



PAREB♠AL

Rulebook



V1.1.1





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Introduction

Pareboal is a battle-style card game inspired by poker. In Pareboal, players fight against each other in a game of strategy and luck in equal amounts, trying to drop the opponent to zero hit points while losing as little of their own health as possible. The game can be played either solo or with a friend.

Setting up

All you need in order to play Pareboal is a standard **52-card playing card deck**. Should the deck have any jokers, the game can be played with or without them; it is up to the discretion of the player(s) whether the jokers are to be used or not. A calculator may also be helpful but is not strictly necessary.

Follow the steps below to set up for the game.

1. Shuffle the deck and place it **face-down** in the middle of the play area.
2. Have both players take **five cards** from the top of the deck and place them in a row in front of them, **all face-down**. These cards will signify the **health bar** of each player. If playing single-player, simply take 10 cards and divide them between either "side".
3. Have both players take **five more cards** from the top of the deck and place them in a row below their health bars, **all face-up except for one which is dealt face-down**. These cards will be the **hand** of each player. The face-down card in either hand is each player's **blind card** (see blind card rules on page 5). If playing single-player, simply take 10 cards and divide them between either "side".

Basic rules

Objective of the game

The basic gameplay loop in Pareboal constitutes discarding cards and drawing new ones in an attempt to bring the opposing player's **health** to 0. In order to get to that goal, a degree of mathematics and decision-making is also involved.





At its simplest, the objective is to have a hand with a higher total score than the opponent. While there are bonus points to be gotten from certain poker hands, they serve a secondary role in that objective; what matters more are the values of individual cards. Because of this, the player with the worse poker hand may actually have the better Pareboal hand!

On their turn, a player can discard any number of cards (up to 4, excluding the **blind card**) and replace the discarded cards with new ones drawn from the deck. Any discarded cards are placed to the **bottom of the deck**.

At the end of a turn, the total points of both players' hands are calculated, and the player with less points must remove one card from their health bar and place it into a **grave pile**. In other words, they lose a **health point**. Any cards in the grave pile are not used during the remainder of the game.

The player to lose all of their health points first loses the game.

If playing single-player, the opponent's (or **NPC's**) hand can be treated as a static goal to beat, meaning that only the player needs to perform discard actions.

Structure of a turn

1. Look at both hands and make a mental note of their total scores (see **Card scores** and **Hand bonuses** on pages 6-7).
2. Take any cards you wish to discard from your own hand and place them at the bottom of the deck. Take note of the number of cards you discarded. Take an equal amount of cards from the top of the deck and place them in your hand row. This step can be skipped if there are no cards to be discarded (follow the **card restrictions** as described on page 6). **Only one discard action** may be performed unless playing with the Extra Discards modifier (see page 8).
3. Flip the blind cards face-up and calculate the total scores of both hands. In the event that a blind card breaks card restriction rules, discard it and draw a replacement card from the deck.
4. The player with the worse hand, i.e. the one with fewer points, removes **one card** from their health bar and places it in the grave pile. In the event of a tie, neither player loses a health point.
5. Remove all cards from both players' hands, place them back into the deck and deal new hands for both players.

To keep the order of the cards from becoming predictable, a reshuffle of the deck is recommended every 3 turns or so.





Health



Health is a central mechanic in Pareboal. It is a resource that determines the pace of a game and a deciding factor in which player ultimately wins. As players compete for a higher total score with their hands, one is most likely going to lose a **health point** at the end of a turn.

The face-down row of cards in front of each player is essentially their **health bar**. Both players start with 5 health points. When a player loses one of those health points, they remove it from their health bar and place it in a separate pile outside the play area. This pile will be the **grave pile**. Once either player removes their last health point, the game ends and the player with health points remaining is granted victory.

If a turn ends in a tie, i.e. both players have an equal number of points, neither player loses a health point.

Grave pile

The **grave pile** is a separate area into which any health points that either player loses are placed. Cards can be placed into the grave pile either face-down or face-up, but to keep it from being confused with the deck, placing them face-up is recommended.

Cards placed into the grave pile are not used for the remainder of a game.

Blind cards

Each time a hand is dealt, one of the cards is dealt face-down rather than face-up. This face-down card becomes a **blind card**. The blind card is flipped face-up when both players have performed any necessary discards and/or yanks. While it is face-down, the blind card cannot be discarded or yanked.

Yanking

When a player discards a card, they may replace it with one of the opponent's cards. In such an event, the opponent hands the specified card over to the other player and draws a new card. This is known as **yanking**. If a player wishes to yank a card, they must discard a card that is lower in value than the card to be yanked.





In the event that a player discards multiple cards at once, they may only yank one card from the opponent.

Yanking is forbidden in single-player.

Card restrictions

If playing with jokers, there may only be **one joker** in a hand at any time. If the number of jokers in a hand exceeds that limit, **any extra jokers MUST be discarded**. The joker must also be discarded if the other four cards in a hand are all picture cards or aces.

Yanked cards **can not be discarded**.

Card scores

Number cards (2-10) are all worth an amount of points equal to the value described on the card.

Picture cards (J, Q, K) are all worth 10 points. Jacks and kings are considered odd, and queens are considered even.

