Card Games

To Build Fluency

Click forward for rules to over 20 card games.

Card Games

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Español

English

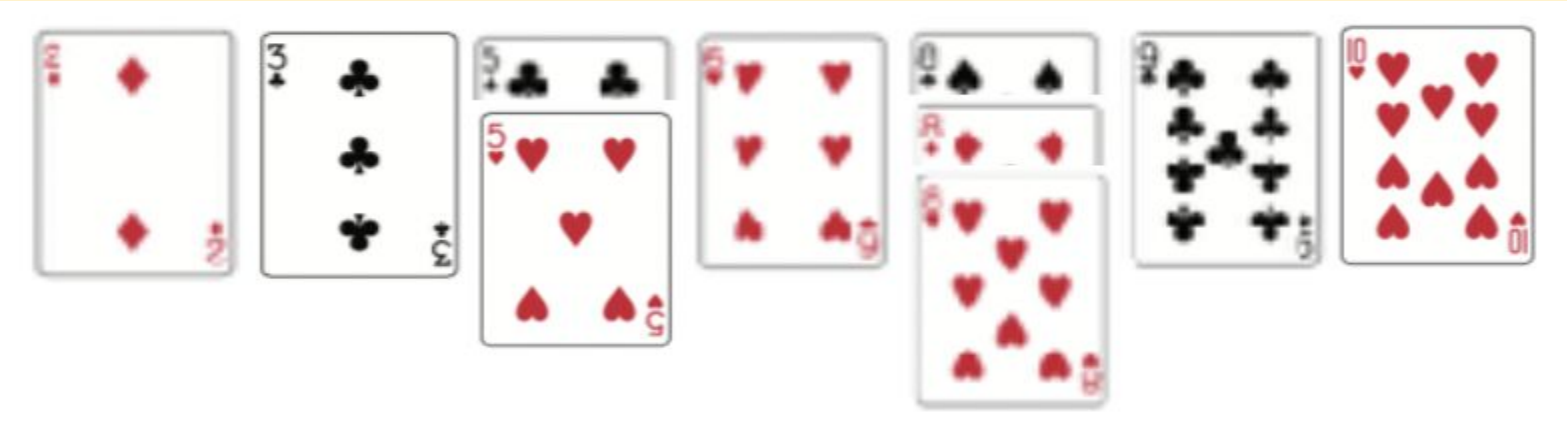
Quick Sort

Ages: 4-6 **Skills**: ordering, number recognition

Cards required : Ace to 10 **Players**: 2-4

Shuffle the pack and deal ten cards face down to each player. Make sure that each player has plenty of table space for this game. Say "1,2,3 go", and each player must look at and then correctly arrange their ten cards in ascending order (from left to right) in a row in front of them. If they have two cards of equal value they should place them in a staggered pile.

Here is an example of how a completed hand might look:



The first person to place all ten cards correctly wins the round. Each player then collects up their ten cards, mixes them, and passes them to the person on their left. (This is simply to keep the game from slowing down between rounds.) The game then starts again.

Also try:

If playing with different age children, give each player cards that total <u>double</u> their age. If one player is 5 and the other is 8, the youngest player gets 10 cards and the older player would get 16.

25 Up

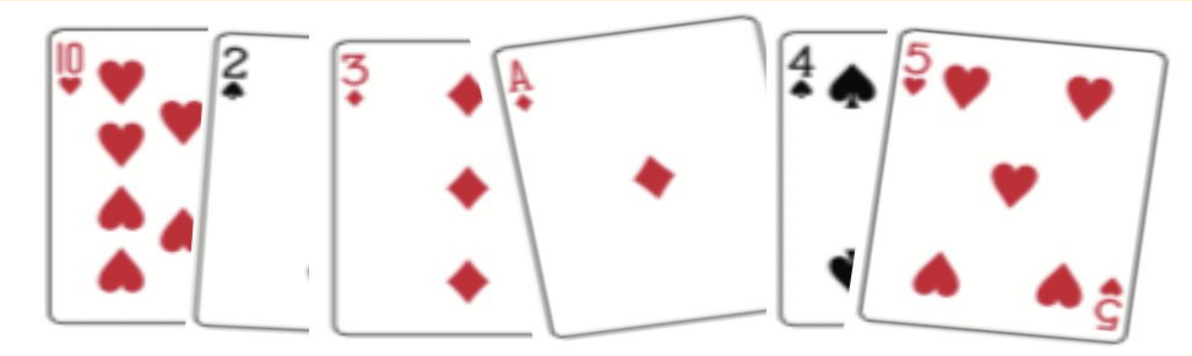
Ages: 4-7 **Skills**: addition

Cards required : A, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 **Players**: any number

Mix the six cards face down so that their values are unknown. Deal the first card face up and call out its value. Deal the second card on top of if, but this time, call out the total of the numbers dealt so far.

Repeat this until you have dealt all 6 cards - the total should be 25.

For example, if these were the cards, you would say: "TEN, TWELVE, FIFTEEN, SIXTEEN, TWENTY, TWENTY-FIVE."



The lovely thing is that the total is of course always 25, so children will know if they have made an error during their calculation. If another person is present they can use a stopwatch. The aim of the game is NOT to beat each other, but to beat your own previous best.

Also try: 25 Down

This game is almost exactly the same as '25 up' except this time you start with a score of 25 and work your way downwards. So before you deal any cards you say "TWENTY-FIVE". Then deal the cards one at a time into a pile. Each time you deal one of the cards you SUBTRACT that card's value keeping a running total until you reach zero. (If you don't reach zero, you know you have gone wrong somewhere, which is very useful!)

