

OBJECTIVE:

Get MEAN! and strategize as you play through the entire Draw Deck, then be the first to get rid of all cards in your hand to win.

THE CARDS:

MEAN! is all about the numbers.

The card colors are very pretty, but mean nothing.

All cards, except Wild, have a set value. One is the lowest number, and Twelve is the highest.

There are four of each card per deck, except there are six Sixes.

Special Card Effects are marked on the top and bottom of Special Cards.

Card Icons let you quickly see what cards do, when fanned in your hand.

REGULAR CARDS

2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11

SPECIAL CARDS

1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, Wild



SET UP:

For 2-4 players, use 1 deck. For 5-8 players, use the 2 decks combined.

1. Give the deck a good shuffle!
2. Create four Punishment Piles in the arrangement below, each Pile with three cards: two cards face-down then one card face-up on top.
3. Deal four cards to each player.
4. Place the remaining cards face-down as the Draw Deck.
5. Leave space in the middle for the Play Area.

! Note: Besides the backing colour, the black and teal decks are identical.



A DRAW DECK **B** PUNISHMENT PILES*

C PLAY AREA (EMPTY)

*note that cards shown in figure are for example only

GAMEPLAY:

The Dealer goes first, and play moves clockwise.

Each turn has two steps:

Step 1: Draw from the Draw Deck

If you have fewer than five cards in your hand, pick up cards from the Draw Deck until you have exactly five.

If you already have five or more cards, or the Draw Deck is empty, skip this step.

Step 2: Play or Get Punished

If the Play Area is empty:

Play any card(s) from your hand and announce the Card Direction ('Going Up' or 'Going Down') then end your turn.

If there is already a card in the Play Area:

Play a card(s) that matches the current Card Direction and end your turn.

If you can't play:

Add an entire Punishment Pile of your choice to your hand (all three cards). Your turn ends. Do not replace the Pile.

IMPORTANT RULES:

If you can play on your turn, you must play.

You may play multiple cards together if they have the same value, but you don't have to.

You cannot play more than four of the same value consecutively, as this clears the Play Area. (See: CLEARING THE PLAY AREA)

If there are no Punishment Piles left when you need one, make more! (See: REPLENISHING PUNISHMENT PILES)

Never replenish the Draw Deck.

NEWBIE TIP:

New players often forget to pick up at the start of their turn. Help each other by saying: "Don't forget to pick up!"

CARD DIRECTION:

Card Direction is the driving force of MEAN! It can be either 'Going Up' or 'Going Down'. When a player plays a card on an empty Play Area, they announce the Card Direction of their choice.

If '**Going Up**' the next card(s) played must be equal to or greater in value than the top card in the Play Area.

Conversely, if '**Going Down**' the next card(s) played must be equal to or lesser in value.

Play continues following the chosen Card Direction until one of the Special Cards that set Card Direction are played. (See: SPECIAL CARDS)

You can skip numbers. For example, when 'Going Up', an Eleven may be played on a Five.

! Note: A player only chooses the Card Direction when playing on an empty Play Area.

! Note: Players may not ignore the direction of Special Cards that dictate Card Direction.

! Note: Regular cards, Sixes and Eights cannot change the Card Direction.

SPECIAL CARDS:

↑ ONE & THREE

Always sets Card Direction to 'Going Up.' If the direction is already 'Going Up', nothing changes.

↓ TEN & TWELVE

Always sets Card Direction to 'Going Down.' If the direction is already 'Going Down', nothing changes.

↻ EIGHT

Swap your entire hand with another player of your choice.

- Swapping is not optional.
- If you play multiple Eights on your turn, only swap once.

If you play an Eight as your final card, you lose and everyone else wins!

! Remember: if you can play, you must play, even if your last card is an Eight. You just lose. MEAN!

? WILD

Can be played as any numbered card that works with the current Card Direction.

