



Players: 2 - 10 people  
 Age: 8+ years  
 Game duration: approx. 10 - 20 minutes per participating player  
  
 Game material: 144 playing cards  
 10 rule cards  
 1 game manual

## Game instructions

You can find video instructions, sample rounds, and more about the game on our website. There you'll also find a free online version of *What the Rule?!* that you can play with friends or alone against our AI game master. Just go to [www.perdix-spiele.de/what-the-rule](http://www.perdix-spiele.de/what-the-rule) or scan the QR code with your smartphone.



## Game idea

Find the rule! In this game, you try to find out which secret rule your cards may be placed according to by cleverly playing your hand cards. At the beginning of each round, one player comes up with a rule and thus becomes the game master for that round. The other players take turns playing their hand cards. If a card matching the rule is played, the player may try to guess the secret rule. Once a player has figured out the correct rule, the round ends. The next round begins with a new game master and a new rule.

The game is played with 144 playing cards, with each card appearing exactly twice in the game. The cards are distinguished by four different characteristics:

1. The shape: "circle", "triangle" or "square".
2. The number of shapes: "1", "2", "3", "4", "5" or "6".
3. The filling of the shapes: "filled" or "unfilled".
4. The color of the card: "white" or "black".

For example, a simple rule would be: „Always alternate black and white cards“. Can you figure out the rule? Or do you end up thinking **WHAT THE RULE?!**

## Preparation

When you play the game for the first time, you can shuffle the ten rule cards and set them aside face down (preferably without looking at them first). On these cards you will find simple rules that can help you get started. Instead of making up your own rule, game leaders can simply draw a rule from the face-down pile during the first few rounds. For experienced players, this preparation step is not necessary.

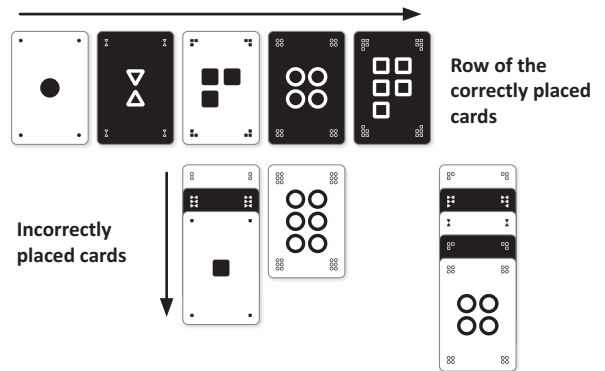
## Gameplay

The game is played in several rounds. At the beginning of each round, one player is chosen to lead the round (the game master). The leader thinks of an interesting rule and writes it down on a piece of paper. If the game is being played by a group for the first time, a rule card can be drawn instead. Before the round begins, the 144 playing cards are shuffled. After the game leader has written down his rule, he distributes ten cards to each of the other players. The remaining cards are placed in the center of the table as a face-down draw pile. The first round is led by whoever comes up with an interesting rule first (or whoever is the first to grab one of the face-down rule cards). In the next round, the game leadership is then passed clockwise to the player on the left. The player to the left of the game leader starts the round. The game is played clockwise. The player whose turn it is can choose between two actions:

### First option: Play a card

A player may decide to play one of his hand cards. The game master must now decide whether the card matches his rule or not. If the card matches the rule, it is placed to the right of the last matching card. In this way, a row of correctly placed cards is formed during the round (see illustration). The first correct card is placed to the right of the discard pile. After a card has been played correctly, the player in turn may try to guess the rule. All players must be able to hear his guess. The game master now decides whether the rule suggestion matches his secret rule. If the suggestion is correct, the round ends immediately. If it is wrong, it is the next player's turn.

If the card does not match the rule, it is placed below the next free spot in the row of correctly placed cards. Thus, in the course of the round, rows of incorrectly laid cards can be created that run at right angles to the row of correctly laid cards (see illustration). Since the card was placed incorrectly, the player must now draw a card from the draw pile. After that, it is the next player's turn.



**Example:** Alan, Bob, Caro and Dina play a round of *What the Rule?!* together. Alan is the game leader. Her secret rule is: *Ascending number from 1 to 6 (and then starting over again)*. It is Bob's turn and he plays a white card with 4 unfilled circles (the card at the bottom right in the picture). According to Caro's rule, however, a card with 6 symbols should actually be played. Caro therefore decides that Bob's card does not fit her rule and places it in the row of misplaced cards. Now it is Dina's turn.

