

Two Card Games



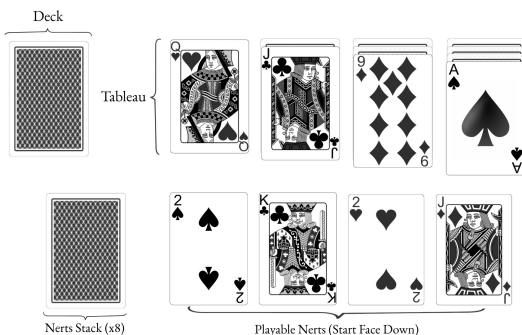
Nerts

PLAYERS: unlimited

EQUIPMENT: one full (uniquely backed) deck per player, no jokers

NERTS IS LIKE Solitaire, except completely chaotic and on a timer and also with other people. So really, not all that much like solitaire. The goal of the game is to score points, which come from two places: Finishing your "nerts" pile, and playing cards to the center.

THE STARTING LAYOUT for each player is this:



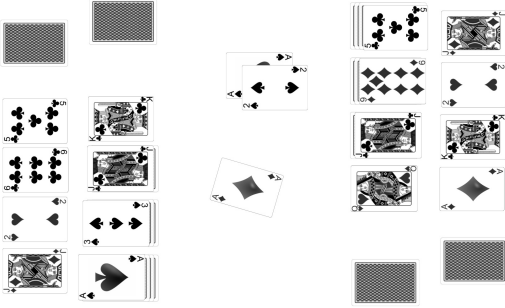
As you can see, you've essentially got a bunch of solitaire setups, one per player.

ALONG WITH THE MAIN solitaire cards, there are the twelve nerts below: Four laid out, and eight in a stack to the left side. The goal of the game is to dispose of those nerts, scoring points based on how you did so. Once the game starts, the four face-down nerts are turned face up, and can be played. Whenever one is played, you replace it with another.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS to play your nerts: you can either play them onto your solitaire layout (following the usual solitaire rules: to play a card on another the played card must be the next number/face card down from the base, and must be the opposite color). However, cards can also be played to the center of the play area, either from the nerts or from your solitaire setup.

WHEN PLAYING CARDS to the center, the following rules apply: Aces of any suit may be played to the center any time they're available for play, either as a nert or as the open card of a solitaire pile. Once in the center they cannot be moved, and are "public property," as it were. Anyone can play the next card up in that suit. Once the next card is played, the next can be, and so on.

California Jacks



FOR EXAMPLE, if Bob plays the ace of spades, he, Will, or Mike can play the two of spades. Once the two is played, the three can be played, and so on.

THIS IS WHERE the game gets chaotic, since anyone can play the next card, but only *one* person can play it. The first to play always counts, and if two people play at the same time, whoever's hand/card is underneath gets it. Only one card may be played at a time, and only with one hand. So you can't play a four while holding the five in your other hand to play immediately after. However, once you've let go of the four you *can* use your other hand to grab the five and try to play it. Just only have one card in hand at a time. And if there's ever doubt as to whether you two-handed, give it to the other guy. No use ruining the fun just to be right.

THE ROUND ENDS once a player has played all his nerts (both in the pile and in the slots), and hits the table/floor and shouts "NERTS!" Whoever ran out scores ten points, plus one for every card he played to the center. Everyone else scores what they played to the center, *minus* one for every nert they have left.

NOTE: When you run out of nerts, you don't *have* to end the game. You can choose to keep going. Watch out though! Only the one to shout "Nerts!" gets the bonus.

CALIFORNIA JACKS is an unusual game, one you probably haven't heard of. It's a two player game, so if you don't have the 3 minimum for Nerts, you can try this instead.

SHUFFLE THE DECK, and cut it, and show the card that was cut (cutting the deck is splitting it in half). That card's suit is the "trump" suit for this round. We'll come back to trump suits in a moment. Next, deal six cards to each player. Finally, place the deck face up on the table between the players, a bit to one side. Only the bottom (now top) card of the deck should be visible.

THE GOAL of California Jacks is to score points. Points are scored by winning certain "tricks," and tricks are won by playing high cards or trump cards.

THE NON-DEALER starts. He can play any card he likes from his hand, face up, in the center of the table. The dealer must then play a card of the same suit *if he can*. If he can't, he must play a card of the trump suit. If he can't do that either, he loses one point. Now, one of you will have won the trick. The person who wins is determined like this:

- Highest trump card, if a trump card was played
- If not, highest card of the suit led

Cards that are neither trump nor the suit that was first played can never win a trick. Trump cards will always beat other cards, which is why they're called *trump* cards. They "trump," or beat, everything else.

WHOEVER won the trick takes the two cards played and stashes them, then takes the top card of the deck (the one that's visible). Whoever lost

then takes the next card in the deck. Then whoever won the trick leads a new trick (plays the first card), and so on. Play continues until all cards have been played and won.

Points are scored like this: one point each for whoever has the ace, 2, and jack of trumps at the end of the round, and one point for whoever has more "points" in the tricks they won. You tally up the point value of your tricks by adding 4 for each ace, 3 for kings, 2 for queens, 1 for jacks, and 10 for each ten.

Strategy note: Not every trick is worth something. Winning the tricks with the special cards is worth more than all the others combined. So sometimes it's worth losing a trick. Especially if you don't want the card on top of the deck.

