# Shadow Cards

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10 and up | 2-5 players | about 30 minutes

## Story and Game Idea

*In the southern lands, conflict over the Shadow Cards has been raging for countless years between four tribes. Whoever possesses these cards will be rewarded with a powerful vision.*
*The magical tribe of the Ignis currently controls the Shadow Cards. Meanwhile, the clan of the Emerald Serpents has withdrawn into the jungle and the wild Desert Blades camp in the southern dunes. No one knows where the mysterious cult of the midnight blue Soul Shadows is hiding. Another clash seems inevitable.*

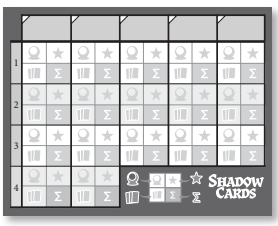
In this trick-taking game, you will select two cards each round to predict how many trick points you will score. Do you dare make a bold prediction, or would you rather play it safe? Whoever can best predict their score over three rounds wins!

## Contents

***60 cards***

*with values from 0 to 14 in red, yellow, green, and blue*

***1 scorepad***




## Your Task

In ***Shadow Cards***, you will make a prediction based on your hand: How many points do you think you will score by winning tricks? You then try to exactly fulfill your prediction.
The player who fulfills their predictions the most successfully over the course of three rounds wins the game.

**What is a trick?**
You take turns playing one card each. These cards make up a trick.

## The Trick Round

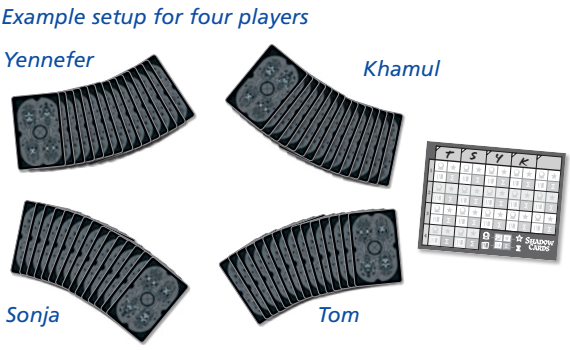
Each round consists of the following steps:

1. Dealing Cards
2. Predicting Trick Points
3. Playing Tricks
4. Receiving Experience Points

### 1. Dealing Cards

Shuffle all the cards.
If you're playing with **five** players, deal out all the cards such that you each receive **12 cards**. If you're playing with **two, three, or four** players, distribute the cards into **four equal stacks** of **15 cards**.
If you're playing with four players, you each take one stack as your hand.
Likewise, if there are three players, you each take one stack as your hand. Place the fourth stack aside. Section *3. Playing Tricks* explains how this stack comes into play.
At the end of the rules, you can read how the game differs when playing with two players.

*Example setup for four players*



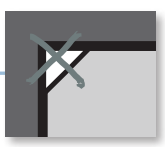

### 2. Predicting Trick Points

Look at the cards in your hand and estimate how many trick points you will win this round. You each choose any **two of your cards** simultaneously and place them face down in front of you. The sum of these two cards is your **secret prediction** of how many trick points you will score this round. If you play a 7 and a 14 for example, you are aiming to score 21 trick points this round. You may look at your prediction at any time during the game.

**Trick points**
The player who wins the trick chooses one of the cards played. This card's value represents their trick points.

*Tom chooses 13 and 14 as his prediction and places the two cards face down in front of him. He is therefore aiming to score 27 trick points this round.*

### 3. Playing Tricks



Whoever last had a vision begins and marks an "x" by their name on the scorepad. They then lead the first trick by playing a card. The other players follow and each play a card in clockwise order.
When playing a card, make sure you follow these rules: If you play the first card into the trick, you may play any of your cards. All other players must **follow suit**. This means that they **must** play a card of the **same color** as the first card in the trick. Players can only play trumps or other suits if they do not have any cards of the required suit in their hand.

**Red is trump**
A red card wins against any card of another suit.

The trick is won by:

- The **highest card** in the trump suit **red**.
- The **highest card** in the suit that was **first played** into the trick if no trump cards were played.