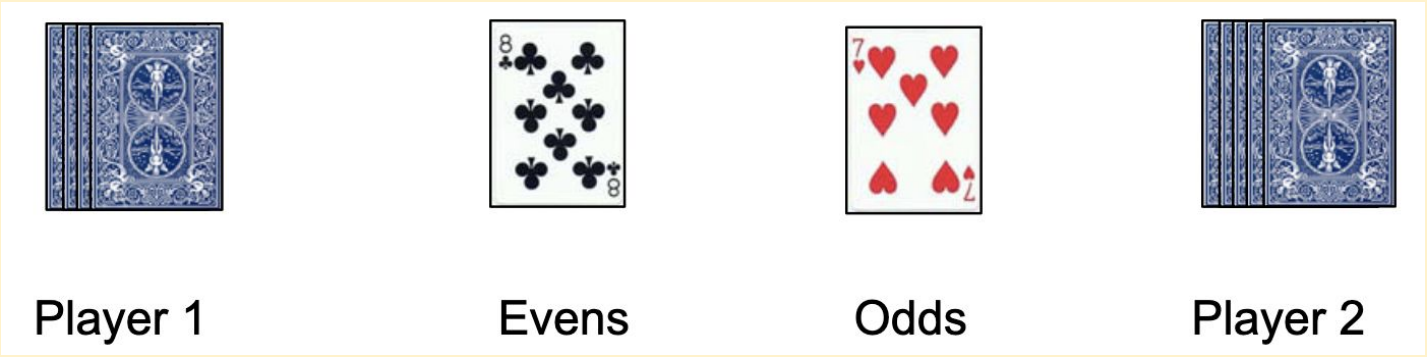
Again, the important thing is to try and beat your previous best score.

Odd or Even

Ages : 4-7
Skills : number recognition
Cards required : Ace to 10
Players : 2

For this game, aces are worth one.

Place one odd-numbered card and one even-numbered card in the center of the table. Players split the rest of the deck.



Students race to get rid of all of their cards by placing their odd number cards on the odd stack and the even number cards on the even stack.

The first player to correctly get rid of all of their cards wins!

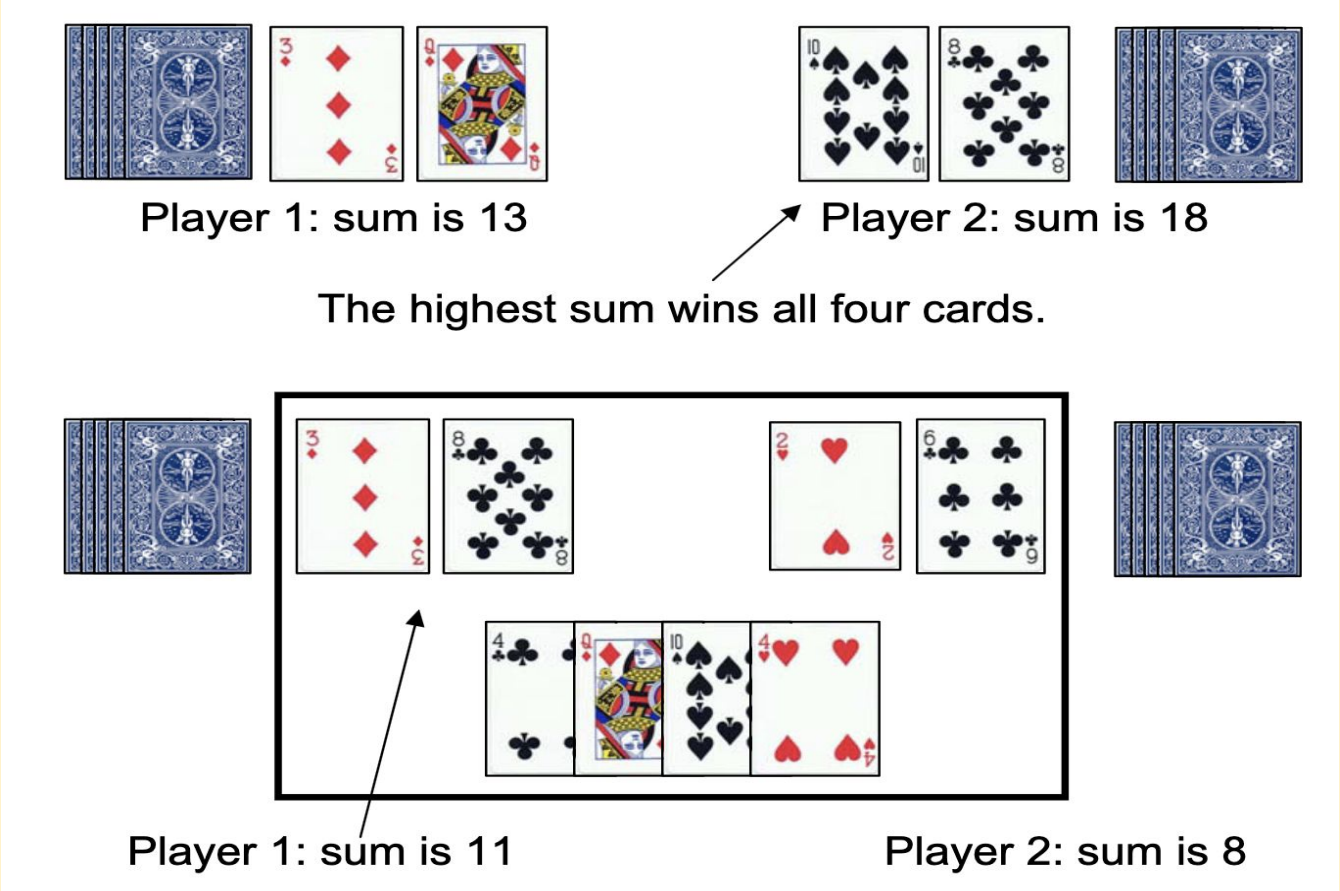
Addition War

Ages: 5-8 **Skills**: addition

Cards required : All **Players**: two

For this game, Jacks are worth 11, Queens are worth 12, and Kings are worth 13.

