

# Beggar My Neighbour

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Beggar My Neighbour is one of the all-time favourite children's card games. It is an exciting game of luck, best played to a time limit. The rules are below:



**Number of Players:**

2 – 6

**Age Range:**

6+

**Cards:**

For two or three players, one standard deck of cards can be used. Any more than three players will require two decks.

**Instructions:**

All the cards are dealt, one by one, around the group, until there are none left. It does not matter if some players have more cards than others. Each player collects his cards in a face-down pile and does not look at them.

To start, the person to the left of the dealer places his top card face-up in the centre. Then the game moves around clockwise, with each player adding one card to the central pile until someone turns up an Ace, Knave, Queen or King. The player who turns up one of these cards can then demand payment from the next player:

An ace earns four cards

A King earns three cards

A Queen earns two cards

A Knave earns one card

These payment cards are each placed on the central pile. If an Ace, King, Queen or Knave is turned up, then the next player to the left has to pay the required amount of cards, and so on. This continues until a payment is complete without Aces or Court Cards. Then, the last player who turned up an Ace or Court Card takes the whole central pile and puts it at the bottom of his own. He starts the next round, and the game begins again.

The winner is the player who first goes out by using up all his cards. If playing to a time limit, then the winner is the player with the least remaining cards when the time runs out.

# Go Fish

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Go Fish is a card game of chance and skill for two or more players. Younger children will just enjoy the excitement of it; older kids will begin to learn to try to memorize what cards the other players have.



**Number of Players:** 2+

**Age Range:** 7+

**Cards:**

Either a standard deck or a special "Happy Families" pack can be used.

**Instructions:**

The dealing depends on the amount of players participating in the game. If there are two or three, each player is dealt seven cards, but if there are more people taking part, they are only dealt five. The remaining cards are placed face down in the middle to form the "fish" pile.

The players then have to sort their cards into groups of the same number or picture (i.e. a group of fives; a group of Queens), making sure not to show any other player their hand. Then, to start, the person to the left of the dealer asks any other player for cards of any one of the groups he holds in his hand (for example, if he has two Kings, he may ask the other player for Kings). If the other player any of the cards he is asked for, he must hand them over. The "requester" can then go on asking the same player for more cards until the player does not have the cards he wants.

A player who does not have the cards he is asked for tells the requester to "go fish". The requester then has to take one card from the "fish" pile and the person who told him to "go fish" becomes the new requester.

Anyone who collects all four cards of a set (i.e. all four Knaves) puts them face down in front of him.

The winner is the first person to have nothing left but a collection of complete sets. If two people run out of cards together, the player with the most sets wins the game.

# Memory

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Also known as Concentration, this card game is an old stand-by which can be adapted for all ages and abilities of children and is great for improving concentration and memory skills.



**Number of Players:** 2+ (but see Solitaire version below)

**Age Range:** 3+

**Cards:**

One standard deck of cards, adapted as appropriate for age and ability (see below). You can also use pictorial cards (such as our [Ghost Cards](#) at Halloween), learning cards (for Colours, Numbers, [Alphabets](#) and so on), or make cards particularly appropriate to your child's interests and hobbies. We also have a printable [Christmas Concentration](#) game and many [Bingo Cards](#) which can be adapted for this game, with lovely colourful pictures.

**Instructions:**

Select a number of pairs of cards appropriate to your child. Older children can use the whole pack of 52.

Shuffle, and spread all the cards out face down on the table between the players (you can either choose a random arrangement, or lay the cards out in grid form; the latter makes it easier to remember where cards are placed).

The object of the game is to find matching pairs. Players take it in turns to turn over 2 cards. Let all the players see them and study them. If they are not a matching pair, try to remember what and where they are, then turn them back over. Play then passes to the next player. If they *are* a matching pair, that player removes them from the table and keeps them, and then has another turn.

When all cards have been removed from the table, each player counts up the number of cards they have collected. The player with the most cards is the winner.

**Variations:**

Make a hands-on, tactile version using small household objects, as described in [Under The Cups](#). Include one pair of "sweeties" or other treats to make the game especially exciting. The player who finds the matching pair is allowed to eat them!

**Play a solitaire version:**

Older children can count how many "turns" it takes them to complete the game, and try to beat their record. Younger children may find it more helpful to have a pile of buttons and two cups. Move a button from one cup to the other for every "turn" and see if they can complete the game before all the buttons have been moved across.

**Leave an odd card out:**

You can make the game a little harder for older children by leaving one card without it's pair.

# Menagerie

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Be prepared for a lot of noise with this card game, which is also known as "Animals". Great fun!



