

SCHOOL OF MAHJONG



Sit Down & *Win*

THE GAME-NIGHT KIT

Everything your table needs to play a real American Mahjong night: read the hand, run the Charleston, host with confidence, and keep your eye sharp.

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The Card-Reading Cheat-Sheet

Every hand on the card is one of these shapes. Read your tiles, find the one they fit, and you have your direction.



Consecutive Numbers (Runs)

A ladder of numbers climbing in one suit, like 3-4-5-6 all in Dots.

Chase: Keep the longest run you hold and extend it. Pairs and pungs along the run are gold.

Pass: Off-suit strays and numbers that don't touch your run.



Even Numbers (2-4-6-8)

A hand stacked with 2s, 4s, 6s, and 8s across any suits.

Chase: Collect the evens, especially numbers you already hold in pairs.

Pass: Odd numbers (1-3-5-7-9) and unpaired honors.



Odd Numbers (1-3-5-7-9)

A hand stacked with 1s, 3s, 5s, 7s, and 9s.

Chase: Collect the odds and pair them up.

Pass: Even numbers and unpaired honors.



Like Numbers

The same number showing up across suits, like a 5 of Craks, 5 of Bams, and 5 of Dots.

Chase: Gather more copies of your most-repeated number.

Pass: One-off numbers you only hold a single copy of.



Winds & Dragons (Honors)

Three or more wind and dragon tiles, ideally already in pairs.

Chase: Pair and pung your winds and dragons; honors only score in groups.

Pass: Scattered single number tiles that don't build a group.



Singles & Pairs

Lots of pairs and very few groups of three.

Chase: Protect every pair you have and build toward more. Remember: a joker can never fill a pair.

Pass: Tiles with no partner in sight.

The Charleston Flowchart

Six rules, in order. Walk down the list each pass and you'll almost never give away a tile you needed.

1

Never pass a joker.

You aren't allowed to, and they're the most valuable tile you can hold.

2

Pass your most isolated tiles first.

A tile that serves no direction is the cheapest thing to give away.

3

Protect your pairs and pungs.

A joker can never rebuild a pair, so a made pair is a sole path you don't break.

4

Pass flowers last.

Many card lines need them, so flowers are the last thing to let go, not the first.

5

Send single winds and dragons early.

Unless you're going for an honors hand, a lone honor rarely scores.

6

Re-read after every pass.

Three tiles leave and three arrive, so your direction can change from pass one to pass four.

The Score Card

The winner of each hand is paid by everyone, at the value printed on the card (double it for a jokerless or self-picked win). Tally the night here.

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Host Your First Game Night

A simple run of show, from the box on the table to calling Mahjong.

- 1 Gather your table**

Four players is the classic game; three works fine. Each player needs the current year's National Mah Jongg League card.

- 2 Lay out the set**

A full American set: 152 tiles including 8 jokers and the flowers, plus racks and a pair of dice. Score slips and snacks make it a night.

- 3 Build the wall and deal**

Each player builds two rows of tiles, then the dealer hands out 13 to each player (the dealer keeps 14 to start).

- 4 Run the Charleston**

Pass three right, three across, three left, then an optional second pass. This is where most hands are won or lost, use the flowchart.

- 5 Play the hand**

Draw and discard around the table. Call a discard only to make an exposure that matches a line on your card.

- 6 Declare Mahjong and score**

The first complete hand calls Mahjong and is paid by everyone, using the value printed on the card (with doubles for a jokerless or self-picked win).

- 7 Keep it warm**

Keep the card at every elbow, call your tiles clearly, and let beginners take back a discard or two. The goal is everyone comes back next week.

30 Reading Drills

Cover the answer with your hand, read the tiles: where is it going, and which three would you pass? Then check yourself.

DRILL 1

1 Crak · 2 Bam · 2 Dot · 3 Crak · 4 Crak · 7 Bam · 7 Dot · 8 Crak ·
Green Dragon · Red Dragon · Flower · East · South

Going for Winds & Dragons. Pass 2 Bam, 2 Dot, 7 Bam.

DRILL 3

1 Dot · 2 Dot · 3 Crak · 5 Crak · 6 Dot · 7 Crak · 8 Bam · 8 Crak ·
Red Dragon · Joker · East · East · West

Going for Winds & Dragons. Pass 1 Dot, 2 Dot, 6 Dot.