Shuffle and give each player half the pack, face down. Both players turn over their top two cards.



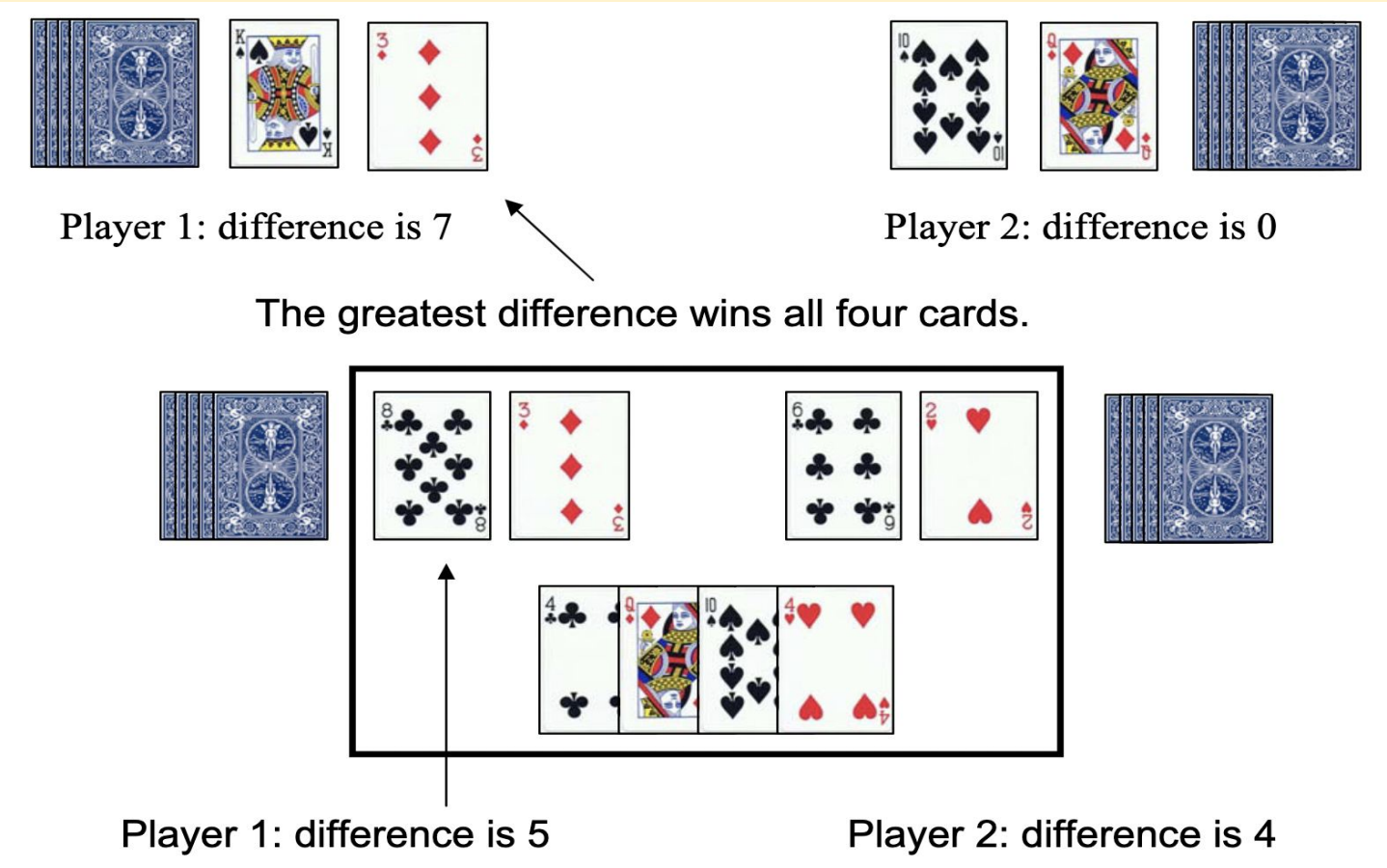
If the card sums have the same value, the cards are placed in a center pile. The next hand is played normally and the winner of the next addition number battle takes the center pile as well.

Subtraction War

Ages : 5-8
Skills : subtraction
Cards required : All
Players : two

For this game, Jacks are worth 11, Queens are worth 12, and Kings are worth 13.

Shuffle and give each player half the pack, face down. Both players turn over their top two cards and subtract the smaller number from the larger number.



If the card differences have the same value, the cards are placed in a center pile. The next hand is played normally and the winner of the next subtraction number battle takes the center pile as well.

