, and Solitaire, he moved on to Bridge at the age of 12. After graduating from Oxford University (where he captained the Bridge team), he worked in accountancy. Highlights of his work career were learning how to play Piquet and Clobyosh in the Tax Department of Thomson McLintock. After four years with Price Waterhouse, supervising the partnership's Bridge team, he went into the world of business, working seven years in the Oil Taxation department of Conoco. During that time he began a career as a journalist and commentator on card games. Over the course of the last two decades he has written newspaper and magazine articles and six books on Bridge.