

Rummy 500

How to Play Rummy 500

Rummy 500 is played by two people with the standard 52-card pack. Each player receives a hand of 13 cards, and the rest of the pack is placed face down; this is the stock. The top card of the stock is turned up and placed beside the stock in a discard pile. In Rummy 500, all discards are available to draw, not just the top one; the discard pile is fanned out so that each card is visible.

There are three phases to a turn:

1 Drawing: You can either draw the top card of the stock, or draw from the discard pile. When drawing from the discard pile, you can take the top card, or you can take a card farther down in the pile, but there are some restrictions:

If you take the top card of the discard pile, you must play it to the table in the current turn. You can change the game options to not require you to play this card; in this case, if you draw this card, you must discard a different card.

If you take a card farther down in the discard pile, you must be able to play that card to the table in the current turn, and you must also take all the cards above that card in the discard pile into your hand. The card you have to meld that turn will be raised slightly in your hand as a reminder.

2 Playing cards to the table: This is optional. You can move sets and sequences, called melds, from your hand to the table; this is known as melding. You can also play cards that extend existing melds (either yours or your opponent's). You get points for each card you play to the table. You can meld as many cards as you like.

3 Discarding: You must end your turn by discarding a card to the top of the discard pile. The exception to this rule is if you have melded all the cards in your hand (ending the hand); in this case, no discard is necessary.

The hand continues with each player taking a turn until one player has played all of his or her cards to the table (discarding if necessary), ending the hand. The hand can also end if all of the cards in the stock are drawn, and the person whose turn it is does not want to draw from the discard pile (or cannot); that player passes, ending the game.

You play multiple hands until one player reaches 500 points or more at the end of a hand; that player wins the game. In the event of a tie, further hands are played until there is a single winner.

General Strategies

Success in Rummy depends largely on keeping track of the discards. From this you'll know which of your own combinations are still "alive" and you'll be able to guess which combinations your opponent is holding.

Pay attention to sequences when considering what cards to draw or discard. For example, it is easy to miss an ace-low sequence (A-2-3 or A-2-3-4), because the ace is always sorted as a high card in your hand.

Later in the game, intimidate your opponent—keep a vigilant eye on your opponent's score, and try to keep your score slightly ahead to keep him or her from ending the game. Also watch your opponent's hand size at the end of the game: you don't want to be surprised by the other player going out when you have a full hand of cards (especially high ones) near the end.

Know when to lose gracefully. If you're dramatically behind on points in the current hand, but you can go out, consider going out early even if this means losing; since you're playing several games to 500 points, think long term. Prolonging the hand when you're losing and your outlook is bad gives your opponent a chance to make the outcome even worse for you.

Your ace strategy should vary throughout the game. Early in the game, it is worth holding onto aces, since the potential 15 points you could score (for a set or ace-high sequence) are very valuable. Near the end of the hand, discard aces that are not sure things. At 15 points a pop, it is too much of a risk to hold onto them near the end of the hand.

If your opponent's score is nearing 500, try to end the hand at an appropriate time, if you can. Don't be afraid to go out early if you don't have a fantastic hand and your opponent won't win the game. Maybe the next hand will be the monster hand you need to mount your comeback.