- You must announce which card it represents when played.
- When played as a Special Card, Wild must inherit that card's effects.
- Wild can only change Card Direction when played as a One, Three, Ten, or Twelve.
- Wilds cannot be combined with numbered cards (e.g., you can't play a Seven and a Wild together but you can play two Wilds as two Sevens).

Avoid arguments. Read these.

SHUFFLE. STRATEGIZE. SABOTAGE.



SIX (MEAN!)

MEAN! has a card value of Six and can only be played when Six is valid for the current Card Direction.

When MEAN! cards are played, the next player is being punished and must do one of the two following options, **without drawing**:

1. **If they can, they must play another MEAN!** (or a Wild as MEAN!) from their hand, passing the punishment to the next player, OR
2. **If they can't play**, they must pick up Punishment Piles equal to the number of unresolved* MEAN! cards on top of the Play Area (e.g., if three unresolved MEAN! cards were played, pick up three Punishment Piles.)

Picking up Punishment Piles ends your turn.

Play continues from a regular Six in the current Card Direction.

*When a player picks up a Punishment Pile due to a MEAN! card, that card is considered **resolved**. For any MEAN! cards played immediately afterward, a player would only need to pick up Piles for those new unresolved MEAN! cards.

Going out on MEAN!: If your final card is MEAN! and the punishment circles back to you, pick up the required Punishment Piles and keep playing. MEAN!

! Note: ALL Special Cards must follow the Card Direction like any regular card.

CLEARING THE PLAY AREA:

If a player completes a set of four cards of the same value on the top of the Play Area (four-of-a-kind, including any Wilds), the Play Area is cleared.

Take *all* the cards from the Play Area and place them aside, face down.

These cards are out of play for the remainder of the game.

Whoever cleared the Play Area restarts play (without drawing) by placing any card from their hand onto an empty Play Area and setting a new Card Direction.

! Note: In the rare instance that this clears their hand but there are still cards in the Draw Deck, on the next turn they will draw 5 new cards. If the Draw Deck is emptied by then, they win!

You cannot play more than four-of-a-kind. So if three-of-a-kind are down (Wild inclusive), you cannot play more than one card of that value from your hand, even if you have more.

If Eights clear the Play Area, swap hands *before* clearing and restarting play. Continue as normal.

If MEAN! cards clear the Play Area, the next player must pick up Punishment Piles for the number of unresolved MEAN! cards, even if they have a MEAN! card in their hand.

! Important: In this instance, if you need to create more Punishment Piles, clear the Play Area before creating them with the Draw Deck (see REPLENISHING PUNISHMENT PILES).

STRATEGY TIP:

Try and remember which cards are removed from play!

REPLENISHING PUNISHMENT PILES:

Punishment Piles only get replenished when a player has to pick up more and there are none left.

To replenish, pick up and shuffle the entire Play Area and deal four new Piles as per the initial setup. Any remaining cards from the shuffled Play Area are removed from play for the remainder of the game. Once the new Piles are made, the punished player must collect their outstanding punishment.

The next player resumes play by taking their turn on the empty Play Area and setting a new Card Direction.

If there are not enough cards in the Play Area to create the four Punishment Piles, use the Draw Deck to supplement.

If there aren't enough cards in the Play Area and Draw Deck to create all four Punishment Piles, make as many full piles as possible. The final pile may have fewer than three cards, with the top card always face up.

If it's not possible to make any full piles, simply use the remaining cards to create a partial pile if possible, always placing the top card face up.

WHEN THE DRAW DECK RUNS OUT

You are in the end game. Unleash chaos. Whoever clears their hand wins. You never replenish the Draw Deck.

WINNING THE GAME:

Once the Draw Deck has been emptied, the first player to clear their hand wins!

Remember: if your final card played is an Eight, you lose and everyone else wins.

Gameplay can continue until one ultimate loser remains, depending how MEAN! you want to be.



TOO MUCH TO READ?

Scan the QR code to watch the Instructions video or read our FAQs