Give Me Ten

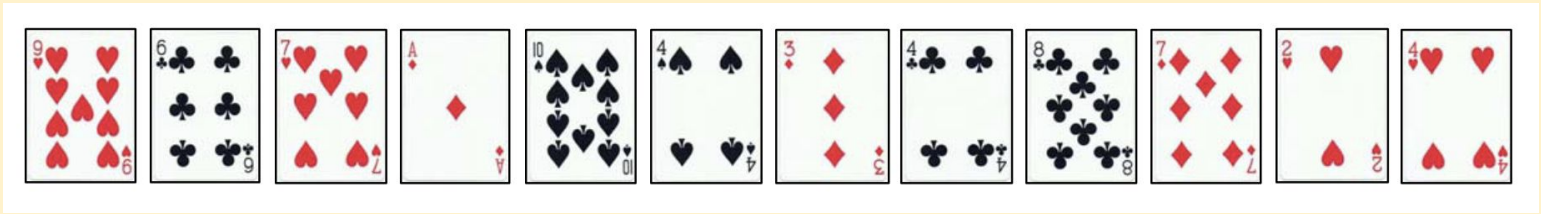
Ages : 5-7

Skills : addition

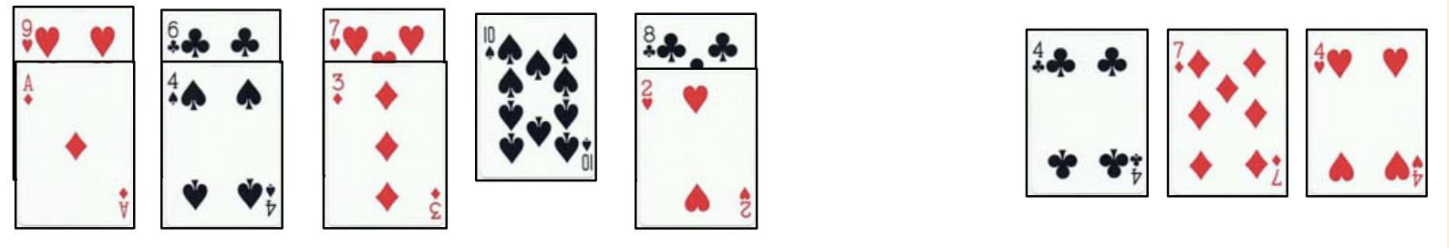
Cards required : Ace to Ten

Players : two

Deal 12 cards face up.



Players take turns finding and removing combinations of cards that add up to 10.



When both the players agree that no more tens are possible, the next 12 cards are dealt face-up

Ten or Twenty

Ages : 6-10 **Skill** : addition

Cards required : Aces to Tens **Players** : 2-4

For this game, Aces are worth one.

Each player is dealt 5 cards to hold in their hand. The remaining cards are placed face-down in a pile in the center. The top card is turned over and placed beside the pile.

Players take turns to pick up the top card of the pile or the top card of the discard pile. If the player can make a set of 3 cards that total 10 or 20 in value, the set is put down facing up in front of the player. The player finishes the turn by discarding a card face up on the discard pile. If the player has made a set of 3 on their turn they also pick up three more cards from the pile to restore their hand to 5 cards.

The winner is the person who has made the most sets when all of the pile is gone.

Also try: Using all the cards. Jacks are worth 11, Queens are worth 12, and Kings are worth 13. If the player can make a set of 3 cards that total 10, 20, or 30 in value, the set is put down facing up in front of the player.

Closest To...

Ages : 6-10 **Skill** : addition

Cards required : Aces to Nines **Players** : 2-4

Select the number of digits to be in the numbers for this game: 2-digit numbers, 3-digit numbers, 4 or 5-digit numbers. Each player is dealt that number of cards.

The aim of the game is to make a number as close as possible to 50 if making 2-digit numbers (or to 500 for 3-digit numbers, 5000 for 4-digit numbers or 50,000 for 5-digit numbers.)

The players arrange their cards to make a number as close as possible to 50 (or 500, 5000, or 50,000).

The player with the closest number wins the round and scores one point.

The winner is the player who scores the most points.

I Spy Sums

Ages : 6-10 **Skill** : addition

Cards required : Aces to Tens **Players** : 3-4

Shuffle the cards and deal them out face up in an 8 by 5 array. Player 1 looks for a pair of cards that are either horizontally or vertically adjacent, adds them together in her head, and says "I spy a sum of 14". The other players have to race each other to spot two adjacent cards that produce that sum.

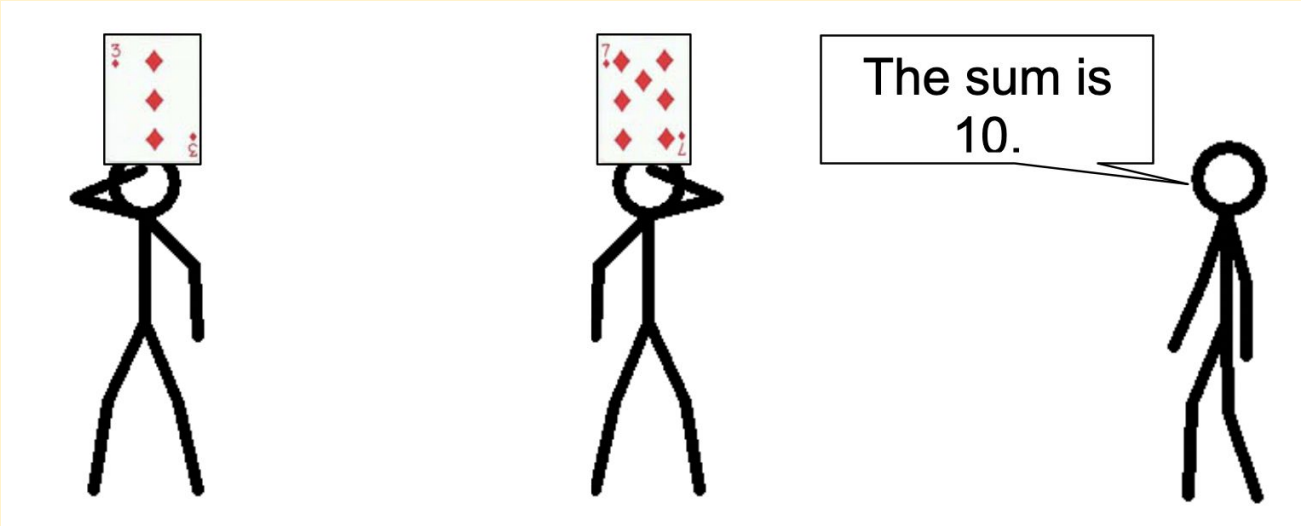
For example a 5 and 9, or perhaps a 10 and a 4. As soon as they spot an adjacent pair that fits, The first person to put their hands on the cards wins the cards for their treasure pile. Bear in mind that there may well be two or more possible correct pairs. Play then passes to the next player who mentally chooses then announces a different sum, and so on around the group so that everyone gets a turn. Continue until there are no more possible pairs on the table. The player with the most treasure is the winner.

