

Aces

Invented by Mark S. Ball

GAME OBJECTIVE

Be the first to earn 7 points or more

PLAYERS

2

CARDS

40 cards total, Ace - 10 in four suits

RANKING

(low) A 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (high)

Aces are wild when combined with number cards

INTRODUCTION

Aces is an extremely speedy shedding card game for two players. Balance hand management with multi-functional Aces which serve as worthless low cards, flexible wild cards, or a devastating four card bomb.

MATERIALS

Strip a standard 52 card deck down to aces up through 10's in four suits. Grab a piece of paper and pencil to keep score.

SETUP

Deal 13 cards to each player. The remaining cards form the stock. Place it face down near the center of the playing space. The deal alternates each round.

PLAY

The dealer begins the draw phase for the round.

DRAW PHASE

The dealer looks at their hand and chooses up to six cards to discard (they may choose zero). These cards are placed face down off to the side. The dealer then draws the same number of cards from the stock to replenish their hand.

Next, the non-dealer may choose to discard up to the same number of cards the dealer did, replenishing their hand from the stock.

Example: If the dealer discards 4 cards, the non-dealer may discard from 0 to 4 cards.

Any remaining cards in the stock are set aside face down and will not be used this round. Both players must have exactly 13 cards in hand to begin play.

BEGIN THE DISCARD PILE

The non-dealer begins the discard pile. The person who begins the discard pile is called the **lead**. The lead may play any **combo** from their hand.

CONTINUE PLAY

The opposite player must either play an *equal or higher-valued* combo of the exact same type, or pass.

- **Matching Ranks:** Because there are no suit-based tie-breakers, playing a combo of the *exact same rank* is legal and successfully beats the previous play.
- **Winning the Pile:** Players alternate turns adding combos to the pile. If a player passes, the last to play cards clears the discard pile away and gains the lead, allowing them to play any combo type they want.

The round ends immediately when one player completely empties their hand.

THE COMBOS

- **Single:** A single card. Beaten by an equal card or a card of a higher rank. (e.g., A 4 is beaten by another 4, or any card 5 through 10).
- **Double:** Two cards of the same rank. Beaten by an equal pair or a higher-ranking pair. (Lowest: A-A, Highest: 10-10).
- **Triple Set:** Three cards of the same rank. Beaten by an equal triple or a higher-ranking triple. (Lowest: A-A-A, Highest: 10-10-10).
- **Triple Run:** Three cards of the same suit in sequential numerical order (e.g., 4♠-5♠-6♠). A run is valued by its highest card. A 4-5-6 run is beaten by an equal 4-5-6 run in a different suit, or a 5-6-7 run or higher.
- **Quad:** Four cards of the same rank. Beaten by a higher-ranking quad. (Lowest: 2-2-2-2, Highest: 10-10-10-10).

The Bomb

Four Aces (A-A-A-A) is the ultimate combo. It is a Bomb that instantly clears the discard pile. It can be lead, or it can be played on *any* combo type. The player who played the Bomb gains the lead.

Wild Aces

When played in a combo with number cards, an Ace is wild and represents ***any number card in any suit needed*** to complete the set or run. Only **one** Ace may be used as a wild per combo.

Examples: 4♠-A♥ (pair of 4's), 7♠-7♥-A♣ (triple 7's), 7♣-A♦-9♣ (club run, ace acts as 8♣), 3♣-3♥-3♠-A♦ (quad 3's)

ENDING THE ROUND

The first player to empty their hand wins the round.

SCORE

At the end of a round, points are awarded as follows:

- **Wild Exit (1 point):** You used one or more Aces as wilds in your final winning combo.
- **Natural Exit (2 Points):** You emptied your hand without using any Aces as wilds in your final combo.
- **Ace Only Exit (3 Points):** You emptied your hand with ONLY Aces in your final combo.

WIN

The first player to earn 7 points or more over multiple rounds wins.

NOTES

A maximum 6-card draw gives an individual player a 1-in-24 chance of getting all four aces. Considering that draws will vary over the course of a game, you can expect to see the bomb every 3 or 4 games.

If you hold zero aces as the dealer before the draw, chances are good that your opponent holds one or two aces. You have about a 70% chance of getting an ace on the draw, but you also open the door for your opponent to possibly get more aces as well. Your current hand shape should determine whether or not you take that chance.

Remember, the same rank can be used to beat and climb. This means a 10 is not a sure thing.

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