

Face Card / Kill Card

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Overview

Face Card / Kill Card is a quick and easy-to-learn game for two or more players created in Los Angeles in 2012.

Goal & Scoring

The goal of the game is to get the highest score of all players without being eliminated from the game. Scores are computed by totaling the points of the cards in a hand. Twos through tens are worth their value and aces are worth eleven points. Face cards dealt face down are worth zero points while face cards dealt face up eliminate a player from the game.

For instance, a player with a $7\spadesuit$ face down and $A\diamondsuit$, $3\heartsuit$, $4\heartsuit$, $9\clubsuit$ face up would have $7+11+3+4+9=34$ points while a player with $K\diamondsuit$ face down and $6\diamondsuit$, $5\spadesuit$, $3\clubsuit$ face up would have a total score of $0+6+5+3=13$ points.

Setup & Initial Deal

For six or fewer players, use at least one full 52-card deck. For more than six players, enough decks should be used to ensure that face cards outnumber players at least two to one. Combined decks should be thoroughly shuffled together.

For the initial deal, the dealer gives one card face down to each player as a hole card. Each player's hole card may contribute to their total score, but will remain unknown to all other players until the end of the game. This hole card allows for credible bluffing.

Playing Turns

Following the initial deal, any cards dealt are dealt in front of the receiving player face up for all to see. A round of play starts with the player on the dealer's left and continues clockwise until every player has had a turn. During their turn, a player may either draw a card or pass play the next player. A player may draw any number of cards during a single turn, but if they draw a face card they are eliminated from the game. After each round of play, a fresh round commences starting with the player on the dealer's left. With luck, a player will survive many rounds of drawing.

Ending the Game

There are two ways to end the game:

- All players but one are eliminated from the game. In this case, the surviving player wins.
- Every player still active in the game passes consecutively without taking any cards. In this case, the hole cards are flipped so that all cards are revealed. The totals are tallied and the player with the highest total wins. In the case of a tie, players may play a tie-breaker round with new hole cards.

Notes

- A player may decline to draw any cards on a turn and then draw more cards during a later turn.
- A face card received face-down from the dealer as a hole card does not eliminate the player, but does not contribute to that player's score.
- It is recommended that players arrange their cards in piles of ten when possible so that it is easier to keep a running total of each player's score. For instance, a $6\heartsuit$ and a $4\clubsuit$ might be merged to form a pile of ten.

Variations

Aces as Ones

Aces count as one point instead of eleven points. This may come in handy if you are using the game to teach children counting. In this case, each pip on a card is a point.

Number of Hole Cards

Players receive more than one hole card to increase potential for bluffing. More decks may be required in this case.

Turnless Play

In this version, after each player receives their hole card the remaining cards are spread out in a pool in the middle of the table. A player may draw a card whenever they like. The game ends when no one has drawn for a given amount of time (e.g. 30 seconds).

Playing with Betting

Each player may contribute a set "ante" before the start of the game and several rounds of poker-style betting may be dispersed between rounds. You may even play with rules like "doubling the pot buys back a life". Winner takes all.