Reading Minds (Addition)

Ages: 7-10 **Skills**: addition, sum

Cards required : Ace to 10 **Players**: three

In this game for three players, one student is the leader and the other two are the "mind readers



The two players each draw a card and, without looking at it, hold it up to their foreheads so that everyone else can see it, but themselves. The leader announces the sum of the two cards. Each "mind reader" must figure out which card is on his or her own forehead and say it aloud. When both "mind readers" have figured out their cards, a new leader is chosen and the game continues.

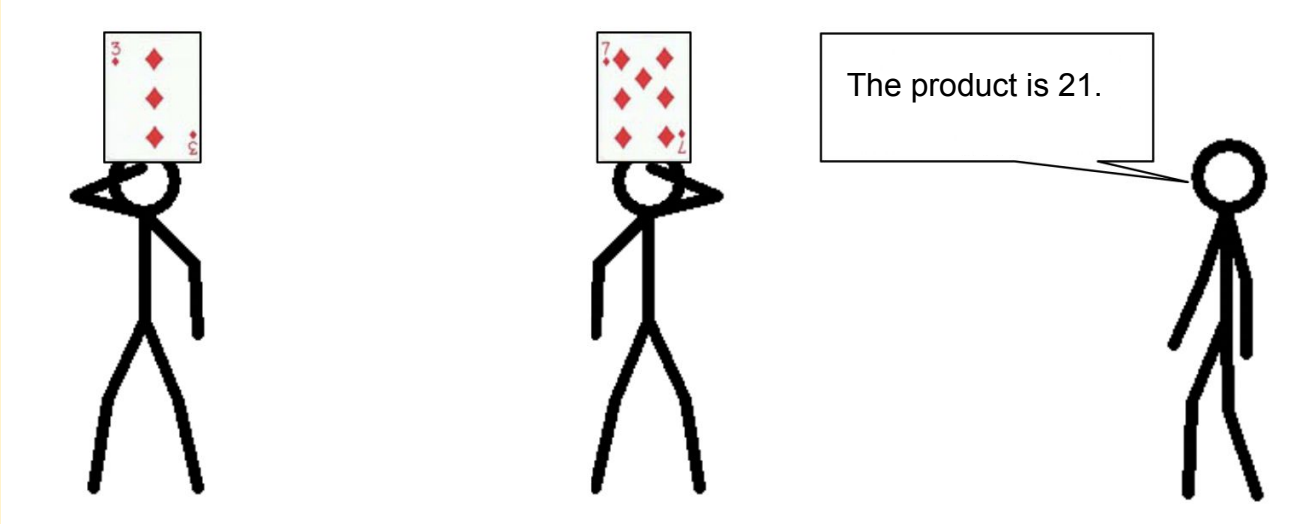
Also Try: For more advanced, play with more people. Three (or four) players draw a card. The leader states the sum and players must figure out their card.

Reading Minds (Multiplication)

Ages: 7-10 **Skills**: multiplication, product

Cards required : Ace to 10 **Players** : three

In this game for three players, one student is the leader and the other two are the "mind readers"



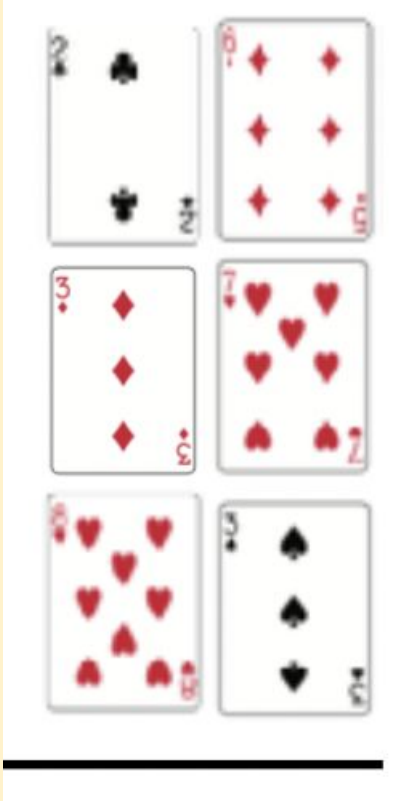
The two players each draw a card and, without looking at it, hold it up to their foreheads so that everyone else can see it, but themselves. The leader announces the product of the two cards. Each "mind reader" must figure out which card is on his or her own forehead and say it aloud. When both "mind readers" have figured out their cards, a new leader is chosen and the game continues.

Ton Totals

Ages : 7-11 **Skills** : column addition, place value

Cards required : Ace to 9 **Players** : any

Shuffle the pack and deal six cards to each player. Players must arrange their six cards into a 3 by 2 array thus forming 3 2-digit numbers, then find the total of these three numbers.



