

Keeping the Learning Going @ Home: Card Games



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In this series, specially written for Independent.ie, the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), offers some valuable pointers to parents across a range of different learning areas. PDST is a Department of Education and Skills support service.

This article, about how fun card games can also sharpen maths skills, the 11th in the series.

Keeping the Learning Going at Home: Card Games

One of the aims of the Primary Mathematics Curriculum is to enable children to “develop a positive attitude towards mathematics”. Playing maths games, including card games, is one way to enhance children’s enjoyment, confidence and motivation in mathematics. Maths games also provide children with opportunities to apply and develop their maths skills and knowledge.

According to the Primary Mathematics Curriculum “games can be very useful in mathematics. Card and dice games can reinforce number recognition and help in the development of strategies. They also encourage co-operation and turn-taking”.

You are probably already familiar with games such as Snap, Go Fish and Salute, so here are a few others to try. To play each of these games you will need a deck of cards. If you don’t have a deck of cards to hand, children can be encouraged to design and make their own or there are many free templates to be found online that can be downloaded and printed.

Yes, No, You Got It!

This game is for two or more players. One player draws a card at random from the deck but doesn’t let the other players see it. The other players take turns asking mathematical questions to find out what card was drawn. The

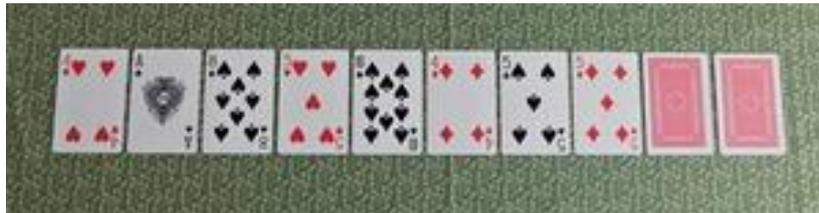
person with the card responds to each question by saying, "Yes," "No," or "You Got It!"

If the player selected the five of hearts possible questions asked might include: Is the card black? (No) Is the value of the card greater than 4? (Yes) Is the card greater than 8? (No) Is the card a 7? (No) Is the card a six? (No) Is the card a diamond? (No) Is the card the five of hearts? (You Got It!). The player who correctly guesses a card keeps that card and takes the next turn. The first one to collect ten cards is the winner.



Flip Out

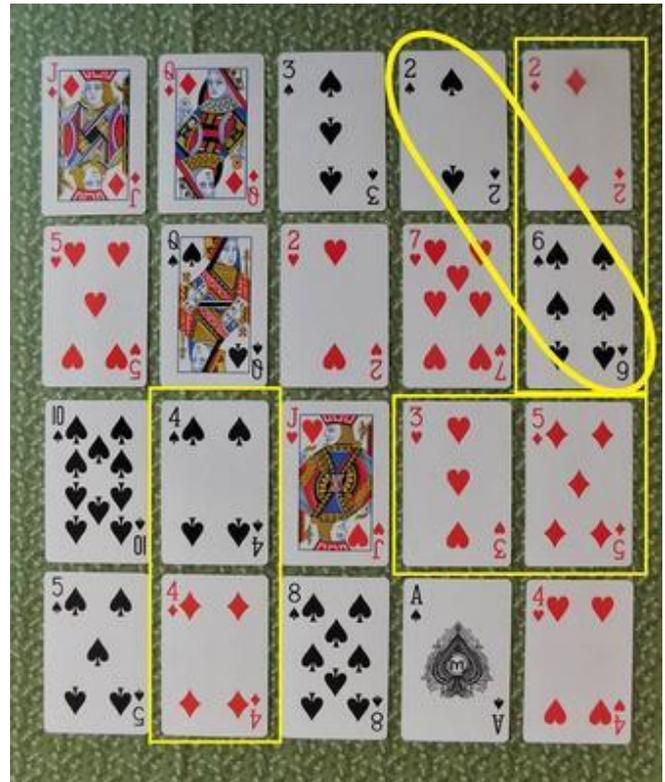
This game is for one or more players. Ace=1, Picture cards=10. Divide the cards evenly amongst the players. Each player should have at least ten cards. Each player shuffles their deck and deals up to ten cards, placing them face down in a row. When given the signal to start the players flip one card at a time, and calculate a running total of the values on the card. Players write down their total e.g. 40 for this set so far, $4 + 1 = 5$, $5 + 8 = 13$, $13 + 3 = 16$, $16 + 10 = 26$, $26 + 4 = 30$, $30 + 5 = 35$, $35 + 5 = 40$. Players check each other's totals. The winner is the one with the highest total. If a total is wrong, the player can not be the winner of that round.



I Spy Sums

This game is for two or more players. Ace = 1, Jack = 11, Queen = 12, King = 13. Deal out the cards **face up** to make 5 rows of 4. The remaining cards are put in a pile to the side. The first player challenges the second player to find two cards next to each other, either vertically, horizontally or diagonally, that add/subtract/multiply/divide to make a number by saying, eg: *"I spy with my little eye two cards that add to 8."* or *"I spy with my little eye two cards that multiply to make 24."*

The second player then looks for two cards that add/subtract/multiply/divide to make that number and picks up this pair. In the example of two cards to add to 8: 3 of hearts and 5 of diamonds or 2 of spades and 6 of spades or 4 of spades and 4 of diamonds. If the second player misses any pair(s) then the first player may claim them. Cards from the pile on the side should be used to fill the gaps created when a player finds a pair. Players swap roles and continue until all the cards are gone. The winner is the player with the most cards at the end of the game.



Children should be encouraged to come with their own ideas on how to simplify these games or how to make them more challenging.

For more fun and engaging ideas on how to keep the learning going at home in mathematics, science and STEM follow us on Twitter @PDSTPrimarySTEM.