

Zero-Sum Game

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Zero-Sum is a 2-player card game in which players score points by creating expressions that equal zero.

Setup

To begin, print and cut out two copies of the game cards on the following pages for a total of 40 cards.

Or, use a standard deck with the face cards removed.

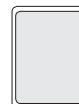
Red cards stand for subtraction, while black cards stand for addition. (Aces are 1's.)

Shuffle the deck and deal 4 cards face down to each player. Place the remaining cards face down in a pile called the stock. Turn four cards from the stock face up. These are the draw cards.

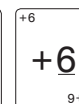
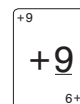


Player 2

Stock



Draw Cards



Player 1

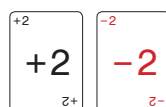
Play

Players take turns. On a player's turn, the goal is to create an expression that equals zero using one of the draw cards and one or more cards in their hand. The number of cards used in the expression is the number of points scored on their turn.

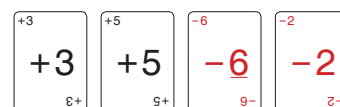
For example, a player can combine the -2 from the draw cards above with cards from their hand to create an expression that equals zero. Several examples are given below.



$$8 - 6 - 2 = 0$$



$$2 - 2 = 0$$



$$3 + 5 - 6 - 2 = 0$$

If a player can create an expression that equals zero, the cards used in the expression are placed in their score pile. Cards from the stock are used to replace the draw card and to fill the player's hand to 4 cards. This ends their turn.

If a player cannot create an expression that equals zero, they draw one card from the stock and end their turn.

Winning

The game ends after all of the cards in the stock have been drawn and neither player can play an expression.

The winner is the player with the most cards in their score pile.

Variation

For more than 2 players, use one full set of 20 cards per player.

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$+1$ $+1$ $+1$	$+2$ $+2$ $+2$	$+3$ $+3$ $+3$	$+4$ $+4$ $+4$	$+5$ $+5$ $+5$	$+6$ $+6$ $+6$	$+7$ $+7$ $+7$	$+8$ $+8$ $+8$	$+9$ $+9$ $+9$	$+10$ $+10$ $+10$
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-5 -5	-5 -5	-10 -10
-4 -4	-4 -4	-9 -9
-3 -3	-3 -3	-8 -8
-2 -2	-2 -2	-7 -7
-1 -1	-1 -1	-6 -6