For example, if the cards drawn were 2 of Clubs, 3 of Diamonds, 7 of Hearts, 8 of Hearts, 3 of Spades, 6 of Diamonds, they might arrange them like this:

The object of the game is to reach a total as close to 100 as possible.

There is no need to award points for this task, as it is designed to be investigative in nature.

Also try :

How can you arrange the cards to give as large a total as possible? Or the smallest? Or the closest to 80? 150? etc.

Deal out six cards, but this time create a 2 by 3 array thus forming 2 3-digit numbers. Find the total of these two numbers. The object of this game is to reach a total as close to 1,000 as possible.

Break the Bank at 27

Ages : 7-11 **Skills** : addition, mental math

Cards required : Ace to 10 **Players** : two

Shuffle the pack and give half to each player. Each player places their half in a pile in front of them, face down. Players take it, in turn, to deal a card from the top of their pile into the center, face up. Each time a new card is played onto the center pile, the player who dealt it must call out the running total of the cards in the pile. The game continues until the total is 27 or over. The player who played the last card wins all the cards in the center of the table. The winner starts the next round.

Also try:

Break the bank at a higher number.
Start at 50 or 100 and mentally subtract until you get to 27 or whatever number you want to end on.

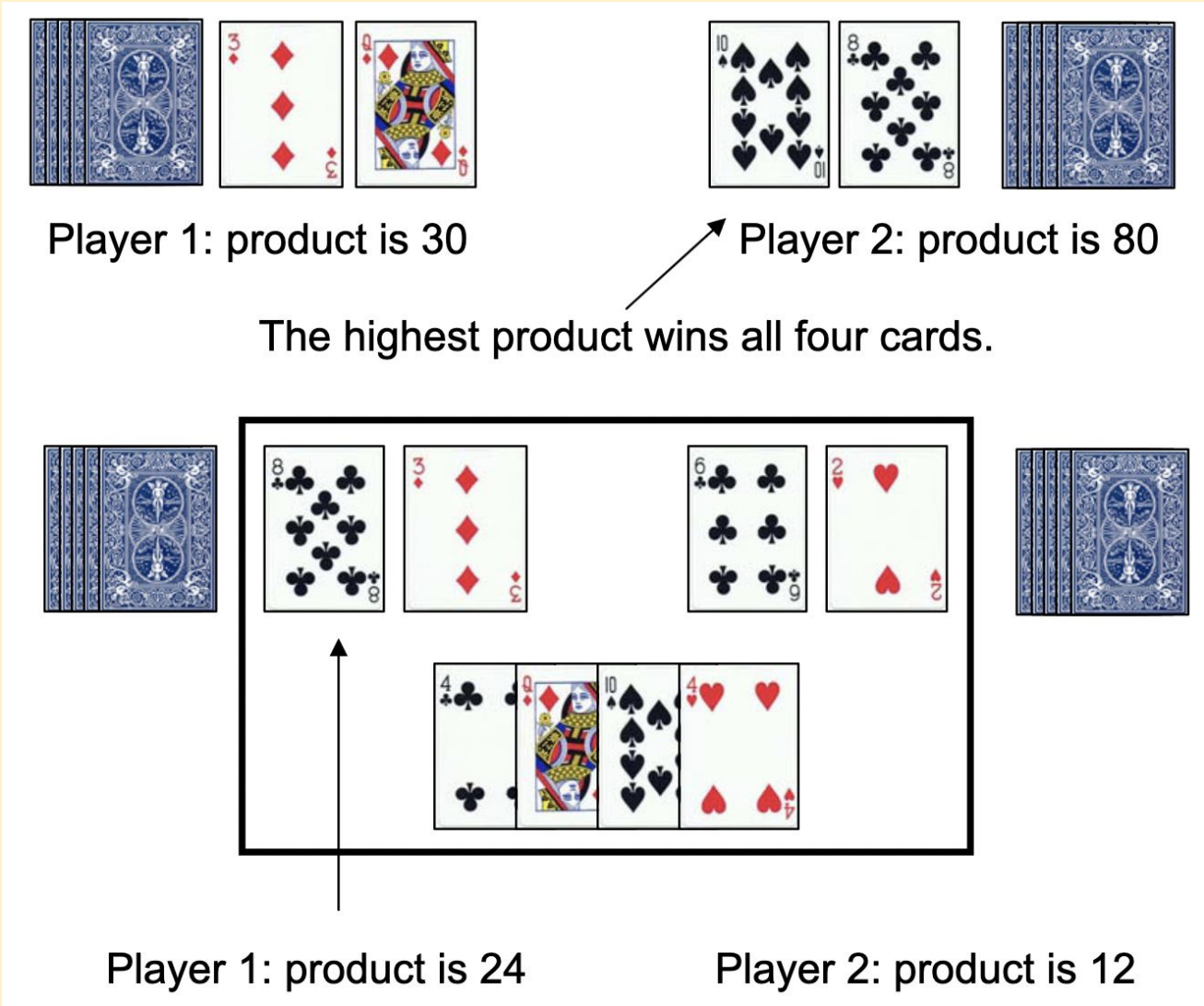
Multiplication War

Ages : 8-11 **Skills** : multiplication

Cards required : All **Players** : two

For this game, all face cards are worth ten.

Shuffle and give each player half the pack, face down. Both players turn over their top two cards and multiply the two numbers.



If the card products have the same value, the cards are placed in a center pile. The next hand is played normally and the winner of the next multiplication number battle takes the center pile as well.