**Number of Players:**

4+

**Age Range:**

6+

**Cards:**

Two standard decks

**Instructions:**

To start, each player chooses an animal name which is long and difficult to say (*Amazonian Umbrellabird* is acceptable, *Cow*, not so much - although this will obviously be dependent on the age of your children!) They then write these names on slips of paper, which are folded up and shaken about in a hat or box. Each player then takes out a slip of paper and whichever animal they have selected is theirs for the rest of the game.

Everyone must then make sure to learn the names of all the animals, not merely their own.

Next, all the cards are dealt clockwise and kept face down. It doesn't matter if the number of cards given to each player is unequal. No player can look at their cards, but simply keep them in a face down pile.

Now, the player to the left of the dealer turns his top card over to start a face up pile. Every other player does the same in turn, continuing around the circle. When a player notices that another player's face up card is of the same rank (ie the same number or picture) as his, he has to shout out the name of the other player's animal three times. The first player to shout correctly wins the other player's face up pile, which he adds to the bottom of his face down pile.

If a player calls out the wrong name, he gives all his face up cards to the player whose name he did shout.

The winner is the player who manages to collect all the cards

# My Ship Sails

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This is an easy card game for kids of all ages (from about 6 up) which is best and most exciting when played at high speed.



**Number of Players:**

4 – to 7

**Age Range:**

6+

**Cards:**

One standard deck of cards

**Instructions:**

Deal seven cards to each player, one at a time and face-down. The rest of the deck is not needed.

The aim of the game is to try and collect seven cards from the same suit (eg seven spades). Keeping the cards hidden, the players sort their cards by suits and decide which suit to collect (although they may change their mind as play progresses).

Then, each player puts an unwanted card face down on the table and slides it to the player on the right, who takes it up. Try to do this in a rhythm so that all players are passing and picking up at the same time. Continue until one player's hand is all one suit. He shouts "My Ship Sails!" and wins the game.

This game is similar to [Fig](#).

# Old Maid

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A popular and easy card game for three or more children. It makes a good starter card game for kids. Also called "Pass The Lady".



**Number of Players:**

3+

**Age Range:**

5+

**Cards:**

A standard deck of 52 cards is used, but with one of the Queens removed. This leaves a pair of Queens in one colour and a single Queen (the old maid) in the other.

**Instructions:**

All the cards are dealt, face down. It doesn't matter if some players end up with more cards than others.

The players then sort their cards, keeping them hidden from all other players. Anyone holding pairs of matching cards, with the same number or picture, should put them down face up. If anyone has three matching cards, he only puts down one pair and keeps the spare card. If anyone has *four* matching cards, he puts down two pairs.

The player to the left of the dealer then fans his cards in his hand so he can see them all, although he keeps them hidden from the other players. He offers them to the player on his left, who cannot see them, but takes a random card from the fan. If the card he picks matches any he already has, he puts down the pair. If not, he keeps it in his hand. Then, he, in turn, fans his cards and offers them to the player on his left.

This continues until all the cards have been put down in pairs, except the Old Maid, which is left alone and cannot be paired. The person left holding this card is the Old Maid, and loses the game.

# Pig

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This is a brilliant starter game for children, who enjoy the rhythm (once they get the hang of it) and the silliness of it all. It is one game that even the youngest child doesn't seem to mind losing, which makes it a real winner!



**Number of Players:**

3+ (and up to 13 using one pack of cards)

**Age Range:**

6+

**Cards:**

Standard 52-card deck

**Instructions:**

For each player, take four of a kind out of the deck and put aside the rest of the cards. If you are playing with younger children, try to make sure that the cards are as different from each other as possible. For example, if you were playing with 3 players you might choose the 4s, 8s and Queens. Shuffle your chosen cards well.

Deal the cards so that each player has four. Now each player looks at their hand and sorts the cards out. The aim of the game is to collect four of a kind, at which point you quickly, and quietly, put a finger on your nose. If you see another player put a finger on their nose, you must do so too (regardless of whether you have 4 of a kind or not). The last player to put a finger on their nose gets a letter - first P, then I, then G.

To play, choose which cards you want to collect then choose a card to discard and put it, face down, on the table in front of you. When everyone has a card on the table, simultaneously pass your card to the player on your left and then pick up the card which has been passed to you. Try to establish a rhythm - it can help if an adult says "down - pass - pick up, down - pass - pick up" to keep everyone going!

The first player to reach "P-I-G" is the loser. If you want a longer game, try playing with D-O-N-K-E-Y instead.

