Games to play with playing cards

Wild Jack

You will need: a full pack of playing cards.

Number of players: two or more.

To prepare for play: Take the kings, queens and jokers from the pack of cards. Jacks are WILD CARDS. You can use them at any time to represent a number from 1 to 10 (inclusive).

The goal: To make up a sum to reach the TARGET NUMBER.

To begin:

- Shuffle the pack and turn over the top two cards.
- If either of the cards is a Jack or a ten, put it at the bottom of the pack and turn over the next top card.
- The cards show your TARGET NUMBER , e.g. if you turn the 4 of hearts followed by the ace of clubs your TARGET NUMBER is 41.
- Deal 5 cards.
- Try to reach the TARGET NUMBER using all 5 cards, using all or some of your cards.
- You may add, subtract, multiply or divide the numbers.
- For example, if you turned over cards that showed 4, 7, ace (1), 5 and 2 and your TARGET NUMBER is 41, you could: add 5 and 7 then subtract 2 giving a total of 10, then multiply by 4 and add 1 arriving at 41 as your answer. (5 + 7 - 2) x 4 + 1 = 41
- Explain your calculations to the other players.
- If you are stuck, you can ask other players for help.

Scoring:

- Making the TARGET NUMBER using all 5 cards, without help - 10 points
- Making the TARGET NUMBER less than 5 cards, without help - 8 points
- Make TARGET NUMBER with help - 6 points
- Helping someone else to make their TARGET NUMBER - 8 points

Variations:

- The number of cards dealt can be varied according to the skill levels of the players.
- To simplify the target number to be reached, children could be allowed to use the two top cards in any order to set the target.
- For children unable to calculate the answers mentally, paper and pencils should be available.

Odds and Threes

Number of players: two, three or four players.

You will need: a pack of cards with the Jacks, Queens and Kings removed. (Ace is a one)

How to play:

- Deal out two cards to each player.
- You can add, subtract, multiply or divide the two numbers to make a whole number, or just put them together to make a 2-digit number.
- You score one point for making an odd number, OR a number that can be divided by three.
- The player who has the most points after five rounds wins the game.

For example:

With these cards you could make the following numbers:

46
64
4 + 6 = 10
4 x 6 = 24
6 - 4 = 2

But only 24 would score a point because it can be divided by three.

Questions to think about:

- Can you predict as soon as you get your cards if you will be able to make an odd number?
- What's the quick way to tell if a number is divisible by 3?
- How could you change the game to make it more challenging?

Stop or Dare

Number of players: two or three players.

Equipment: a pack of cards.

How to play:

- Shuffle the pack and place it face down. Set a target score for the game, for example 100.
- The first player turns over the top card and continues turning over cards, adding together the value of each card, until they decide to stop. Jacks score 11 and Queens score 12.
- When the player stops, the total is recorded as their score.
- However, if an Ace or a King is turned over, no points are scored at all, and the turn is finished.
- The second player then starts turning over cards in the same way.
- Players take turns until someone reaches the target score. This player is the winner.
- If the cards are all turned over before the target is reached, just reshuffle the pack and continue.

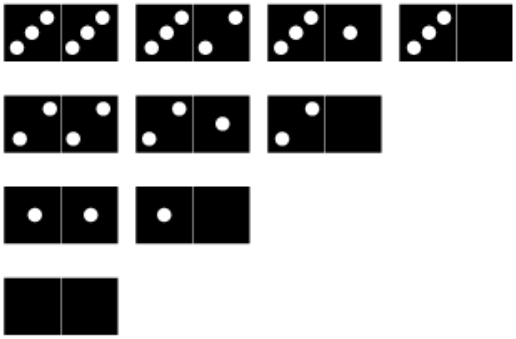
After playing the game a few times, think about these questions:

- Can you develop any strategies to increase your chance of winning?
- Can you create some new rules? For example, could you change which cards (and how many cards) end the turn, or introduce a card that sets your total score back to zero?
- Once you have played your variant a few times, decide whether the same strategies are best.

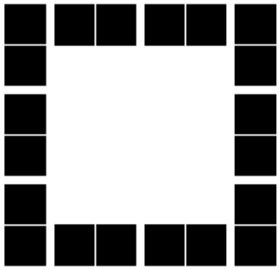
Games to play with dominoes

The patience and resilience test

These are the 'double-3 down' dominoes.

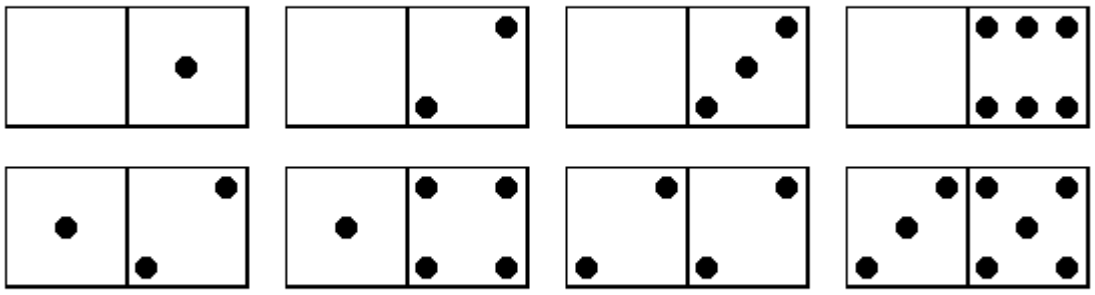


Use these dominoes to make this square so that each side has eight dots.



Eight

Using the 8 dominoes:



make a square where each of the columns and rows adds up to 8.

How many possible solutions are there?

4 Dom

Use these four dominoes to make a square that has the same number of dots on each side.