

Cribbage

Players 2

Length 10–180 minutes

Equipment one standard piecepack, one deck of playing cards

Version 2.1 (2022-07-28)

Description

Cribbage is a popular two-person card game that traditionally uses a special “cribbage board” to keep score. Traditionally a “cribbage board” was often used to keep score for other games such as dominoes and darts. Below is a way to turn a piecepack into an effective cribbage board.

Making a cribbage board with a piecepack

Depending on the version of cribbage played a player usually wins if they score 61 points or 121 points (on a traditional cribbage board the latter effect is often achieved by going twice around a 60 hole crib board).

Give each player 12 tiles and arrange them in one vertical column in groups of two as in Figure 1. If you look at the “points” of this board and ignore the middle column of points then this gives you two columns each with 30 “points” arranged in groups of 5 as in a traditional cribbage board. Each player can place up to 12 coins in the middle column as a reminder to not use it. Give each player two pawns that they will use as “pegs”. They will start off the board before entering the beginning of the board and a player wins when one peg goes off the end of the board. For a 121 point game the player must make a circuit of the board twice. Use piecepack dice as counters to keep track of how many games each player has won (or trips around the circuit).

Objective

Win by being the first to score at least 121 points (cumulatively over several deals) i.e. the player must twice circle the cribbage board.

The Order of Play

Each player “cuts”¹ a card from a shuffled deck of playing cards. The lower card player deals first.² Afterwards players alternate being dealers. Each “hand” has a “deal”, “play”, and “show” phase.

¹Takes a random card at least four cards from the top or bottom of the deck.

²If a tie then each player cuts a card again.

Play

- Starting with non-dealer each player alternates playing a card in front of them.³
- When playing a card count out the sum of cards that have been played.⁴
- If you can't play a card without the count going over 31 then don't play a card and say "Go"
- Once the count reaches 31 or no player can play a card then reset the count to zero and continue playing (if possible starting with the player who didn't play the last card).
- Once a player runs out of cards the other player keeps playing until they run out of cards.
- A player scores points during the "Play" round right after a scoring card is played:

Fifteen Score 2 points if the count equals 15.

Pair Completing a pair⁵ scores 2 points, three of a kind scores 6 points, four of a kind scores 12 points.⁶

Run Completing a run of three or more cards scores as many cards as are in the run. Cards in the run need not be in order.⁷

Last card Score 2 points for playing the last card if the count equals 31 else score 1 point.

Show

Each player retrieves the cards played in the "Play" phase and score them in the following order:

1. The non-dealer's hand
2. The dealer's hand
3. The dealer's crib

The start card is used with the hand/crib to score the following combinations:

Fifteen Each combinations of cards adding up to 15 points⁸ scores 2 points e.g. $Q\clubsuit, 10\spadesuit, 5\diamondsuit, 5\heartsuit$ scores 8 points for four fifteens⁹: $Q\clubsuit 5\diamondsuit, Q\clubsuit 5\heartsuit, 10\spadesuit 5\diamondsuit$, and $10\spadesuit 5\heartsuit$.

³Don't mix these cards with the other player since these scores need to be scored in the "Show" stage.

⁴An ace equals 1 point and a jack, queen, or king equals 10.

⁵Two cards of the same rank.

⁶Because a three of a kind (*pair royal*) is three different pairs while a four of a kind is six different pairs.

⁷But they must be the last played cards.

⁸An ace equals 1 point and a face card equals 10 points.

⁹Plus two points for the pair of fives.

Pair Two cards of the same rank scores 2 points, three cards of the same rank scores 6 points, and “four of a kind” scores 12 points.

Run Three cards of consecutive rank score 3 points, a “run of four” scores 4 points,¹⁰ and a “run of five” score 5 points.

Flush 4 points are scored if all four cards in the hand are the same suit, if the (fifth) start card is also of that suit instead score 5 points.

One for his nob Score one point if the hand contains a jack of the same suit as the start card.

Additional Resources

- www.ludism.org/ppwiki/Cribbage
- boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2398
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cribbage
- www.pagat.com/adders/crib6.html
- Dan Barlow, *Cribbage for Experts* (2004)

Credits

Game design: Traditional (Sir John Suckling), adapted by Trevor L. Davis

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¹⁰Even though a run of four contains two runs of three it only scores 4 points instead of 6 points.