# Rolling Stone

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This card game for kids can be a lot of fun but also very frustrating: just when you are about to win, you can find yourself right back at square one!



**Number of Players:**

4 - 6

**Age Range:**

6+

**Cards:**

If six players: One standard deck with the twos removed

If five players: Twos, threes and fours removed

If four players: Two, threes, fours, fives and sixes removed.

Aces are high

**Instructions:**

The players cut the deck and the highest card deals all the cards around the group clockwise, until each player has eight cards.

The players sort their cards by suit and then the player to the left of the dealer plays one card face-up. The next player then has to play a card which is of the same suit. Play continues until a player cannot place a card, at which point they have to pick up all the face-up cards and add them to their hand. They then start the next round with one of their cards *of a different suit*.

The winner is the player who runs out of cards first.



# Sequence

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This game is easy to learn, making a good starter card game for younger kids, but nevertheless requires concentration and patience..



**Number of Players:** Best with 4 to 5 but it is possible to play with as few as 2

**Age Range:** 6+

**Type of Game:** Luck, Sequencing

**Cards:** One standard deck. For younger children you could remove the picture cards and run each sequence from 1 (Ace) to 10.

**Aim:** To be the first to get rid of all your cards.

**Instructions:** In this game, cards are ranked in numerical order: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace. Cards in order and of the same suit make up a sequence.

To start, the whole deck is dealt clockwise around the group, face-down. It doesn't matter if the cards are unequal.

The player to the left of the dealer places his lowest card face up on the table (not necessarily a 2). The player who has the next card/cards in the sequence plays it/them. Play continues until the Ace of that suit is reached. Then, the next sequence is begun by whoever played the last card, who again places his lowest card.

If at any time a player plays a card that cannot be followed (when the higher cards in that sequence have already been played), he gets another turn. The winner is the player who is the first to get rid of all his cards.

## VARIATIONS:

**Rounds:** This game can be lengthened by playing in rounds. To do this, each player starts with ten counters and a number of rounds is agreed upon. Then, every time someone wins a round, the losers pay him one counter for every card they still hold. The ultimate winner of the whole game is the person with the most counters when the chosen number of rounds has been completed

# Sevens

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Also known as Card Dominoes, Parliament or Fan Tan, this is an exiting card game which is simple for children to learn quickly.



**Number of Players:**

2+

**Age Range:**

6+

**Cards:**

Standard 52-card deck.

**Instructions:**

The entire pack of cards is dealt clockwise and face-down around the group.

The players then sort their cards into sequences in each suit. The player who holds the 7 of diamonds starts by placing this card down in the centre. The game then continues clockwise, with each player, if they can, adding a diamond card to the sequence. This can either go up (8, then 9, then 10 etc) or down (6, then 5, then 4 etc). Any cards played are placed on either side of the 7, as appropriate, so that the diamonds form a row. A player can also start a new sequence in a different suit by placing any of the other 7s below the 7 of diamonds so that a new row can be built in that suit. If a player can do neither, they simply skip a turn.

The winner is the first player to use up all his cards, although if you wish you can continue to play until all the cards have been used up and all four rows are complete

# Slapjack

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This is an easy card game - suitable for very young children - but it can get wild and start off a few sibling arguments! You might want to supervise young children.

**Number of players:** 2 to 5

**Age:** 5+

**Cards:** Standard deck

**Instructions:** Deal the cards out completely, face-down - don't worry if the numbers are uneven. The player to the left of the dealer starts by turning the card on the top of his pack face-up in the centre of the table. Play continues with each player adding a card to the face-up pile, until somebody turns up a Jack, at which point all players try to be the first to "slap" their hand over the stack. Whoever gets their hand there first takes the pile and adds it to the bottom of their pack.

The player to their left starts a new face-up pile, and play continues.

If you lose all your cards you have one more chance to stay in the game, by slapping the next Jack that appears. If you miss that one, you are out for good!

The last person in is the winner.

# Snap

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Snap is popular, noisy and liable to go on forever! A fast game for the whole family, requiring quick reflexes and sharp observation.

**Number of Players:** 2+

**Age Range:** 6+

**Type of Game:** Noisy, Physical

**Cards:** Special snap cards are easy to find, although an old, standard deck can also be fun to use. Use two decks for more than three players.

**Aim:** To win all the cards.

**Instructions:** Deal out all the cards, face-down. Players don't look at their cards, but hold them in a stack in front of them, face down.

To begin, the player to the left of the dealer takes his top card, turns it over and places it face up next to his own pile. The next player does the same, starting a pile of his own.

