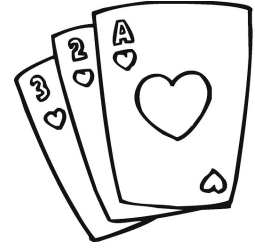# Poison Numbers

Topics: Strategy, vocabulary, number sense, fluency, mental math
Materials: A deck of playing cards and 10 tokens for scoring.
Players: two or more
Recommended Grades: 2-8
Common Core Standards: MP1, MP3, MP6, MP7

The game of Poison Numbers is a game of strategy, mental addition and knowledge of types of numbers. After choosing a type of number, for example even numbers, players take turns adding the value of a card from their hand to the cards on the table while trying to avoid a sum that is a poison number – in this case, an even number.

Why We Love Poison Numbers

Poison Numbers is a great game for practicing mental addition as well as exploring the properties of different types of numbers in a fun and nonthreatening way. It is also a great way to review math vocabulary having to do with different number types.

How to Play

Have one player choose a type of number to be the "poison number" for the first round of play. Then deal 3 cards to each player from a standard deck of cards with the face cards (king, queen, jack) removed. The first person then places one of his 3 cards on the table and says it's value. If it is not a poison number, he replenishes his hand by drawing a card. Then the second player places a card from her hand on the table next to the other card and says the sum of the two cards. If that sum is not a poison number, she replenishes her hand. Players take turns in this manner, each turn adding a card from his or her hand and saying the sum of all of the cards on the table, until someone makes a poison number.

The player who makes a poison number gets a poison token. Poison tokens can be buttons, Lego pieces, pennies or whatever you choose. For the next round another player chooses a type of number for the poison number. Again, the first player to make a poison number gains a poison token. Play until all 10 poison tokens are used up. The player with the fewest tokens is the winner.

Variations

1. For an advanced game, choose a poison number that includes two types of numbers, such as multiples of 5 or multiples of 3.
2. Or, try using a poison number with two types of numbers in an "and" statement, such as a multiple of 7 and an odd number.
3. Add the face cards to the deck. (jack = 11, queen =12, king =13)
4. With multiple players, you may choose to eliminate players when they get 3 poison tokens. The last player left in the game is the winner.

*Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Oj16oJX1U4&t=0s for a fun demonstration of this game.