*Sonja leads the trick with a 2. Yennefer follows suit with an 11. Khamul would like to play a red trump card, but he must follow suit with his 8. Tom doesn't have any green cards, so he plays his 4 – a trump – and wins the trick.*

If you win a trick, choose one of the cards played. The value of the chosen card represents the trick points you will score. Place the cards from the trick as a stack in front of you and put your chosen card face up on top of it.

*Tom chooses the 8 as his trick points. He stacks the four trick cards next to his prediction with the face-up 8 on top.*

If you're playing with **three** players, turn over the top card from the leftover stack at the beginning of each trick. This card has no effect on the suit to be followed, nor can it win the trick. However, you can choose this card as your trick points if you win the trick.

If you win the trick, you lead the next one by playing any one of your cards.
Place every trick that you win in front of you in such a way that all your trick points are always visible.

## 4. Receiving Experience Points

Once you have played all your cards and, consequently, all tricks, the current round ends. You now note your points on the scorepad. Write your prediction in the space and the sum of your trick points for this round in the space.


*Tom predicted 27 trick points. He scored 8+4+9+2+5+0 = 28 trick points this round. He writes down 27 in the space and 28 in the space.*

You now receive experience points ★. These depend on your prediction and your trick points.

If you're playing your first game of ***Shadow Cards***, we recommend introducing the scoring options step-by-step in the following order:

**First trick round of your first game**
**Important: You only score this way in the first trick round of your first game!**
Your goal is to win at least as many trick points as your prediction. Note that a lower prediction is easier to reach but also gives fewer points.

- If you fulfill your prediction, you score your prediction as experience points ★.
- If you score fewer trick points than predicted, you do not receive any experience points.


Now shuffle and deal the cards for the next round. If you began the last round, the player to your left leads the first trick of the new round.

**Second trick round of your first game**
**Important: From now on, scoring is different from the first round! The third round will just build upon the scoring introduced here.**
You now score your trick points as **additional** experience points ★. If your prediction matches your trick points, you receive three times your prediction as experience points.

| | Trick points higher than prediction (> ) | Trick points lower than prediction (< ) | Trick points match prediction (= ) |
|---|---|---|---|
| ★ | Prediction + trick points | Trick points | Triple your prediction |
| Example | 25 52 / 27 Σ | 25 17 / 17 Σ | 25 75 / 25 Σ |

Note the total sum of your experience points from all rounds played so far in the Σ space.

**Third trick round of your first game**
**These are the rules for every round of a normal game!**
You now also score experience points if you have 0 trick points. This is because you either won no tricks or you only chose cards with a value of 0 as your trick points.
If you scored the **most trick points** this round and they **do not match** your prediction, you only receive some of them as experience points. You take your **three highest trick point cards** and subtract your remaining trick points from these cards. If there is a tie for most trick points, this rule applies to all tied players. However, this rule does not apply in the current trick round if you have the most trick points and they match your prediction.

| | Trick points higher than prediction (> ) | Trick points lower than prediction (< ) | Trick points match prediction (= ) | Zero trick points (= 0) | Most trick points (but not equal to prediction) (max ≠ ) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ★ | Prediction + trick points | Trick points | Triple your prediction | Double your prediction | Three highest trick point cards minus remaining trick points |
| Example | 25 52 / 27 Σ | 25 17 / 17 Σ | 25 75 / 25 Σ | 24 48 / 0 Σ | 26 27 / 39 Σ; 12 11 / 10 6 |


*With 39 points, Tom scored the most trick points this round. As this does not match his prediction, he only scores 12+11+10-6 = 27 experience points.*

## Game End

Whoever scored the most experience points after three rounds wins. If players tie, they share the victory.

## 2-Player Game

In a 2-player game, you play **four rounds** in total. As described above, you distribute the cards into four stacks. You then each choose one of these stacks as your hand. You will not need the remaining two stacks until the second trick round. To make your **prediction**, you each choose **three cards** and place them face down in front of you. Then, you play the first round as described above and receive experience points as usual.

If you have the most trick points this round and they do not match your prediction, you take your **five highest trick point cards** and subtract the remaining trick points. If you both have the same number of trick points, this rule does not apply.

For the second round, do not shuffle any cards. Instead, you each take one of the remaining two stacks. Play the second round like the first.

For the third and fourth rounds, shuffle all the cards and deal them again into four stacks.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