

Pig

Whether played for prizes or just for fun, this is a game sure to delight anyone who enjoys letting their hair down and being silly from time to time.

Number of players

This is a game for up to 13 players.

Cards

Take a standard 52-card deck and sort the cards by rank so that you end up with 13 complete sets. You will need one complete set per player. It doesn't matter which rank of cards you choose as the object of the game is to be the first player to assemble four-of-a-kind with no preference given to the value of the cards. Put the remainder of the cards to one side and shuffle the cards you have selected. Each player is dealt four cards face down in front of them.

How to play

The game play in Pig is continuous rather than by taking turns, so instead of one player leading off, the dealer calls 'Start'. The game commences with the players discarding a card to their left-hand neighbour and picking up the card that, by the same process, arrives at their right.

The game continues, with players discarding and receiving cards one by one, until one of the players completes a four-of-a-kind hand. When this feat is achieved, the triumphant player points

to his or her nose without saying anything. All the other players should immediately do likewise. The last player to point to their nose loses the hand

When a player loses a hand, they are given a letter from the word 'pig' as a penalty. The object of the game is to avoid collecting three letters and spelling out the word. If you are playing Pig at a children's party, you may want to avoid confusion and argument by writing the letters on some sticky labels and handing them to the losing player at the end of each hand. Once a player has collected P-I-G they are out. The game continues until only one player is left. Prizes can be given to the victor in the usual fashion – a chocolate pig is an ideal reward.

Twist in the tail

To maintain the interest of players who are 'out' – and thereby avoid that awkward situation where only two are engaged in the game – you can introduce a fun new rule. Tell the redundant pigs that they are allowed to try to distract the active players by talking to them; if any of the players speak back to the ostracized swine, they are out too.