Continue until a player notices that two cards on top of any of the face-up piles are the same. Shout "Snap!" The first to do so receives all the cards in both of the matched piles and adds them to the bottom of his own face-down pile. The game then continues, with the person to the left of the winner continuing play.

If, at any point, a player runs out of face-down cards, he simply overturns his face-up pile and starts again.

If two players shout "Snap!" at exactly the same time, they form a snap pool, with the two matched piles of cards placed together, face-up, in the centre. Play then continues as normal, until someone turns up a card which matches the top card in the snap pool. Whoever then shouts "Snap pool!" fastest takes the whole pool.

If a player incorrectly calls "Snap!" at any point, he should pay every player one card from his face-down pile.

If a player runs out of both face-up and face-down cards, he is out. The winner is the player who ends up with all the cards.

## VARIATIONS:

**Easy Snap:** Extremely good for younger children, this variation of the game has only one central, face-up snap pile. The players each add a new card to the snap pile until the top card matches the one beneath it. The first player to shout "snap" takes the whole central pile and adds them to the bottom of his own face-down stack. If a player runs out of cards, he is out. The winner is the player who ends up with all the cards.

**Speed Snap:** This is a very fast version of the game, with everyone turning their cards over at the same time, instead of in turn.

# Snip Snap Snorem

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This is a popular - and noisy - card matching game, suitable for younger children and mixed age groups.



**Number of players:**

3+

**Age:**

4+

**Cards:**

Standard deck of cards

**Instructions:**

Deal the cards out completely (don't worry if some players get more than others). Players sort the cards in their hands by rank: the object of the game is to get rid of all your cards.

The player to the left of the dealer starts by placing any card down on the table. The next player looks to see if they have a card of the same rank. If they do, they place it down on top of the card, saying "Snip". If they have another card of the same rank, they place it down too, saying "Snap". If they don't, play passes to the next player, and so on. Whoever places the final card of that rank says "Snorem" and wins the right to start the next round with the card of their choice.

Children will soon learn that it is best to lead with a card in which they have more than one of a kind.

# Stealing Bundles

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Also known as Stealing The Old Man's Bundle, this unpredictable game is very popular with kids, who love being able to steal each other's cards! It is an early version of Casino.

**Number of Players:** 2 - 4

**Age Range:** 6+

**Type of Game:** Luck

**Cards:** Standard 52-card deck

**Aim:** To have the biggest "bundle" of cards at the end of the game.

**Instructions:** Each player is dealt four cards, which are kept separate and face-down. Then, another row of four cards is put, this time face-up, in the centre. The rest of the cards are put aside.

The player to the left of the dealer has first turn. In each turn he does one of three things.

1. If he has a card which is of the same rank (ie: twos, Queens) as any of those in the centre, he can "steal" the centre card (or cards) and put it face-up with his own, in front of him, in a stack. This is his "bundle". If he wins more cards in future turns, they all go onto the top of this bundle, with only the top card showing.

2. If he has a card which is of the same rank as the top card in someone else's "bundle", he can steal their bundle!

3. If he has no cards which match the central ones or another's bundle, he "trails", putting one of his own cards face-up in the centre.

When everyone has played all four of their original cards, they are dealt four new ones and the game continues.

When all the cards have been dealt and played, the player with the most cards in their bundle wins

# War

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War makes an easy introduction to card playing for kids without too many rules to complicate the game.



**Number of Players:** 2 (although 3 can play with our variation below)

**Age Range:** 6+

**Type of Game:** Luck

**Cards:** Standard deck of 52 cards

**Aim:** To win all the cards

**Instructions:** Deal out the cards and keep them face down. Player must not look at their cards.

Both players turn over the top card in their piles and put them face-up in the centre. Whoever has turned over the higher ranking card, never mind which suit, picks up both cards and adds them to the bottom of his pile.

Continue in the same way until two cards of the same value (eg two 4s) are turned over at the same time. This constitutes "War". Both players then take two more cards and put one face-down on top of the card they have already placed in the middle, and one face-up. Whoever puts down the higher ranking face-up card wins all six.

If, of course, two more same-ranking cards are put down, the state of "War" continues until there is a winner.

The game is won by the player who manages to collect all the cards.

## VARIATIONS:

**War for Three:** This is nearly the same as War (for two), except that the last card in the deck is not given out, to make sure that all the players have the same number of cards. Then, if two cards of the same rank are turned up, all three people have to go to "War".

If, however, three cards of the same rank are turned up, the players play "Double War", where everyone puts two cards face-down in the centre and one card face-up. If the cards happen to match, they continue with "Single War".