



# ANGIE'S PRODUCTS

## Pinochle: Rules

### The Cards

Double-deck Pinochle uses a deck of 80 cards, made from two Pinochle decks (or four regular decks) by discarding everything except the Aces, Tens, Kings, Queens, and Jacks. There are four of each card. In other words, there are four Aces of Spades, four Aces of Hearts, etc.

Each card has a rank. The highest ranking card is an Ace. The lowest is a Jack. As with some European games, the Ten ranks just below the Ace, and above the King. The rank of cards, then, is: Ace-Ten-King-Queen-Jack. You should sort your cards into this order.

### The Players

Double-deck pinochle is played by four people, in two sets of partners. It is customary to name the players North, South, East, and West. North and South are partners, as are East and West. Partners face one another.

A Pinochle hand is one set of 20 cards played by each of the four players. A game consists of several hands, played and scored successively until one team reaches some pre-determined score (common variants are 350, 450, and 500 points required).

Each player is dealt 20 cards at random at the beginning of each hand. The dealer is chosen randomly for the first hand of a game, and then rotates clockwise to the successive player for each additional hand.

### Tricks

Pinochle is played in tricks, just like Spades, Hearts, and Bridge. A trick consists of one card from each player, played in a clockwise turn. One player leads by playing first. Then the person to his or her left plays, and so on until all four people have played. The highest card played wins the trick, and its player removes all four cards to be counted later.

### Following Suit

The person who leads in each suit determines what card suit the other players must follow. For instance, if the person leads with a Spade, then each player must play a Spade, if possible. If you do not have a Spade, then you must play a Trump (described below) or card from another suit. Finally, you must always play to win the trick, if possible.



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## Sample Tricks (basic)

First Sample Trick:

1. South leads: Ten of Hearts
2. West: Ace of Hearts
3. North: Queen of Hearts
4. East: Jack of Hearts West wins. His Ace beats all, so West leads next.

Second Sample Trick:

1. West leads: King of Spades
2. North: Queen of Spades
3. East: Ten of Spades
4. South: King of Spades East wins. 10 outranks a King.

In case of a tie (e.g., two Aces), the first one played is the winner.

## More Concepts -- Trumping

### Trumps

In each hand, one of the four suits is selected to be the trump suit. The trump suit outranks the other suits. If you play a card from the trump suit, then you will win the trick, unless someone plays a higher ranking card from the trump suit.

Example:

Suppose that Hearts are the trump suit. Look at these two tricks:

Trumps	Trumps
S: 10 Spades	S: 10 Spades
W: Ace Spades	W: Ace Spades
N: Q Hearts	N: Q Hearts
E: Q Spades	E: Q Spades
North wins	East wins

Which suit is trumps? That is determined by the person who wins the bid, a topic that is discussed later.



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## Rules of Trumping

### First Essential Rule of Trumping

The first rule is: You may only trump if you cannot play in the lead suit.

In the examples above, if you have a card from Spades, then you cannot play from the trump suit Hearts. You must always follow the lead suit, if possible.

### Second Essential Rule of Trumping

The second rule is: You must trump if you can legally do so.

In other words, if you cannot follow the lead suit, then you must play a trump, if you have any. Even if you know that your trump card will be beaten by a higher trump, you still must play it.

If you cannot follow suit, and you have no trumps, then you may play any card you wish.

To break one of the trumping rules is to renege, in pinochle terminology. This is severely penalized in real games, for example, by automatically going set on one's bid, or by forfeiting an entire game. Computer versions usually simply prohibit one from playing this way.

## More Concepts -- Scoring and Meld

The winners of a Pinochle game are the team who first reach the score of 500 points, or some other amount that you set using the Options | Setup command. Some people play to 350 450 or 500 or some other amount.

Scoring is composed of two components: Meld and Counters

### Meld

Meld refers to points you receive based on the cards you are dealt. It is therefore random. Various combinations of cards have various values.

For example, if you have a King and Queen in the same suit (e.g., King of Spades and Queen of Spades), that is a marriage. It is worth two points.



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Some other combinations include:

Run (Flush): Ace-10-King-Queen-Jack of trumps (15 points)

Aces: Ace in all four suits (Spades, Clubs, etc.) (10 points)

Pinochle: Queen of Spades with Jack of Diamonds (4 points)

All possible meld values are summarized in the following Meld Table.

## Meld Table

	1 Set	2 Set	3 Set	4 Set	Note
A-A-A-A	10	100	200	400	A in all 4 suits
K-K-K-K	8	80	160	320	K in all 4 suits
Q-Q-Q-Q	6	60	120	240	Q in all 4 suits
J-J-J-J	4	40	80	160	J in all 4 suits
Pinochle	4	30	90	270	Q Spade + J Diamond
Marriages	2	4	6	8	K+Q in same suit
" " of trumps	4	8	12	16	K+Q of trumps
Runs	15	150	300	600	A-10-K-Q-J of trumps

## More Concepts -- Showing Meld

After the bid is over, each player must show the cards that comprise the meld that his or her team is claiming. In other words, if you want to claim the points from your meld, then you have to show those cards to the other players.

To do this, lay all of your meld cards on the table. Do not show your other cards.

Note that you do not have to show your meld cards if your team has less than 20 total meld. That is because you cannot claim them anyway. However, there is one exception: you must show Aces Around if you have them, even if you have less than 20 total meld.



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Summary: Show your meld cards if you have 20 or more for your team  
Show Aces Around if you have them, regardless of total meld points

## More Concepts -- Counters

Counters are the following cards: Ace 10 King

At the end of each hand, the two teams look through the tricks that they have collected (won), and count 1 point for each Ace, 10, and King that they took.

