In case of a tie for lowest card, the last player to have played the Low Card becomes the new Lead Player.

Alvin

Set
Low Card = 11

Betty

Set
Low Card = 8

Daniella

Pass!

Carl

Pass!

Example: *Alvin leads with a Set of four 11s. Betty plays a Set of two 8s. Carl can't play because his Set of three 12s aren't low enough to beat Alvin's Low Card. Daniella passes because she doesn't want to break her Straight to play her two 3s. As Betty's 8s were the lowest cards played, she becomes the next Lead Player for the next trick.*

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Winning the Hand

The hand ends when a player wins a trick and has no cards left.

Whenever a player plays their last card(s) and does not win the trick, they must return those cards to their hand. The player who successfully plays their last card and wins the trick earns a gift card and becomes the Lead Player for the next hand.

In addition, the player(s) with the most unplayed cards remaining at the end of the hand must give a single gift card (if they have any) to the winning player.

Winning the Game

Once the final gift card has been claimed, the winner is the player(s) with the most gifts.

Giving is usually, but not always, better than getting!

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Credits

The game designer is Gordon Hamilton - the director of MathPickle.com. At Christmas you'll find him skiing & snuggling in Canada with his two children, Keefer and Julia.

Art

David Forest and Lina Cossette, *www.mrcuddington.com*

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Video Tutorial

Learn how to play the game by watching the video. Visit either *MathPickle.com* and click on the Games link, or *EGGRules.com* and click on the Games > 12 Days of Christmas link.

Overview

12 Days of Christmas is a game for 2 to 8 players that is played with a special deck of playing cards inspired by the classic carol. Your goal is to acquire the most gifts by giving away all the cards in your hand before your fellow players. It is easiest to do when you are the Lead Player, as you have the opportunity to play the first card(s) of a given turn. If you played the lowest card in the previous hand, you will be this hand's Lead Player. However, as the carol reminds us, low cards are rare — there is only one partridge in a pear tree.
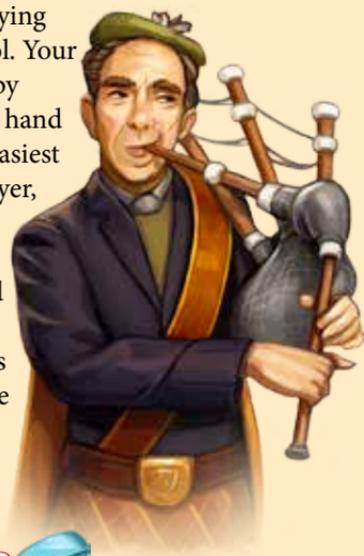
Beginning the Game

Remove the 12 gift cards from the deck. For a short game, everyone starts with a gift and you only play three hands.

The full game takes 12 hands and nobody starts with a gift.

Shuffle the remaining deck of 78 cards and deal the first hand of 12 cards to each player (11 cards for 7 players or 9 cards for 8 players).

Players sort their cards and the player to the left of the Dealer becomes the Lead Player and will play the opening card(s) of the first trick of the first hand.

Playing the Lead

The Lead Player begins the hand by playing one or more cards that must be one of the following 3 combinations:

Set: 2 or more identical cards;

Example: 4 maids a-milking.

Straight: 2 or more successive cards;

Example: 1 goose, 1 golden ring , 1 calling bird, 1 french hen, 1 turtle dove (i.e. 6/5/4/3/2).

Singleton: any single card.

Example: 1 lord a-leaping.

The lowest card played by the Lead Player is called the Lead's Low Card.

Following the Lead

Proceeding clockwise around the table, players either respond by playing a card(s) or passing.

To respond, one must play the same type of combination (Set, Straight or Singleton) as the Lead Player.

- The new combination must include at least one card that is as low or lower than the Lead's Low Card.
- In the case of Sets and Straights, players can respond with more or fewer cards than those led by the Lead Player, but never a single card.
- Players may choose to pass.

After play has gone once around the table and all players have had the opportunity to either respond or pass, the player who played the Low Card discards all the played cards and becomes the new Lead Player.

Lead Hand

**Straight
Low Card = 6**

Response

**Straight
Low Card = 5**