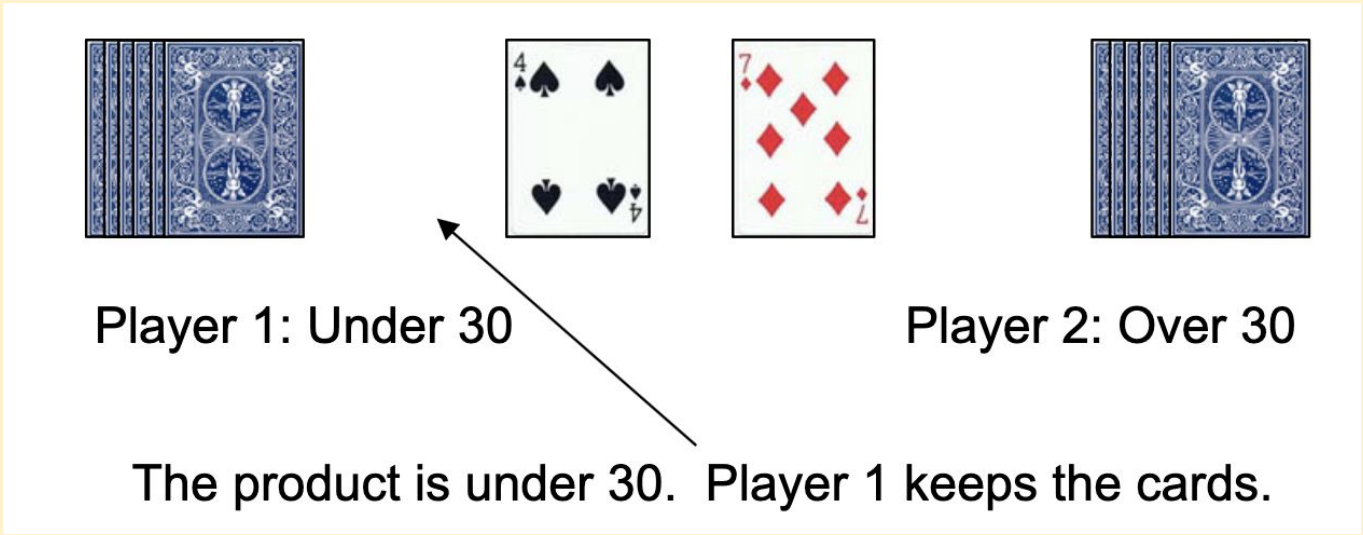
Over Under

Ages : 7-11 **Skills** : multiplication

Cards required : Aces to Tens **Players** : two

For this game, all face cards are worth ten.

Players split a deck of cards. One player is the Under 30 player and the other is the Over 30 player.



Each player turns over a card at the same time and the two numbers are multiplied together. If the product is less than 30, the Under 30 player keeps the cards. If the product is greater than 30, the Over 30 player keeps the cards.

If the answer is exactly 30 each player takes back their card and places it back in their deck.

When all the cards have been used the person with the most cards is the winner.

