

Shut the Box

Topics: strategy, addition, number bonds up to 13

Materials: a deck of cards, paper and pencil, three 6-sided dice

Players: two or more

Recommended Grades: 2-8

Common Core Standards: MP1, MP2, MP3, MP5, MP7, MP8

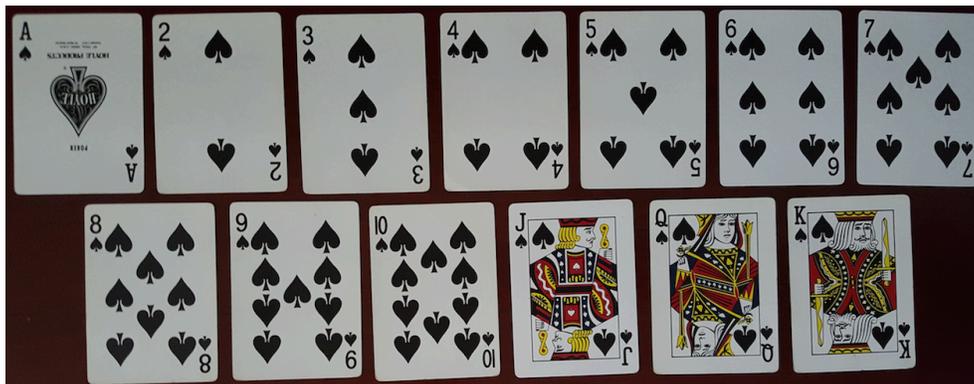
Use sums to turn over as many of your cards as you can? The player with the lowest score at the end of the game is the winner.

Why We Love Shut the Box

Shut the box is fun game of strategy and chance that is appropriate for a wide range of ages. Filled with opportunities to practice addition facts and number bonds, the numerous options from each roll of the dice help build deeper number sense as well as fluency. The element of chance makes this game fun to play over and over again.

How to Play

Shut the Box is a game for two or more players. Lay out a suit of cards Ace (1) through King (13), in order, face in front of each player.



Players take turns rolling their choice of 1, 2, or 3 dice and finding their sum. They then turn over one or more cards that add up to make that same sum. For example, if you roll a two, a three, and a five, you could turn over the 10, or the 6 and the 4, or the 7, 2, and 1, or any other combination that makes a sum of ten. Pass the dice to the next player. Play continues in this manner. A player's game ends when he or she cannot use the remaining face up cards to make the sum rolled. When all of the players' games have ended, each player finds the sum of the remaining face up cards. The player with the lowest score is the winner.

Questions

Some strategy questions to think about as you play:

- How do you decide when to roll 1, 2 or 3 dice?
- Is it better to flip one high card or 2 or 3 low cards?
- Which numbers should you try to flip first?

Variations

1. Solitaire: Play individually trying to get as close to zero as possible.
2. Two Dice: For younger students play with 2 dice instead of three and use the cards 1-10 only.
3. The Long Game: (For two players) The first player tries to flip all of the cards face down, going until he rolls a sum he can't play. Then the second player takes over trying to turn face up all of the cards that the first player had turned over. She keeps rolling until she gets a sum she can't play and passes the board back to the first player. The first person to succeed in reaching their goal of all cards face down or all cards face up is the winner. (For young players, place markers on cards instead of turning them over.)

About this Game

Adapted from the book Math You Can Play, by Denise Gaskins