

Spades

The rules on one page

Players

4, in 2 teams of 2

You need

A standard 52-card deck, plus paper and a pencil for the score

Goal

Win at least as many tricks as your team bid, without piling up extra tricks

Game ends

The first team to 500 points wins

Setup

1. Sit so that partners face each other across the table. Have paper and a pencil ready for the score.
2. Draw cards to choose the first dealer. The highest card deals. After each hand the deal passes to the left.
3. Shuffle a standard 52-card deck with no jokers. Deal it all out one card at a time, face down, starting on the dealer's left. Everyone gets 13 cards and sorts them by suit.

How to play

1. **Bid your tricks.** Starting on the dealer's left and going clockwise, each player bids the number of tricks they expect to win, from 0 to 13. Everyone must bid, and there is only one round. Add the two partners' bids together. That total is the team's bid, and the team needs at least that many tricks between them.
2. **Know what a nil bid is.** A bid of 0 is called nil. It is a promise not to win a single trick, with a bonus for keeping it and a penalty for breaking it. Your partner still bids a number and tries to win that many tricks. Any other bid must be at least 1.
3. **Lead the first trick.** The player on the dealer's left plays the first card of the first trick. This is called leading, and the first lead may be any card except a spade. Going clockwise, each player plays one card. If you have a card of the suit led, you must play one. If you have none, play any card, a spade included.
4. **See who wins the trick.** Spades are trump, so any spade beats any card of another suit. The highest spade in a trick wins it. With no spades, the highest card of the suit led wins. Cards rank from the ace down to the 2. The winner of a trick leads the next one.
5. **Wait for spades to be broken.** You may not lead a spade until spades are broken. They are broken the first time anyone plays a spade, which usually happens when a player has none of the suit led. From then on anyone may lead a spade. If spades are all you have left, you may lead one even when they are not broken.

6. **Score the hand.** After 13 tricks, each team counts its tricks. A team that won at least its bid scores 10 points for each trick bid, plus 1 for each extra trick. A team that fell short loses 10 points for each trick bid. Extra tricks are called bags, and every 10 of them cost 100 points. The deal passes to the left.

When you may play a spade

What is happening	Playing a spade
A spade was led	Required if you have one
Another suit was led and you have a card of that suit	Not allowed. You must follow suit.
Another suit was led and you have none of it	Allowed on any trick. So is any other card.
You are leading and spades are broken	Allowed
You are leading and spades are not broken	Allowed only if spades are all you have left

Scoring

Points for one hand

What happened	Points
Your team wins at least as many tricks as it bid	10 for each trick bid
Each extra trick beyond the bid (a bag)	1
Your team wins fewer tricks than it bid	Minus 10 for each trick bid
Your team's bags reach 10	Minus 100
A nil is kept: the bidder wins no tricks	100
A nil is broken: the bidder wins 1 or more tricks	Minus 100
A blind nil, bid before looking at your cards, is kept	200
A blind nil is broken	Minus 200

The first team to reach 500 points wins the game. If both teams reach 500 in the same hand, the higher score wins.