## Minimum amounts of Meld and Counters

In order to score either Meld or Counters, you must get at least 20 points of that category of scoring (i.e., 20 Meld or 20 Counters).

Also, in order to score your Meld, you must get at least 20 counters by the end of the hand.

## Examples:

25 Meld	25 Meld	18 Meld	18 Meld
18 Counters	20 Counters	18 Counters	25 Counters
No Score	45 Scored	No Score	25 Scored

## What to Play

Remember that two components are necessary to score: Meld and Counters. Whether you have much meld is determined by chance. Therefore, the point of playing tricks is to try to win as many counters as possible -- so that you may either save your meld by winning 20 counters, or prevent your opponents from saving by denying them the 20 they need.

There are a total of 48 counters in the deck, plus 2 for winning the last trick of each hand.

In order to try to maximize the number of counters you win, you should do the following, whenever possible:

1. Whenever it appears that your team will win the trick, play a counter (A-10-K).
2. Whenever you will not win the trick, play a non-counter (Q-J).

For example, if your partner leads with an Ace, then you should play a King or a 10, since an Ace is likely to win. If the opponents lead with an Ace, then you should play a Jack or Queen if possible.



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## More Concepts -- Bidding

Bidding makes Pinochle different from many other card games (and makes it similar to Bridge).

The main goal of bidding is:

If you have substantial meld, you wish to win the bid and choose a trump suit that will allow you to save that meld.

For instance, if you have a hand that contains, say 11 Spades cards, then you would likely find it easy to win 20 counters if you bid and chose Spades as the trump suit.

## What is a Bid?

The bid is a promise to score a certain number of points in the hand, both from Meld and from the Counters you win.

Bidding starts at 50. This means that if you bid, then your Meld and your Counters (including those of your partner, North) must have at least 50 points combined by the end of the hand. Of course, you must have at least 20 points minimum of each, as described above.

## Structure of the Bid

After the cards are dealt, the person to the left of the dealer begins bidding. For example, if West deals, the North will bid first. That person may either bid 50 or higher, or may Pass. Once a person has passed, he or she may not bid again.

The bid progresses clockwise around the table. As long as people bid, it keeps going around, skipping those who have passed. When three people have passed, the remaining person is said to have won the bid, and he or she picks the Trump suit.

After the bidding is over, each team declares its Meld by showing those cards to the others. If a team combines for 20 or more Meld, that is noted to be scored later (if they also take 20 or more Counters).

## Rules for Bidding

There are three principal rules that apply to bidding:

1. Your team must combine for at least 20 meld, if you win the bid. If you do not have 20 meld, you lose the number of points that you bid. (Losing after winning the bid is called going set.)



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2. You must have a marriage in your trump suit, if you win the bid. You cannot pick a trump suit unless it has both a King and Queen. If you win the bid and have no marriages, you are automatically set.

3. Bidding goes from 50 to 60 by 1s. Above 60, it goes by 5s. Therefore: you can bid 50, 51 ...59, 60, 65, 70, etc. You cannot bid 61, 62, etc.

## Dropping the Bid

If no one bids, then the bid is dropped on the person who is dealing. This person must then make an automatic bid of 50. If he or she cannot bid in accordance with the requirements above, then his or her team is set, just as if a true bid had been made.

For this reason, if your partner is dealing and you have at least one marriage, it is customary for you to bid, so that you can save your partner from having the bid dropped on him or her.

## An Example Bid

Suppose you have the following hand:

Spade: Ace Ace Ace King Queen

Hearts: Ace Queen Queen Jack Jack

Clubs: Ace Ten King Queen Jack Jack Jack

Diamonds: Ace Ten Jack

It is your turn to bid first.

Notice that you have the following meld:

Aces Around (Ace Spades+Ace Hearts+Ace Clubs+Ace Diamonds = 10 meld)

Two marriages (King+Queen in Spades and Clubs = 4 meld)

One Pinochle (Queen Spades+Jack Diamonds = 4 meld)

Also, you have a Run in Clubs, if you win the bid.

Since you bid first, you should bid: 51 to tell your partner of your Aces.

West passes after you bid.

Then your partner North bids: 53. This tells you that North has 20 Meld or more.

East passes.

You should then bid 54. This tells your partner that you want to choose trumps (because you bid again).



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Finally, North passes.

You are asked to choose trumps. You pick Clubs, in order to score your Run.

## More Rules -- Passing

It is quite all right to Pass when you are asked to bid. However, once you have passed, you cannot bid again later (except to continue passing). There are many good reasons to pass:

If you do not have much meld (less than 10 or so)

You do not have any marriages (and thus could not pick trumps)

Your hand is weak (not many high-ranking cards)

The bid is too high for you

Your partner seems to want the bid

... etc.

## Playing the Hand

After someone has won the bid, you will play out the hand, as follows:

1. The person who won the bid will lead with the first card. Everyone else must follow with the same suit, if possible.
2. Whoever wins each trick will lead for the next trick
3. If you are void in the suit that is led, you must trump, if you can.
4. Remember, you must always play to beat the cards shown, if you can.

## Playing the Hand

You begin scoring after all cards have been played (after the 20th Trick). The rules for scoring are as follows:

1. Whoever wins the last trick (20th) gets 2 extra points for counters.
2. If the bidders do not get at least 20 counters, they are set. The final bid amount is deducted from their score.
3. If the bidders are set, their opponents still get their meld and counters as usual.