DRILL 5

2 Dot · 4 Bam · 5 Bam · 5 Dot · 5 Dot · 8 Crak · 8 Dot · 9 Bam · 9
Crak · 9 Dot · Soap (White) · Flower · Flower

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 2 Dot, 4 Bam, 8 Crak.

DRILL 7

1 Crak · 1 Dot · 2 Bam · 3 Bam · 3 Crak · 4 Crak · 4 Crak · 6 Crak ·
6 Dot · 8 Dot · 9 Crak · Joker · Joker

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass 1 Crak, 1 Dot, 3 Bam.

DRILL 9

1 Crak · 3 Dot · 3 Dot · 3 Dot · 5 Bam · 6 Bam · 6 Crak · 8 Dot ·
Green Dragon · Red Dragon · Soap (White) · Joker · East

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 1 Crak, 5 Bam, 6 Bam.

DRILL 11

1 Bam · 2 Dot · 3 Dot · 3 Dot · 5 Bam · 5 Bam · 5 Crak · 5 Crak · 7
Bam · 8 Bam · 8 Dot · Soap (White) · East

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 2 Dot, 8 Bam, 8 Dot.

DRILL 13

1 Crak · 3 Crak · 3 Dot · 4 Bam · 4 Crak · 5 Crak · 6 Crak · 6 Dot ·
9 Bam · Green Dragon · Flower · Flower · Flower

Going for Consecutive Numbers. Pass Green Dragon, 4 Bam, 6 Dot.

DRILL 15

1 Bam · 2 Bam · 3 Bam · 4 Crak · 4 Crak · 6 Crak · 6 Crak · 7 Bam
· 7 Dot · 8 Crak · 8 Dot · Red Dragon · Flower

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass Red Dragon, 7 Dot, 1 Bam.

DRILL 17

1 Bam · 1 Dot · 4 Crak · 4 Crak · 4 Dot · 7 Bam · 8 Crak · 8 Dot · 9
Bam · 9 Dot · 9 Dot · East · South

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 1 Bam, 1 Dot, 7 Bam.

DRILL 2

1 Crak · 4 Bam · 4 Dot · 5 Dot · 6 Crak · 8 Bam · 8 Bam · Soap
(White) · Flower · Joker · Joker · South · West

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass 1 Crak, 5 Dot, Soap
(White).

DRILL 4

1 Dot · 2 Crak · 3 Bam · 5 Bam · 6 Bam · 6 Dot · 7 Bam · Green
Dragon · Green Dragon · Flower · Joker · North · North

Going for Consecutive Numbers. Pass 1 Dot, 2 Crak, 6 Dot.

DRILL 6

1 Dot · 2 Bam · 4 Bam · 5 Dot · 7 Bam · 8 Crak · 8 Dot · Soap
(White) · Soap (White) · Flower · Joker · Joker · North

Going for Winds & Dragons. Pass 1 Dot, 2 Bam, 4 Bam.

DRILL 8

2 Crak · 2 Dot · 4 Bam · 4 Bam · 4 Bam · 4 Dot · 5 Dot · 6 Bam · 7
Crak · 9 Bam · 9 Crak · 9 Dot · Green Dragon

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 5 Dot, 7 Crak, 9 Bam.

DRILL 10

1 Bam · 2 Bam · 4 Bam · 4 Dot · 6 Dot · 8 Crak · 8 Crak · 8 Dot · 9
Bam · 9 Crak · Red Dragon · Flower · East

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass 1 Bam, 9 Bam, 9 Crak.

DRILL 12

3 Crak · 3 Dot · 3 Dot · 4 Dot · 6 Crak · 6 Dot · 7 Bam · 8 Dot · 9
Dot · Green Dragon · Soap (White) · Flower · Flower

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 4 Dot, 6 Crak, 6 Dot.

DRILL 14

1 Bam · 1 Crak · 1 Dot · 2 Dot · 4 Dot · 5 Dot · 6 Bam · 6 Bam · 8
Bam · 9 Dot · Green Dragon · Joker · West

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 5 Dot, 9 Dot, Green Dragon.

