

Geschenkt (The Gift)

Amigo 2004

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...is still too expensive!

Players: 3 - 5

Ages: from 8 years

Duration: approximately 20 min

Contents

33 playing cards with the numbers 3–35

55 chips

Idea of the game

One card lies face-up in the middle of the table. On his turn, a player must decide: either take this card and place it face-up in front of himself (as minus points). Or, he can refuse the card by playing one of his chips next to it. Then the next player in clockwise order takes his turn and must make the same decision: either take the card (together with the chip played by the previous player) or refuse the card by playing a chip of his own, etc. Whoever has the fewest minus points at the end of the game is the winner.

The cards and the chips

Each stand-alone card that a player has lying in front of himself counts as minus points equal to the number shown on the card. A 7 counts seven minus points, a 15 counts fifteen minus points, a 29 counts twenty-nine minus points, etc.

Sabine has four stand-alone cards lying face-up in front of her at the moment. Her cards equal 41 minus points (4+6+10+21).

Cards connected by an unbroken sequence of numbers (chains) count only as many minus points as the lowest numbered card in the sequence. For example, if a player has the 8 and 9 in front of himself, these two cards together count only 8 minus points. If he has the 17, 18, 19 and 20 in front of himself, these four cards together count only 17 minus points.

Note: Chains of connected numbers are more desirable than several stand-alone cards.

Peter has 28 minus points in front of him at the moment, 13 for the stand-alone card and 15 for the chain. If he eventually succeeds in getting the 14, too, then he will have completed a chain from 13–16 that would only count 13 minus points!

In order to avoid taking a card, the player whose turn it is must pay a chip. As a result, having many chips is always desirable because it allows a player to refuse many cards. Additionally, each chip still held at the end of the game counts as one positive point.

Set-up

Each player gets 11 chips. There will be leftover chips with only 3 or 4 players; these are not used and are put back into the box. Each player should hide their chips in their hands throughout the game, keeping the quantity secret from the other players.

The cards are thoroughly shuffled. 24 cards are counted out and placed in a face-down stack in the middle of the table. The remaining 9 cards are not used and are put back in the box face-down.

Course of the game

Select a start player at random. This player takes the topmost card of the face-down stack and turns it face-up next to the stack. He must now decide what to do with that card:

- either take it and place it face-up in front of himself
- or refuse it and play one of his chips next to it

If that player refuses the card, the player to his left now makes the same decision: either take the card (together with the chip) or refuse the card and play one of his chips next to it. Play continues in this manner in clockwise order: either take the card (together with all chips lying next to it) or refuse the card and play another chip next to it.

When a player finally decides to take the card (together with all chips lying next to it), he places the card face-up in front of himself and takes all the chips that were next to it into his hand. Then, this player must turn over the next card from the stack and decide, as previously described, whether to take it or refuse it by playing a chip. If he refuses the card, the player to his left decides, etc. It is allowed (and likely to occur frequently) that players will refuse a card several times throughout a round and, thus, a large quantity of chips will accumulate next to the card before someone finally takes it.

Example: Peter turns over the topmost card of the stack, revealing the number 11. Since this card would give Peter 11 minus points, he refuses it and plays one of his chips beside it. Sabine also refuses the card and puts one of her chips beside it. Lisa wants to save her

chips and, thus, doesn't refuse the card. She takes the 11 and places it face up in front of her. Additionally, she gets the two chips next to it and takes them into her hand. Now, Lisa turns over the next card from the face-down stack, revealing the number 16. Lisa could immediately take the card but that would give her 16 more minus points. She refuses the card and plays a chip beside it, etc.

Note: For purposes of clarity, cards that are part of number chains should always be placed side-by-side so that they overlap and so that they are clearly distinct from stand-alone cards. The numbers on all cards must be clearly visible at times.

Play continues in this manner until the draw stack is completely depleted. Then the game ends and final scoring takes place.

End of the game and scoring

Once all 24 cards have found an owner, each player calculates his final score.

Each player adds up the numbers on all his stand-alone cards and the numbers on the lowest-numbered card in each of his chains, (see also "The cards and the chips"). From that sum, he subtracts the number of chips that he still holds. This is quite simple.

An example for clarification:

Lisa has three stand-alone cards and two chains in front of her at the end of the game. For this she receives 59 minus points ($3+7+10+14+25 = 59$). From this she subtracts her 8 chips, giving her a final score of 51 ($59-8 = 51$).

The player with the lowest final score, i.e. the fewest minus points, is the winner.

Tactical Tips

- Sooner or later, every player must take a card - if not before, then when they have no more chips. Therefore, you should not shy away near the beginning of the game from taking a card where there are not yet that many chips. For example, taking the 15 with 3 or 4 chips is worth consideration.

- A good possibility exists for getting yourself a decent haul of chips with a card that you could easily take (because it makes or extends a chain for you) but that no other player can easily take (because it will bring them many minus points); here, you can "send it around" for one or two rounds before you take it.

Example: Sabine already has the 34 in front of her. Now, she turns over the 35 from the stack. Sabine could easily take the 35 because it makes a chain (together with her 34). The other players are unlikely to take the 35, however, since it is guaranteed to give them 35 minus points. Thus, on her turn, Sabine doesn't take the 35 right away but instead refuses it and waits until a substantial number of chips have accumulated next to it.

Note: You can, of course, try to "send it around" with a very high card for several rounds but you should not be too greedy because once one of the other players is out of chips, he will be forced to take the card.

- Since before the start of the game nine cards are set aside, it is inevitable that there will be gaps between some of the stand-alone cards. Of course, you can and must hope that you will be able to close gaps amongst your own cards (for example between the 22 and the 24). Luck is ultimately a significant part of the game. If a gap is very wide indeed (for example between the 30 and the 35), then it is pretty unlikely that all the missing cards are present in the face-down stack - and that you will get all of them even if they are.

- Players who would like a slightly more tactical game, should try the following variant: each player gets only 10 chips at the start of the game. The three cards with the numbers 10, 20 and 30 are taken out of the deck and put back in the box. The remaining cards are thoroughly shuffled. 24 cards are counted out and placed as a face-down deck in the middle of the table. The remaining 6 cards are not used and are put back in the box face-down. The rules of the game are otherwise unchanged.