Cribbage Rules

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Before You Play

To play Cribbage, all you need are the following:

- Two players, including yourself.
- A standard deck of 52 cards: No jokers necessary.
- A Cribbage board: Many people think that using the board is an integral part of playing the game, but you can also use a pencil and paper to keep score.

You score points in Cribbage in two distinct phases. First, there is the play of the cards; second, you score the points in your hand. You get opportunities to record points during both phases of the game.

The Deal

The rules require that the game starts with a cut. Both players cut the deck.

If this is a second game, the deal goes to the person who lost the previous match.

The player cutting the lower card is the dealer.

The winner of the cut should shuffle the pack and offer it to his opponent for a further cut. The dealer then deals six cards to each player.

As the game goes on, the deal alternates with each hand.

The Discard

Following the cut, each player throws away two cards from his hand into the 'crib' or 'box' - a third hand that is scored by the dealer at the end of the round.

The Turn-Up

The game of cribbage then begins with the non-dealer cutting the deck. This is done after the discard. This card is called the *turn-up* or *starter*. If the turn-up card is a Jack, the dealer immediately scores two points.

Playing the Round

The Count

In the playing phase of Cribbage, the players take it in turns to lay down a card, trying to make the running total equal to certain values. The non-dealer plays first and states the value of her card (for example, "ten" for a Jack). Court cards count ten (together with the face 10 they are known as the 'ten-cards', or 'tenth cards'). Ace counts one.

The players go back and forth putting a card down and adding to the “count”.

If it is a player’s turn, and they can’t go (no cards, or the count goes above 31), the other player may play, as long as they go no higher than 31 too.

The last person who plays gets the point(s).

If cards remain in hands, the player other than who went last, plays his/her cards.

Targets during the Round

15 and 31

If a player makes the total exactly 15, they score two points ("fifteen-two"). Two points are also awarded for making 31.

Additionally, you score a point if your opponent cannot play without going over 31 .

Pairs

If your card is the same rank as the last card played, you score two for a pair. If your opponent plays a third card of the same rank, he scores 6 for a "pair royal" (three of a kind). Four of a kind scores 12 ("double pair royal").

Runs

If the last 3 cards played form a sequence, the player making the sequence scores 3 for a "run". For example, 3-4-5 makes a run of 3 and so scores 3 for the player laying down the 5. If the opponent then plays a 6 (or a 2) to extend the sequence to 4 cards, she scores 4, and so on as long as the sequence is unbroken.

Sequence do not have to be in order. For example, if the play goes 7-9-6, you can then play an 8 to score 4 for a run of 4

Counting

Having played out all the cards, both players then score their hands, non-dealer first.

This time, both players include the turn-up card as part of both hands. The dealer's crib also includes the turn-up. Again, points are scored for 15s, runs, and pairs; you can also score for a flush (all cards of the same suit) - see the cribbage scoring chart below for a handy reference.

Flush - if you have 4 cards in your hand that are the same suit, then you get 4 points. If the turn up card also matches, you get 5 points.

Example Hands

Scoring Examples

Score	Value	Comment
15	2	Any combination of cards that add up to 15
Pair	2	Matching pairs
Pair royal	6	Three of a kind

Double pair royal	12	Four of a kind
Run	1 per card	Runs need not be in numerical order (eg 3-5-6-4) but they must be consecutive (3-4-4-5 does not score).
Go	1	The **go** is scored by the last player to lay a card.
31	2	The 2 points for 31 *includes* a go (by definition no-one can go when the total is 31). So no extra point is scored for the go.
Nobs	1	**A point** is scored if you hold the Jack of the **turn-up** suit.

Winning the Game

In the standard six-card cribbage game the winner is the first player to reach 121 points, and the end of the board. The cribbage rules do not require you to score exactly 121; any score that takes you past 120 points is enough to win - provided you get to count it! If the loser has not reached 91 points the victor scores a *skunk*, or double win.

In mini-crib, the winner is the first person to get past 60. You can extend the mini-game to a full game by going around the board twice.