

Royal Tarot Cards

RGS 5235

The Cards

The standard Tarot deck consists of 78 cards, which can be separated into five suits: Trumps, Swords, Cups, Pentacles, and Wands. Besides the suit of Trumps, the other four suits correspond to the spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs that comprise a deck of playing cards. Most people are familiar with the composition of a standard deck: Cards numbered from 2 to 10, Jacks, Queens, Kings, Aces, and usually two Jokers. But in the Tarot deck, each suit also has a Knight, situated between the Jack and the Queen. This means that there are 14 cards for each suit, totaling 56 cards for the four suits. The remaining 22 cards are called Trumps, which are numbered from 0 to 21.

Scoring

For every suit, 1 (usually known as the Ace) is the lowest card and King is the highest card. If you do not have any card of the suit in play, you should play a Trump. The Trump cards of 0, 1, and 21 are called Oudlers, and earn as many points as a King card. As such, they are key cards for winning tricks. The point system is as follows:

- Oudler: 5 points
- King: 5 points
- Queen: 4 points
- Knight: 3 points
- Jack: 2 points
- Other Cards: 1 point

Total Points: 130

The Deal

Here, we will explain a four-player game. There are variations to these rules for a three-player and five-player game, but for the sake of brevity, we will only introduce the rules for a four-player game.

Pick anyone as the first dealer. The game starts with the player located to the right of the dealer and continues counterclockwise. The player opposite the dealer shuffles cards and the player left of the dealer cuts cards. Each player is given 3 cards, and this continues until each player has 18 cards. 6 cards are dealt face down in the center of the table, dealt singly at any time during the deal, at the choice of the dealer, except that the first 3 and the last 3 cards of the deck cannot be dealt to this pile (called "the Dog"). A player who is dealt only the 1 of Trumps and no other Trump cards must discard the entire hand and have the next dealer deal them a new hand.

Bidding

Each player, starting to the dealer's right and continuing counterclockwise, has one chance to bid on the hand, or pass. If all four players pass, the hands are discarded and the next dealer deals. This means that no one is satisfied with their hand.

The bids are as follows:

- Take: The one who bids gets the 6 cards in the Dog.
- Guard: The same as a Take, but outranks a Take in bidding.
- Guard without the Dog: No one gets to see the cards in the Dog, but the points in it count as part of the taker's tricks.
- Guard against the Dog: The same as Guard without the Dog, but the points are counted as part of the opposing team's tricks.

In the Take or Guard, before the taker places the 6 cards in their hand, they must place them face up for all to see. Then they must remove any 6 cards from their hand, except for Trumps or Kings, and place them face down. In the rare case that the taker can't obey this rule, they may discard Trumps. These cards are also counted for the taker's trick.

After bidding, the players other than the taker become the opposing team and the game begins.

The Game

The player to the right of the dealer leads the first trick with a card of any suit. The winner of the trick leads the next round. The winner is determined by the highest Trump, or highest card of that suit if there is no Trump played. Every time a trick is won, the winner takes the cards until the game is over and the points are counted.

For every trick, you must play a card from the same suit. Other rules are as follows:

- If you do not have a card from the suit played, you must trump.
- If someone has already trumped, you must overtrump.
- If someone has already trumped and you cannot overtrump, you may undertrump.
- If someone has already trumped and you do not have any Trump cards, you may play any card.

The 0 Trump may be played in any trick, but it can never win that trick. If a player leads with the 0 Trump, the next player can play any card, and this card defines what suit should be played.

If the 0 Trump is played in the last trick, it is taken by the team who wins the trick. If a player wins all tricks, and leads with the 0 Trump on the last trick, the 0 Trump wins.

When the game is over, the taker counts their points and the opposing team collects their cards and counts their points. Unless the bid is Guard against the Dog, the 6 cards at the center of the table are counted as the taker's points, When the bid is Guard against the Dog, the 6 cards at the center of the table are counted as the opposing team's. Whoever has the most points wins!

There are many variations to these rules, as well as various scoring systems. Feel free to search the web or refer to books for other rule systems and other Tarot-based card games. If you are interested in astrology, there is an abundance of material on the use of Tarot cards for fortune telling. Have fun!!!