

Gaps (Montana)

1 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Arrange each row into a complete suit sequence from 2 to King.

SETUP

- 1 player with a standard 52-card deck.
- Deal all cards face-up in 4 rows of 13.
- Remove all 4 Aces to create gaps.

SCORING

- Win by completing all four rows from 2 to King.
- 1-2 redeals typically allowed when stuck.

Tip: Move 2s to the left column first — they anchor your entire row.

ON YOUR TURN

- Fill a gap with the card one rank higher and same suit as the card to its left.
- Any 2 can fill a gap in the leftmost column.
- Gaps next to Kings are dead.

Gaps, also known as Montana or Spaces, is a solitaire card game where all 52 cards are dealt face-up into four rows of thirteen. The Aces are removed to create four gaps, and the player rearranges cards by moving them into the gaps to form complete ascending sequences by suit from 2 through King in each row.

Objective

Arrange all four rows so that each row contains a complete suit in ascending order from 2 to King, from left to right.

Setup

1. **Players:** 1 player (solitaire).
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck.
3. **Layout:** Deal all 52 cards face-up into 4 rows of 13 cards.
4. **Gaps:** Remove the 4 Aces from the layout, creating 4 gaps (empty spaces).

Gameplay

1. **Moving cards:** A gap may be filled by the card that is one rank higher than the card to the left of the gap and of the same suit. For example, if the 5 of Hearts is to the left of a gap, only the 6 of Hearts may fill that gap.
2. **Leftmost column:** A gap in the leftmost position of any row may be filled by any 2.
3. **Dead gaps:** A gap to the right of a King (or to the right of another gap with no card to its left) is dead and cannot be filled.
4. **Redeals:** When no more moves are possible, a redeal is allowed. Cards already in correct sequence from the left of each row are left in place. All other cards are gathered, shuffled, and redealt to fill the remaining spaces. The Aces are again removed. Typically 1 or 2 redeals are allowed.

Scoring

1. **Win condition:** The game is won if all four rows are completed with suits in order from 2 to King.
2. **Partial scoring:** Some versions score based on the number of cards correctly placed in sequence before the game stalls.
3. **Redeal cost:** Each redeal used can reduce the final score in point-based versions.

Variations

- **Montana:** An alternate name; some versions place the 2s in the leftmost column at setup to give the player a head start.
- **Addiction:** A digital variant that typically allows 3 redeals and tracks completion statistics.
- **No-redeal Gaps:** A harder variant where no redeals are permitted.

Tips and Strategies

- Prioritise moving 2s to the leftmost column first, as this anchors entire rows for building.
- Avoid creating dead gaps next to Kings unless you have no alternative.
- Plan several moves ahead; a single move affects the availability of gaps throughout the layout.

Tips & Strategy

Always anchor 2s in the leftmost positions first. Think several moves ahead because each gap movement cascades into future options. Avoid creating unmovable dead gaps next to Kings.

The game requires careful planning because each move alters the landscape of available moves. Sequences build from the left, so early positioning of 2s is paramount.