Aces (A) can be worth either 1 or 11 points depending on the other cards in a hand. If a hand has at least one card with a value of at least 8, any aces in that hand will be worth 11 points. If the other cards in a hand all have values of 7 or less, aces in that hand will be worth 1 point. In either case, aces will be considered odd.

Jokers are worth an amount of points equal to the score of the highest-value card in a hand.

With only the scores of individual cards in a hand summed, the maximum total score that a hand can theoretically have is 54 (equivalent to four aces and a 10 or picture card). In practice, however, a hand's total score can and likely will exceed this limit.





Hand bonuses

In Pareboal, bonus points are granted for special hands. These hands are mostly derived from poker with a few additions specific to Pareboal. Consult the table below for which hands qualify for point bonuses and how many bonus points a hand grants.

Jokers and wild cards are **unaccounted for** in special hands; for instance, a pair in a hand with a joker does not become a three-of-a-kind.

Bonuses are only granted for one special hand per player per turn. Hands listed further down the table override ones listed above; for instance, if a hand has a full house with all evens, the bonus is only granted for the full house and the all evens are ignored.

HAND	BONUS	EXAMPLE
High card	Score of highest card in hand	♠A ♥9 ♣7 ♠3 ♥2
All odds	Score of highest card in hand	♠J ♣7 ♠5 ♠3 ♦A
All evens	Score of highest card in hand	♠10 ♠8 ♦6 ♥4 ♠2
Pair	Score of one card in pair	♥K ♦J ♠8 ♥8 ♠4
Two pairs	Score of one card in higher pair	♥10 ♠10 ♦7 ♠7 ♠5
4-card straight	Score of lowest card in hand	♠Q ♠J ♥10 ♠9 ♠6
Three-of-a-kind	Score of one card in three	♠A ♦K ♦7 ♠7 ♥7
4-card flush	4 points	♦Q ♠Q ♠9 ♠5 ♠2
Straight	Score of lowest card in hand	♥10 ♥9 ♠8 ♠7 ♦6
Flush	5 points	♥A ♥Q ♥9 ♥5 ♥3
Full house	8 points	♥J ♠J ♦J ♠5 ♥5
Four-of-a-kind	Score of one card in four	♠A ♥8 ♦8 ♠8 ♠8
Straight flush	10 points	♦7 ♦6 ♦5 ♦4 ♦3
Royal flush	9 points	♠A ♠K ♠Q ♠J ♠10





Modifiers

Pareboal offers a selection of optional extra rules, known as **modifiers**, to add an extra layer of unpredictability to the game. These modifiers can be applied to a game individually or combined with each other as desired. You can even come up with your own modifiers!

This rulebook offers the following default modifiers:

Ace is high

Aces are always worth 11 points.

Chaos mode

The deck is reshuffled at the end of every turn.

Extra discards

Player(s) may perform additional discard actions during their turn. For the sake of balance, the recommended maximum number of discard actions allowed is 3. Best combined with Chaos Mode.

Ghost mode

Lost health point cards are placed at the bottom of the deck instead of the grave pile.

Golden jokers

Jokers double the score(s) of the lowest-value card(s) in a hand (up to a maximum score of 10).

Healing yanks

If a player has less than 5 health and performs a yank, the other player's picture card becomes an extra health point instead. The yanking player places the card in their health bar and does not need to discard any cards in this case.

One ace

Restricts the aces in a hand to one, similarly to jokers. If a hand has more than one ace, any extra aces must be discarded.

Wild card

Decide on one card to become a **wild card**. The wild card is effectively a joker, giving points equal to the score of the highest-value card in a hand. Works best when the game is played with no jokers.





Credits

Game designed by Santtu “MFG38” Pesonen

Rulebook designed and written by Santtu “MFG38” Pesonen

Revision history

[2024-02-04] v1.0:

- Initial release.

[2024-02-05] v1.0.1:

- Tweaked hand bonus rules.
- Added rule for discarding jokers if other cards in a hand are all picture cards.
- Renamed Extras to Modifiers.
- Added the Ace Is High, Ghost Mode and Golden Jokers modifiers.

[2024-02-06] v1.0.2:

- Tweaked hand bonus rules.
- Simplified card value rules regarding jokers.
- Added 3 new special hands: all odds, all evens and 4-card straight.
- Added examples of special hands to hand bonus table.
- Minor (non-breaking) clarifications and rewrites.

[2024-02-12] v1.1:

- Redesigned the rulebook with new graphics and fonts.
- Tweaked hand bonus rules.
- Tweaked card value rules regarding aces.
- Added new special hand: 4-card flush.
- Renamed the discard pile to grave pile for the sake of avoiding confusion between discarding (i.e. placing cards back into the deck) and the discard pile.
- Made blind cards a part of the basic ruleset.
 - As a result, the Blind Card modifier became obsolete and has been removed.
- Rewrote yanking rules to be less restrictive.
 - As a result, the Unrestricted Yanks modifier became obsolete and has been removed.
- Minor (non-breaking) rewrites.

[2024-11-17] v1.1.1:

- Minor rewrites and formatting tweaks.

