

MathMasters • Rules

Source: <https://tablepress.space/mathmasters/rules/> · Rebuilds with the site.

MathMasters

Say the same number in more than one way. 2–4 players · 25 min · ages 8+ · 52 play cards + 3 table cards (55) · a pencil for scores.

> This game is about saying the same number in more than one way, exactly, felt as the click when 2 times 3 really is 6, decided by when you spend a Times set versus when you play more of the same number.

What is in the box

- 3 table cards (How to play, First game, How you score) — leave them out where everyone can see
- 52 play cards. Each card has a kind (Number, Picture, Parts, or Match) and a number from 1 to 13
- Optional: four scraps of paper as prize chips

No dice. No app. Print the sheets from <https://tablepress.space/mathmasters/print.html>

How to start (under 2 minutes)

Put the 3 table cards out. Mix the other 52.

- 3 people: give 16 cards each
- 4 people: give 12 cards each

Put the last 4 cards face-up in the middle. Call them Hints.

Read table card 1. For the first round, use table card 2 only (Same Number and All Four). Then add table card 3.

Play 3 rounds with 3 people, or 4 rounds with 4 people.

How you win

After the last round, the person with the most points wins.

A turn

The leader plays a set. Going left, each person must play a stronger set of the same kind, or say pass.

When everyone else has passed, the last person who played wins those cards, writes the score, and leads next. If that person's hand is empty, the next seated person who still has cards leads.

Once per round, when you play, you may add one Hint card into your set. If you win that pile, score 1 less (you used a hint).

You may always lead. If you have no matching pair, lead one card. That is a Same Number set of 1.

The four kinds of set

Same Number — one or more cards that show the same number, any kinds. Stronger: more cards, then bigger number. Three 4s beat two 13s. One card is legal. Two cards beat one card.

Times — exactly three cards. Two of the numbers multiply to the third. The smaller of those two is at least 2. Stronger: bigger answer. Answers you may use: 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12.

Examples: $2 \times 2 = 4$. $2 \times 3 = 6$. $2 \times 4 = 8$. $3 \times 3 = 9$. $2 \times 5 = 10$. $2 \times 6 = 12$. $3 \times 4 = 12$.

7, 11, and 13 are primes. They are never the answer in a Times set.

Make 13 — two or more cards of one kind whose numbers add to 13. Stronger: more cards, then the biggest number in the set.

Easy pairs: 1+12, 2+11, 3+10, 4+9, 5+8, 6+7.

All Four — all four kinds of one number. All Four beats every other set. If two All Four sets meet, the bigger number wins.

You must follow the same kind of set. A Times set does not beat a Same Number set. All Four does.

Wrong Times

If someone plays a Times set that does not multiply, anyone may say Wrong Times right away. Show the mistake. Those three cards go back to that person's hand. That person must pass. You score +1.

If you called Wrong Times but the math was right, you pass, and you may not call again this pile.

How a pile scores

Add up the numbers on the cards you won.

- Times pile: +3
- Make 13 with four cards: +3
- All Four: +5

Prizes (optional). One chip each, worth +2 at the end. A later matching play steals the chip.

- First Times — won the first Times pile of the whole game
- Picture Times — won a Times pile that includes the Picture card of the answer (the rectangle)
- Big Same — won a Same Number set of 3 or 4 cards
- Long 13 — won a Make 13 set of 4 cards

Sample turn

Ana leads Same Number: Picture 9 and Number 9. Two nines.

Bo has three 4s. Three cards beat two cards. Bo plays them.

Cam cannot follow Same Number with a fourth 4 (the deck only has four of each number, and Bo already used three). Cam has Number 5, Picture 5, and Parts 5. Cam takes Hint Match 5 and plays All Four of 5. All Four beats the three 4s. Hint tax: -1 if Cam wins.

Ana and Bo pass. Cam takes $9+9+4+4+4+5+5+5+5 = 50$, plus All Four +5, minus 1 = 54, and leads next.

When it ends

A round ends when every play card from the deal is in a won pile (all hands empty). After the last pile of the last round, add prize chips. Highest total wins. If there is a tie, most Times piles wins.

Stuck? Read this

I cannot lead. Lead one card. That is always legal.

Same strength. You must be strictly stronger. Equal is a pass.

No Hint cards left. Play from your hand.

Two people say Wrong Times at once. The first person to the left of the leader counts.

I could beat them but I pass. That is allowed.

My hand is empty while following. You pass. The last person who can play still wins the pile.

I won the pile and my hand is empty. The next seated person who still has cards leads.

Closed pile / leftover Hints at the end of a round. They do not score. Next round, deal again from a fresh shuffle of the 52 (keep the 3 table cards out).

2 people

Give 16 each. 4 Hints. Leave the other 16 in a face-down pile and do not use them. Play 3 rounds. Taking a

Hint is how you bump into each other.

Young table (8–9 years)

First whole game: Same Number and All Four only. Give 10 cards each. 4 Hints. Stop after 2 rounds if people are tired. An adult may read the table cards out loud once.

Extra hard (not on the cards)

After a pile, the next lead must include a card whose number leaves the same remainder as the last winning number when you divide by 3. Skip this unless everyone asks for it.

So everyone can play

- Kinds have a word and a mark. Do not teach them by color.
- Times check: look at the Picture rectangle, or read “2 times 3 makes 6” on the Parts card.
- A hand of 12–16 cards may sit in a row on the table.
- Numbers are large. The small italic line is extra. You do not need it to play.
- Start with Same Number. Times is one times table, not a test.