

THE Phase

Designer:

Players: 3-6

Duration: 15-45 minutes

OVERVIEW

THE Phase is a trick-taking game. The player who wins the most tricks is the winner of the round.

CONTENTS

80 playing cards

5 Phase cards

HOW TO READ THE CARD

Grid Mark - used in Phase I

Adjacent Mark - used in Phase II

Card Color - used in Phase III

Card Icon - indexing of the mark and rank

Rank - the number that determines who wins the trick

PREPARATION

First, choose whether you are playing a **Standard** or **Quick** game (detailed explanation for both are found at the end of the rules).

Place the Phase I or 0 card (depending on if it's a Standard or Quick game) face up where everyone can see it. Place the other Phase cards in order in a face down stack nearby.

Deal cards based on the Phase chosen.

Determine a starting player using a method of your choosing.

GAME FLOW

Round

Trick

- Everyone plays a card
- Compare card ranks
- Winners of trick are determined
- Winners take the cards

Continue playing tricks until you have only one card left in your hand.

Compare rank totals of acquired cards

Round winners will be determined

PHASE

There are five types of "Phase" (0, I, II, III, IV). You are always in one of them during the game.

Each Phase defines the rules of the game, the foundation of the game, and the rules of the trick.

During the game, a player may "Phase Up" or "Phase Down" (that is, to move up or down one number from the current Phase).

For example, if you are in Phase I and a "Phase Up" occurs, you are now in Phase II.

The Phase cards representing the Phases should be placed where everyone can see them.

It may be helpful to put the Phase cards on top of each other in order and turn them over as they Phases change.

Many board games use the term "phase" as a delimiter of the progress of the game (start phase, main phase, etc.) but in this game it has a completely different meaning.

You can never go lower than Phase 0 or higher than Phase VI.

TRICK (PHASE I-III)

The players take turns to play a card for their hand, starting with the lead player.

The lead player can play a card of their choice, and the second and subsequent players play a card of their choice according to the Phase Rule at that time. If there is no card that can be played according to the Phase Rule, the player plays a card of their choice.

Playing a card according to the Phase Rule is called "following."

TRICK (PHASE 0, IV)

These Phases are a bit special. Everyone plays cards according to the rules written on the Phase card.

END OF TRICK

After everyone has played their cards, the ranks of the cards are compared (except for cards that did not follow the lead). If ranks are tied, the winner was the first played. As shown in the table below, the rank is determined and the cards are awarded.

Order to take	Rank played	Card to take
1st	lowest	highest rank
2nd	2nd lowest	lowest rank

Cards taken at the end of a trick are placed in front of the players who took them. All other cards are discarded. The player who finished 1st (played the lowest rank card on suit) leads the next trick.

EXAMPLE

It is currently Phase II, so the trait for following is color.

Paul, the leader, has played a green 8. The next player, Max, was able to follow and played a green 40. Mary did not have a green card, so she played a yellow 35. Akiko was able to follow with a green 5, but Hideki did not have any green and played a red 50.

We ignore the cards that did not follow the lead (sorry Mary and Hideki!)

Akiko, who played the lowest rank card (5) takes the highest rank card (40). Paul, who played the second smallest rank card (8) gets the smallest rank card (5).

BUST

Always keep an eye on the total rank value of the cards you have taken. If the total value **exceeds** the Phase base value (S_{max}) it is a Bust (same as S_{max} is ok).

The cards are processed according to the respective rules.

RULES - STANDARD

Playing time	30-45 minutes
Cards dealt	Number of players +3
Initial Phase	Phase I

Play tricks equalling the number of players +2. The round ends when all tricks have been played. Each player totals the ranks of all cards they have taken. The winner of the round is the player with the highest total without Busting, and they receive 1 Victory Point.

The Phase is changed depending on whether or not someone Busted in the round.

- If one or more players Bust → Phase Up
- If nobody Busts → Phase Down

Gather all cards and shuffle them. Deal a new hand and start a new round.

Continue playing rounds until one player has earned 3 Victory Points (has won 3 rounds) - or 2 points if playing with 5 or 6 players.

RULES - QUICK

Playing time	15-20 minutes
Cards dealt	10
Initial Phase	Phase 0

Play tricks. At the end of each trick, the cards acquired in the trick are combined with the cards acquired in the previous tricks.

If anyone Busts, they discard a card of the highest rank among the cards they acquired.

The Phase is changed in the same way as in the Standard game, and the next trick is played.

After 9 tricks, the winner is the player with the highest total.

FINALLY

Up to this point, we have only introduced the standard rules. As you get used to them, you may want to change the rules to something more interesting.

For example, if you have a card in your hand that you can follow, you must play it. This will create a game of "must-follow."

In this way, trick-taking has the charm of a Phase change, where a slight change can completely change the whole game.

SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATION

The description of the Phase Rules for Phase IV was misleading. The following is a more accurate description.

The leader nominates a person other than themself to play a card of their choice from their hand as that person's card. The second and subsequent players nominate someone other than the leader who has not yet played a card of their choice from their hand, and have that person play it as their card. This is repeated, and the last person has the card of their choice in hand played as the leader's card.

When everyone has played their card, the trick is done.

In other words, the correct progression is that "the turn is passed around randomly starting with the leader, and the leader is given a card at the end."

<<Translator's note: I THINK what this means is , for example, Player A chooses Player C to play a card first., Player B then chooses Player D to play, Player C then chooses player B to play, and finally Player A plays a card. It doesn't have to be in this exact order, as long as the players do not play their cards in clockwise order from the leader and the leader plays last.>>

APOLOGY AND CORRECTION

Thank you for purchasing THE Phase. It is with great regret that we would like to correct the following typographical error on one of the play cards.

Please be aware of this fact or remove this card when playing. (Please be assured that removing this card does not affect the gameplay in any way).

We sincerely apologize for any defects in the product.

Please accept our sincere apologies.

<<The red 40 card with the purple hex has "50" in its index rather than "40". It should be "40".>>

PHASE CARDS

Phase 0

$S_{\max} = 10$

Phase Rules

All players play a card at once.

Among the card colors, the card with the majority is kept, and the other cards are discarded.

The remaining cards are used for the trick evaluation.

If there is no majority, the trick is evaluated with all cards.

Phase I

$S_{\max} = 50$

Phase Rules

The players take turns playing cards according to the color of the Grid Mark played by the leader. There are two shapes in each color, and <<from what I can gather from the image on the card>> players must alternate which shape is played during the trick.

Phase II

$S_{\max} = 60$

Phase Rules

Follows the Adjacent Mark played by the leader.

<<There are symbols that look like half a circle with three wedges, one filled in on each shape. If the leftmost or rightmost wedge is filled in on the card led, all other players must play a card with the middle wedge filled in. Likewise, if the leader plays a middle wedge card, either the leftmost or rightmost wedge card may be played to follow.>>

Cards that could not follow are ignored, and the next player must still play adjacent to the leader's card.

Phase III

$S_{\max} = 70$

Phase Rules

Follows the Card Color of the leader's card.

The player plays a card of the same color as the card color played by the leader.

Phase IV

$S_{\max} = \infty$

Phase Rules

(see SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATION above)