4441. Preparation and Shuffle

* **Deck Preparation:** Depending on the casino, Blackjack is typically played with one to eight decks of standard 52-card playing cards.
* **Shuffling:** The dealer thoroughly shuffles the deck(s). If multiple decks are used, a shuffling machine or manual methods like riffle shuffling may be employed.
* **Cutting the Deck:** A player is usually given the option to cut the deck by inserting a cut card, after which the dealer splits the deck at the cut card’s point.
* **Placement:** The shuffled deck is placed into a shoe (if multiple decks are used).

2. Dealing the Cards

* **Initial Deal:** The dealer distributes two cards to each player, including themselves. The cards are dealt one at a time in a clockwise direction starting from the dealer's left.
  + Players receive their cards face up.
  + The dealer receives one card face up (known as the "upcard") and one card face down (known as the "hole card").

3. Checking for Blackjack

* **Dealer’s Check:** If the dealer’s upcard is an Ace or a 10-value card (10, Jack, Queen, King), they check their hole card to see if they have Blackjack.
  + If the dealer has Blackjack, they reveal their cards immediately.
  + If the dealer shows an Ace as the upcard, players are offered insurance before the dealer checks for Blackjack.

4. Player Actions

In turn, each player gets to decide their course of action:

* **Hit:** The player requests another card to be dealt to them.
* **Stand:** The player keeps their current hand and stops requesting additional cards.
* **Double Down:** The player doubles their initial bet and commits to standing after receiving exactly one more card.
* **Split:** If the player's first two cards are of the same value, they can split them into two separate hands, each with its own bet.
* **Surrender (if available):** The player forfeits half their bet and ends their game for that round (early or late surrender depending on house rules).

5. Dealer’s Turn

After all players have concluded their actions:

* **Revealing the Hole Card:** The dealer reveals their face-down card.
* **Dealer Hits or Stands:**
  + The dealer must hit until their cards total 17 or higher.
  + Some casinos require the dealer to hit on a “soft 17” (a hand containing an Ace valued as 11), while others require the dealer to stand.

6. Determining the Outcome

* **Player vs. Dealer:** Each player's hand is compared to the dealer’s hand.
  + **Player Wins:** If the player’s hand is closer to 21 than the dealer’s hand or the dealer busts (exceeds 21).
  + **Dealer Wins:** If the dealer’s hand is closer to 21 than the player’s hand or the player busts.
  + **Push (Tie):** If the player’s hand and the dealer’s hand have the same value.
* **Payouts:** Winnings are paid out at even money for standard wins or 3:2 (or sometimes 6:5) for a natural Blackjack. Losing bets are collected by the dealer.

7. Collecting and Resetting

* **Collect Cards:** The dealer collects all cards from the table and places them in the discard tray.
* **Next Round:** The dealer prepares for the next round by potentially reshuffling the deck(s) once the cut card is reached, or based on house rules.

This cycle repeats until the deck(s) need to be reshuffled or until the game concludes for other reasons.