### Second option: Reveal your hand cards.

A player may think that none of his hand cards match the secret rule. In this case, he can reveal his hand cards to all players. The game master must now decide whether the player is correct in his assumption. If none of the cards in his hand match the rule, they are placed under the draw pile and the player draws new cards. He must draw exactly one card less than he had in his hand before. Since the player was

correct in his guess, he may now try to guess the rule. However, if one or more cards in the hand match the secret rule, the game master selects one of them and places it in the row of correctly placed cards on the table. The player now draws a card from the draw pile and it is the next player's turn.

**Example:** Dina assumes that none of her eight hand cards match the secret rule and therefore places them face up on the table for all players to see. Caro sees that Dina does not have a matching card in her hand. Her hand cards are therefore placed face down under the draw pile. Dina now draws seven new cards from the draw pile. After that, Dina may try to guess the rule.

### When is a rule guessed correctly?



A rule is also considered guessed when the player suggests an equivalent to the secret rule. For example, an equivalent to the "white cards only" rule would be "no black cards".

The player must always guess the entire rule. For example, if the secret rule is "only circle or triangle may be laid", the rule suggestion "only circle may be laid" would be incomplete.

### Hints from the game master

Players may decide to introduce hints from the game master at any time during the round between two turns. This can be particularly useful for rules that are very difficult to guess. The decision affects the point distribution at the end of the round and must therefore be decided unanimously by all players (including the game master). In the further course of the game, the game leader must announce each tip audibly to all players beforehand. If no player opposes, the game master can give the tip. A tip may only be given if no player objects to it.

**Example:** After the round has been going for a while, still no one has an idea what the secret rule might be. Alan, Bob, Caro and Dina therefore decide together that game leader Caro may give hints. After giving a first hint, she announces another hint a few moves later. Bob thinks he knows the secret rule, but it is not yet his turn. He therefore wants Caro not to give the players any more hints for now. Since Bob objects, Caro does not provide the tip.

### End of round and point distribution

The round ends when one of three conditions is met:

1. A player guesses the secret rule.
2. A player runs out of cards at the end of his turn.
3. The draw pile is exhausted.

First, all players (except the game master) receive 10 points each, minus one point for each remaining hand card. If a player has managed to guess the secret rule, he receives an additional 5 points. If during the round the players have decided to take hints from the game master, he receives only 2 points for this instead. The game master receives exactly as many points as the player with the highest score. However, in certain cases, the game master's points are halved and rounded down if necessary:

1. The rule is guessed before each player has had at least two turns.
2. The rule is guessed before at least 10 cards have been played.
3. The round ends without the rule being guessed.

The points are then added to the score from the previous rounds and recorded as a new total score.

**Example:** In his turn, Bob guesses the secret rule and thus ends the round. Since at least one hint was given, he receives 2 (instead of 5) points for this. Since he still has three cards in his hand, he receives an additional  $10 - 3 = 7$  points and thus receives a total of 9 points in this round. Dina has only two cards left in her hand and therefore receives  $10 - 2 = 8$  points. Alan still has five cards in his hand and receives  $10 - 5 = 5$  points. Caro, as the game leader, receives the same number of points as Bob (9 points).

### End of the game

The game ends after each player has been the game leader once. For a shorter or longer game, the players can also agree on a different number of rounds before the game. The winner is the player with the highest score. In case of a tie, there is more than one winner.

### Game without points (two player game)

In a game with only two players, the game is played without points. The game principle and the rest of the game remain unchanged. This game mode is also recommended for larger groups or for a short round in between. One player thinks up an interesting rule. The other players now try to find out the secret rule according to the usual game principle. This can also be done as a group, so that the players think together and share their ideas.

### Tips and tricks



- If you want, you can take notes during the game. Especially in longer game rounds, it can otherwise be difficult to remember all the rejected rule suggestions.
- Some players like to take more time to think things over than other players. In this case, it can be useful to introduce a fixed time limit for each turn.
- It may happen that the game master makes a mistake during the game. This is the case, for example, when a card is placed in the row of correct cards that does not actually fit the secret rule. If such a mistake is noticed, the players can decide for themselves how to deal with it. For example, the round could be continued normally if the mistake can still be corrected. The players could also decide to abort the round or simply not count it at the end.

### Rules for your first rounds (rule card translation):

- Alternate between filled and unfilled cards.
- Alternate between cards with even and odd numbers.
- Circle must be followed by triangle, triangle must be followed by square and square must be followed by circle.
- Black cards must always show a number between 1 and 3, white cards must show a number between 4 and 6.
- Two black cards and two white cards must always be played alternately.
- All cards can be played except those with circles.
- The next played card must show another shape as the card before.
- White cards must be filled, black cards must be unfilled.
- Cards with the numbers 1 or 2 are not allowed to be played.
- Cards with even numbers must be white and cards with odd numbers must be black.