DRILL 16

1 Bam · 1 Dot · 3 Bam · 3 Crak · 5 Bam · 7 Bam · 8 Bam · 8 Crak ·
9 Bam · 9 Crak · Green Dragon · Flower · North

Going for Odd Numbers (1·3·5·7·9). Pass Green Dragon, North, 8
Crak.

DRILL 18

1 Crak · 3 Bam · 4 Bam · 4 Dot · 5 Dot · 5 Dot · 8 Bam · 8 Dot · 9
Bam · 9 Crak · Flower · Joker · North

Going for Odd Numbers (1·3·5·7·9). Pass North, 4 Dot, 8 Dot.

DRILL 19

2 Crak · 4 Crak · 5 Bam · 5 Crak · 5 Crak · 5 Dot · 6 Crak · 7 Bam · 9 Crak · 9 Crak · Green Dragon · Flower · Joker

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 2 Crak, 4 Crak, 6 Crak.

DRILL 21

1 Bam · 2 Bam · 2 Crak · 2 Crak · 4 Bam · 6 Bam · 7 Crak · 8 Bam · 8 Dot · 9 Bam · Green Dragon · North · South

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass 1 Bam, 7 Crak, 9 Bam.

DRILL 23

3 Crak · 4 Bam · 5 Crak · 6 Crak · 7 Bam · 7 Crak · 8 Dot · 9 Dot · Green Dragon · Soap (White) · East · South · West

Going for Winds & Dragons. Pass 4 Bam, 7 Bam, 8 Dot.

DRILL 25

2 Crak · 2 Dot · 3 Crak · 4 Crak · 4 Dot · 6 Crak · 6 Crak · 7 Crak · 8 Crak · Green Dragon · Soap (White) · Flower · North

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass Green Dragon, Soap (White), North.

DRILL 27

2 Dot · 3 Bam · 4 Bam · 4 Dot · 6 Bam · 7 Bam · 7 Crak · 8 Crak · 9 Dot · Soap (White) · Flower · Flower · West

Going for Even Numbers (2·4·6·8). Pass Soap (White), West, 3 Bam.

DRILL 29

2 Bam · 3 Bam · 5 Crak · 5 Crak · 6 Bam · 6 Bam · 8 Dot · 9 Bam · 9 Bam · 9 Dot · Red Dragon · Joker · Joker

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 2 Bam, 8 Dot, Red Dragon.

DRILL 20

2 Bam · 3 Bam · 3 Crak · 4 Crak · 5 Bam · 6 Bam · 6 Dot · 7 Crak · 7 Crak · 9 Crak · Flower · Joker · West

Going for Odd Numbers (1·3·5·7·9). Pass West, 2 Bam, 6 Bam.

DRILL 22

2 Bam · 3 Crak · 4 Crak · 4 Dot · 5 Bam · 5 Crak · 5 Crak · 8 Bam · 9 Bam · 9 Crak · Flower · Joker · Joker

Going for Like Numbers. Pass 2 Bam, 4 Dot, 8 Bam.

DRILL 24

1 Dot · 1 Dot · 2 Crak · 2 Dot · 3 Bam · 5 Bam · 5 Dot · 6 Dot · 7 Crak · 8 Bam · 9 Bam · Soap (White) · Flower

Going for Odd Numbers (1·3·5·7·9). Pass Soap (White), 2 Crak, 2 Dot.

DRILL 26

2 Bam · 3 Bam · 3 Crak · 3 Crak · 4 Dot · 5 Dot · 6 Dot · 7 Dot · 9 Dot · Flower · Flower · Flower · West

Going for Consecutive Numbers. Pass West, 2 Bam, 4 Dot.

DRILL 28

2 Bam · 3 Bam · 3 Crak · 4 Bam · 4 Crak · 5 Bam · 7 Crak · 8 Bam · 8 Bam · 9 Crak · Red Dragon · South · West

Going for Consecutive Numbers. Pass Red Dragon, South, West.

DRILL 30

1 Bam · 1 Crak · 3 Crak · 4 Dot · 5 Dot · 6 Dot · 7 Crak · 8 Bam · 8 Crak · 9 Dot · 9 Dot · Joker · West

Going for Odd Numbers (1·3·5·7·9). Pass West, 8 Bam, 8 Crak.
