



## Cribbage rules and how to play

At [Playiro](#), we break down **Cribbage rules** into a clear, playable flow so you can understand exactly how a round works from deal to scoring.

Cribbage is a two-player [card game](#) where points are scored in two phases: the play (pegging) and the show (hand scoring). The objective is to be the first to reach **121 points**.

Each round follows the same structure: deal cards, build the crib, reveal the starter card, play cards up to 31, then count points.

### Setup and preparations

Setup element	Details
Players	2 (standard game)
Deck	52 cards, no jokers
Cards dealt	6 per player
Goal	Reach 121 points
Scoring tool	Cribbage board or paper

### Before the round begins:

- 1 Each player draws a card. Lowest card becomes the dealer
- 2 The dealer shuffles and the opponent cuts the deck
- 3 The dealer gives **6 cards to each player**

### Card values in Cribbage

Understanding card values is essential before playing:

Card	Value
Ace	1
2–10	Face value
Jack, Queen, King	10

### Cribbage gameplay step by step

A round of Cribbage is played in a fixed order. Once you understand this flow, the game becomes much easier to follow.

#### 1 Discard to the crib

Each player chooses **2 cards** from their hand and places them face down into the crib.

- The crib belongs to the dealer
- It will be scored at the end of the round

## 2 Reveal the starter card

The non-dealer cuts the deck, and the dealer turns over the top card.

- This is called the **starter**
- If it is a Jack, the dealer scores **2 points immediately**

## 3 Start the play (pegging phase)

The non-dealer plays the first card. Players take turns placing one card at a time while calling out the running total.

## 4 Keep the total at 31 or below

The total can never exceed **31**. If a player cannot play:

- They say “**Go**”
- The opponent continues if possible

Combination	Points
Total of 15	2
Pair	2
Three of a kind	6
Four of a kind	12
Run (3+)	Same as number of cards
Exact 31	2

## 1 Go and reset

When neither player can continue:

- The last player to play scores **1 point**
- If they hit exactly 31, they score **2 points instead**
- The count resets to 0 and play continues

## 2 Finish all cards

Once all cards are played, the pegging phase ends and scoring moves to the next stage.

## Counting hands and the crib

After the play phase, points are counted in a specific order:

- 1 Non-dealer's hand
- 2 Dealer's hand
- 3 The crib

Each hand includes **4 cards + the starter card**.

## Scoring combinations

Combination	Points
Fifteen (any combo)	2
Pair	2
Run	3+
Flush	4 (5 with starter)
His nobs (Jack same suit as starter)	1

All valid combinations are counted separately, which means a single hand can score many points at once.

## How to win in Cribbage

The goal is to be the first player to reach **121 points**.

Points are tracked using pegs on a cribbage board, where players move forward as they score during both the play and counting phases.

A game can end at any time during a round as soon as a player reaches 121. You do not need to finish the hand.

Because points are scored continuously, every decision matters throughout the round, not just at the end.

## Tips to improve your Cribbage strategy

Cribbage rewards decision-making more than luck. Small choices in discarding and timing often decide the outcome.

Tip	What it means in practice
Play the crib correctly	As dealer, build a strong crib. As non-dealer, avoid feeding it
Avoid risky leads	Playing a 5 early often gives away easy points
Track totals closely	Always know if 15 or 31 is possible next turn
Set up runs	Think ahead instead of reacting to single cards
Control the count	Keep totals awkward for your opponent
Count hands efficiently	Spot scoring combinations quickly to avoid missing points

## Variations of Cribbage

Different rule variations can slightly change how the game is played.

### Short game

- Played to **61 points** instead of 121

### Muggins

- If a player misses points while counting, the opponent can claim them

### Skunk rule

- If the loser scores under 91, the win counts double
- Under 61 is considered a stronger loss

## Overview of Cribbage rules

Aspect	Details
Players	2
Deck	52 cards
Cards per player	6 (discard to 4)
Phases	Pegging and hand scoring
Crib	Extra hand for dealer
Target score	121 points
Key mechanic	Running total up to 31
Win condition	First to 121 points

## Is Cribbage worth playing?

Cribbage is worth playing if you enjoy card games where every decision has a direct impact on your score.

The rules are straightforward, but the depth comes from timing, counting, and how you manage both your hand and the crib. It is one of the few games where points are scored continuously, which keeps every moment relevant.

It also scales well with experience. The more you play, the more patterns you start to recognize, especially in scoring combinations and safe plays.

If you want a card game that combines structure with real decision-making, Cribbage is a strong choice.