

Elements Rules

Overview

Elements is a card game for 4 players divided into 2 teams.

The winner of the game will be team scoring the most points.

Card Deck

The card deck consists of 57 cards divided into 4 'suits' and one special Dragon card.

The suits are the basic 'elements': Air, Earth, Fire and Water.

Each suit contains cards numbered from 2 through 15 of the same color and containing the same element symbol.

The number in the top-left and bottom-right of a card indicates a card's power.

Some of the cards are also worth points.

The number of points a card is worth is indicated in a blue box with a gold number.

There are a total of 180 points in the deck.

Card Power	Card Point Value
5	5
10	10
14	10
15	10
Dragon (20)	20

Game Play

The game is played as a sequence of hands and tricks.

Each player starts a hand with 13 cards. (The 5 remaining cards are stored in a hidden kitty).

A hand is complete when all players have played all their 13 cards.

A hand is broken down into a sequence of 13 tricks.

A trick consists of going once around the table with each player playing 1 card.

The winner of a trick is determined as follows:

- The player of the highest-power card of the suit that was played first (i.e. lead) in the trick

OR

- The player of the highest-power trump card

The winner of a trick scores the point values of all the point cards played in the trick.

The team's score is the sum of all the points collected by the players on the team.

Bidding

At the start of each hand 5 cards are deposited face-down on the table in a hidden storage called the 'kitty'.

The hand begins with a round of bidding to decide 2 things:

1. Who will name the trump suit for the hand
2. Who will get to access the 5 hidden cards in the kitty

Each player places a bid, one player at a time, starting with the player to the left of the dealer.

You are bidding on how many points you think your team can capture in the hand.

The point total for a team during a hand is the sum of points captured by all players on a team.

Bids can range from 70 points up to all 180 points in the deck.

Each player must bid higher than the previous high bid or PASS.

A player can PASS which means they are declining to bid any more this hand. (They will be able to bid again at the start of the next hand).

The winner of the bidding is the player with the highest bid after all other players have PASSED.

Trump Suit

The player that wins the bidding gets to name the trump suit for the hand.

The trump suit is simply one of the 4 suits.

Naming a suit trump means that all cards of that suit will have a higher power than all other cards of all other suits during this hand. For example, if Water is named the trump suit, the 2 of Water has a higher power than all the cards of Air, Earth and Fire for this hand.

The player should name a suit of which they either have a lot of cards or have high-power cards or both.

The trump suit can be a different suit each hand. It does not matter which suit was trump in previous hands.

The Dragon card will change its suit to become the highest card in whichever suit is named trump for the hand. Thus the Dragon remains the highest power card in the game at all times.

Kitty

The player that wins the bidding is the only player to see the cards in the kitty.

The player may exchange cards freely between the cards they are holding and the kitty.

When finished, the player must be holding 13 cards and the kitty must again contain 5 cards.
The player cannot leave any point cards in the kitty. All 180 points must be part of each hand.
Suggestions for what to put in the kitty are low-power cards and/or you can try to get out of a suit.

Card Play

After processing the kitty, the bid winner plays the first card of the first trick.

Any card can be lead, there is no restriction against 'breaking trump'.

The play continues to the dealer's left, one player at a time, until each player has played one card.

This completes the first trick.

Each card must be played according to the following rules:

1. A player must 'follow suit' if possible, which means playing the same suit that was lead in the trick (i.e. the suit of the first card played in the trick).
2. If a player is 'out of suit' meaning they do not have any cards of the suit that was lead, then they can play any card in their hand.

The winner of the trick is determined as follows:

- The player of the highest-power card of the suit that was played first (i.e. lead) in the trick
- OR
- The player of the highest-power trump card

The winner of the trick collects the cards played in that trick and the team score is updated immediately.

The winner of the trick then leads the first card for the next trick. Any card may be lead, regardless of what happened in the preceding trick.

The play continues until all cards are played.

This completes one hand.

Scoring

The temporary 'hand' score for each team is updated at the end of each trick during a hand.

At the end of the hand the 'game' score is updated for each team.

The team that did not win the bidding this hand simply scores all the points they collected in the hand.

The score for the team that won the bidding this hand is calculated as follows:

- If the team collected points equal to or greater than the amount of the winning bid, they score the total points they collected during the hand.
- If the team collected fewer points than the amount of the winning bid, then they lose the amount of the winning bid.

Scoring Example 1:

Team 1 wins the bid with a bid of 110.

During the hand, Team 2 collects 50 points and Team 1 collects 130 points.
Team 2 scores 50 points.
Since Team 1 collected greater than the value of the high bid, they score the 130 points.

Scoring Example 2:

Team 1 wins the bid with a bid of 110.
During the hand, Team 2 collects 75 points and Team 1 collects 105 points.
Team 2 scores 75 points.
Since Team 1 collected fewer than the value of the high bid, they lose 110 points.

End of Hand

At the end of each hand the team scores are updated and the deal for the next hand passes to the left of the dealer of the previous hand. After that player deals, bidding commences for the new hand exactly the same as for the first hand.

End of Game

The game ends when you get tired of playing, or any player leaves the game!
Enjoy!