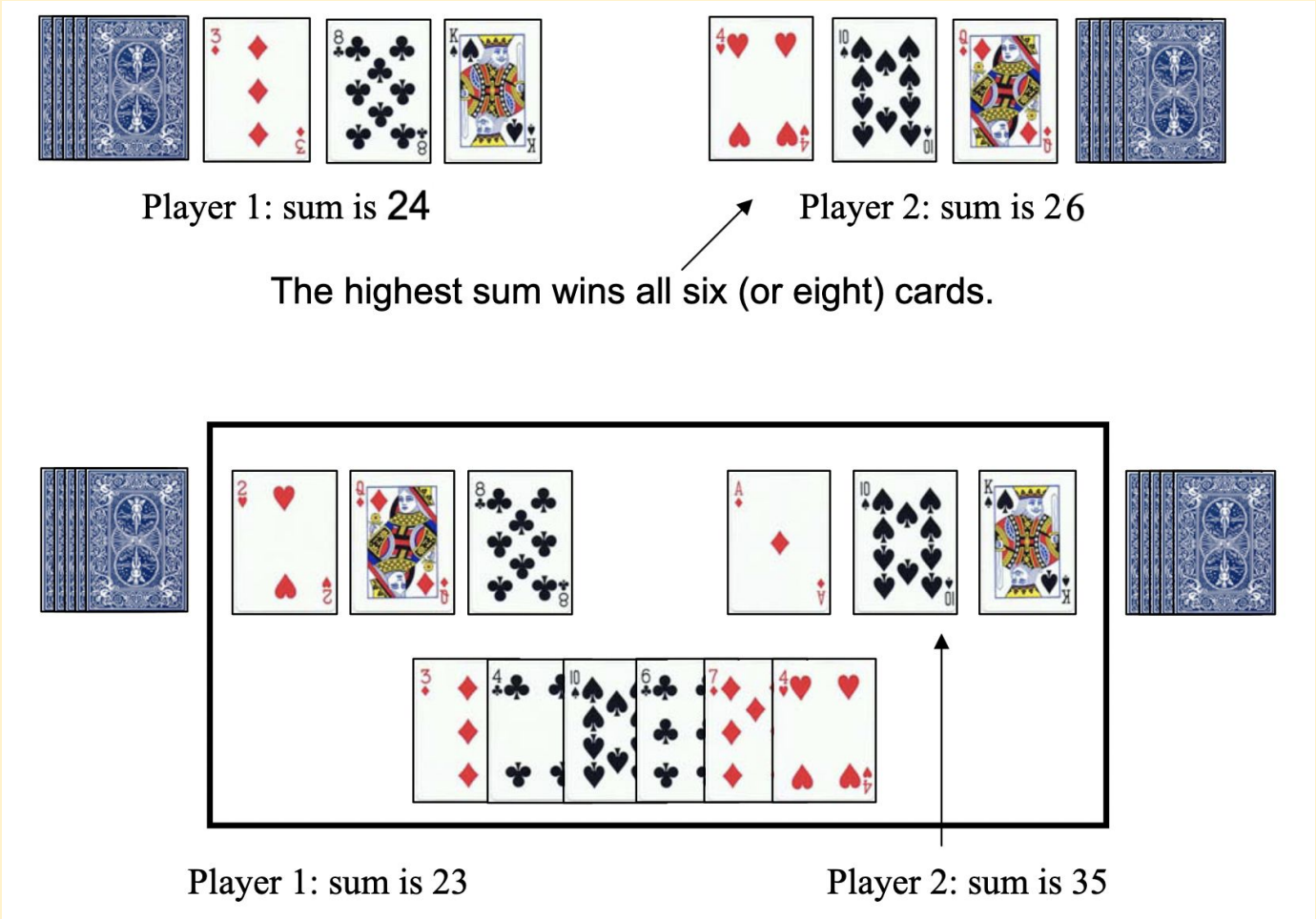
Advanced Addition War

Ages: 7-11 **Skills**: addition

Cards required : All **Players**: two

For this game, Jacks are worth 11, Queens are worth 12, and Kings are worth 13.

Shuffle and give each player half the pack, face down. Both players turn over their top three (or four) cards.



If the card sums have the same value, the cards are placed in a center pile. The next hand is played normally and the winner of the next addition number battle takes the center pile as well.

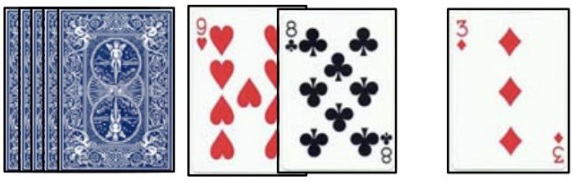
Advanced Subtraction War

Ages : 7-11
Cards required : All

Skills : subtraction
Players : two

For this game, Jacks are worth 11, Queens are worth 12, and Kings are worth 13.

Shuffle and give each player half the pack, face down. Players simultaneously flip over their top three cards. Make two of them into a 2-digit number and subtract the third. Players may move the cards and place them in any position of the number they wish.



Player 1: 98 – 3 = 95

Player 2: 76 – 4 = 72

The greatest difference wins all six cards.

If the card differences have the same value, the cards are placed in a center pile. The next hand is played normally and the winner of the next subtraction number battle takes the center pile as well.

Also try: Increase the number of cards to flip if you are working on larger numbers such as a three-digit number minus a two-digit number.

100 or Bust

Ages: 7-11 **Skills**: addition, probability

Cards required : Ace to 9 **Players**: as many as you like

In this game, players try to be the first to score exactly 100 points without going over (hence 'bust').

The dealer shuffles the pack, turns over the top card, and calls out its value. Every player has to write down either the number itself, or ten times the number. The dealer deals a second card. The players again have to write down either the number or ten times the number, but this time they must add it to their original number. If they go over 100, they must declare themselves 'bust' and are out of the game. Play continues in this way, the dealer calling out the value of the next card, and players choosing whether to write it as is or ten times it, and add it to their running total.

Tactically, players are often tempted to 'go high' initially but this does not always turn out to be the best strategy. Either way, this is a fantastic opportunity to practice both place value and calculation.

Also try:

Starting at 100 and subtracting.

I Spy Products

Ages : 7-11 **Skill** : muliplication

Cards required : Ace to Queens **Players** : 3-4

For this game, Jacks are worth 11 and Queens are worth 12.

Shuffle the cards and deal them out face up in an 8 by 6 array. Player 1 looks for a pair of cards that are either horizontally or vertically adjacent, multiplies them together in her head, and says "I spy a product of 24". The other players have to race each other to spot two adjacent cards that produce that product.

For example a 2 and Queen, or perhaps a 6 and a 4. As soon as they spot an adjacent pair that fits, The first person to put their hands on the cards wins the cards for their treasure pile. Bear in mind that there may well be two or more possible correct pairs, particularly with numbers such as 24 which have many factors. Play then passes to the next player who mentally chooses then announces a different product, and so on around the group so that everyone gets a turn. Continue until there are no more possible pairs on the table. The player with the most treasure is the winner.

25 From 5

Ages : 7-11
Skill : addition
Cards required : All
Players : 2-5

For this game, Jacks are worth 11, Queens are worth 12, and Kings are worth 13.

Shuffle the cards and give 5 to each player. Place the rest of the cards face down as a 'bank.' Turn over the top card of the bank. Players have to try and make the number 25 by adding all the cards in their hand. The first player picks up the face-up card and discards one card of their choice face-up onto a discard pile.

The new top card of the bank is also turned face up. Play continues with each player picking up either a) the top card of the bank or b) the top card of the discard pile, and then discarding one of their own onto the discard pile. The winner of the round is the first player to say "25" and show that their 5 cards total exactly 25. They get a point, and the round is ended.

Play continues for a set amount of time or an agreed number of rounds.

Beat Yourself

Ages : 7-11 **Skill** : addition, subtraction, multiplication

Cards required : One set of Ace to ten (any suit) **Players** : 1

You will want a timer for this activity.

Shuffle the ten cards. Turn the first one face up and call out its value. Turn over the remaining cards one by one but this time call out the running total. If you do not make any errors the finishing total will be 55.

There are lots of variations with this one. For example, why not start at 55 and try to get to zero as fast as possible without any mistakes?

Another popular alternative is to choose a times table you wish to practice. If you choose for example the sevens, when you turn over each card, say out loud the multiple of 7 and the number shown. Repeat for the whole set. You win the game if you beat your time.

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