

Ninety-Nine (99)

2 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Easy

Duration: Medium

Avoid being the player who pushes the running total over 99.

SETUP

- Each player receives 3 tokens (lives).
- Deal 3 cards to each player.
- Running total starts at 0.

SCORING

- Lose a token when you cannot play without exceeding 99.
- Lose all 3 tokens and you are eliminated.
- Last player with tokens wins.

Tip: Hold onto Kings, 9s, and 4s as escape cards for when the total is high.

ON YOUR TURN

- Play one card and announce the new running total.
- Draw a replacement card from the deck.
- Special cards: King sets total to 99, 9 is a pass (0), 4 reverses play.
- 10 adds or subtracts 10 (player's choice).

The objective of the Ninety-Nine card game is to avoid being the player who causes the total value of the cards played to exceed 99. Players must strategically play cards from their hands to manipulate the total value while avoiding reaching or exceeding 99.

Preliminaries

- At the start of the game, each player is given three tokens.
- Each hand, three cards are dealt to each player.
- The player to the left of the dealer starts the game by choosing one of their cards, placing it on the discard pile, and calling out its value. They then draw a new card.
- Players take turns playing cards and calling out the new total value until a player cannot play without causing the total to exceed ninety-nine.
- The losing player forfeits one token, and all cards are collected for a new hand.
- Once a player runs out of tokens, they are out of the game.
- The last player remaining, i.e., the last player with tokens, wins the game.

Standard Rules of Play

- **Aces:** The value of an Ace is either 1 or 11, chosen by the player when played.
- **3s:** The value of a 3 is 3, and the next player loses a turn.
- **4s:** The value of a 4 is 0, and the order of play is reversed. If only two players remain, the player who played the 4 takes another turn instead.
- **9s:** The value of a 9 is 0 (a pass card).
- **10s:** The value of a 10 is either -10 or +10, determined by the player when played.
- **Jacks, Queens:** The value of these cards is 10.
- **Kings:** Playing a King sets the total to 99, regardless of the previous total.
- **Numbered Cards (2-8):** The value of these cards is their face value.

Additional Notes

- The Ninety-Nine card game is ideal for cultivating math skills in children due to its focus on basic addition.
- Players must remain attentive to the total value called out on each play to avoid exceeding 99.
- Variations of the game may include alternative token systems or scoring methods.

Tips for Success

- **Risk Management:** Be mindful of the total and assess the risk of going over 99 points with each card played.
- **Card Counting:** Keep track of the cards played to anticipate the remaining cards in the deck and adjust your strategy accordingly.
- **Bluffing:** Use strategic plays and calculated bluffs to mislead opponents and gain an advantage.

Variations

- **Starting Total:** Experiment with different starting totals to adjust the pacing and intensity of the game.
- **Special Cards:** Introduce special cards with unique effects to add variety and strategic depth to the gameplay.

Tips & Strategy

To succeed in Ninety-Nine, carefully manage your risk, keep track of the total, and use strategic plays to outmaneuver your opponents.

Strategic decision-making is key in Ninety-Nine, where players must balance risk and reward, anticipate opponents' moves, and manage the total to avoid elimination.