

Contents for Hearts Help

Hearts is a game that uses a combination of strategy and luck. You play the game with up to three other players, each person playing on their own computer. Each time a person plays a card, the action appears on the computer of the other players.

The computer fills in any empty hands. For example, you can play with two players and have the computer play the other two hands. When you play by yourself, the computer plays the other three hands. If a player quits mid-game, the computer takes over that hand and the game continues, but, if the dealer quits, the game is over.

You must have a mouse to play Hearts.

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Keeping Score

The game is over when one player has scored more than 100 points. The winner is the player who has the fewest points.

At the end of each round (each player has played all 13 cards), the following points are given:

- One point for each Heart you collected.
- Thirteen points for the Queen of Spades.
- If one player wins all the Hearts and the Queen of Spades (called Shooting the Moon), then that player gets zero while all other players are penalized 26 points.

Starting the Game

You can play Hearts alone or with up to three players. One person must be the dealer. The game starts on the dealer's computer and then other players join the game. To join a game, you type the computer name of the dealer when the game starts. Any hands not claimed are played by the computer.

To start Hearts and be the dealer

- 1 Start Hearts.
- 2 Type your name and select being the dealer. Then choose the OK button.
Your name appears at the bottom of the screen. As other players join, their names are added.
- 3 Press F2 when you are ready to begin the game. Thirteen cards are dealt to each player.

Tip: The faster the computer the dealer has, the faster the game runs. Therefore, if possible, have the dealer be the player who has the fastest computer.

To join another Hearts game

- 1 Start Hearts.
- 2 Type your name and select the option to connect to another game. Then choose the OK button.
- 3 Type the computer name of the dealer whose game you want to join. Then choose the OK button.
The dealer waits until all players have joined, then deals the cards.

Playing the Game

Hearts is a trick-based card game. A trick is when someone leads with a card and each player plays a card of the same suit. If you do not have a card in that suit, you can play any card. The trick is won by the player who plays the highest card in the suit of the first card played. Aces are high.

The object of Hearts is to have the lowest score at the end of the game. You get 1 point for each Heart you end up with at the end of the round and 13 points for the Queen of Spades.

The following are the basics you need to know to play Hearts:

- Click a card to select it. Click again to remove the selection.
- Buttons are greyed until they are available.

To play Hearts

- 1 After the cards are dealt, each player selects three cards from their hand, and then passes them to the left by clicking the Pass Left button.

At the beginning of the next round, you pass to the right, then across the table. On the fourth round, you do not pass any cards. Then the cycle repeats.

- 2 Click the OK button directly above your cards to accept the cards passed to you.
- 3 The player with the two of Clubs starts the first trick by playing the two of Clubs.
- 4 Each player, moving clockwise around the board, selects a card to play.

If you do not have a card in this suit, you can play any card, but you cannot play a Heart or Queen of Spades during the first trick.

- 5 The player who played the highest card in the suit of the first card played, takes the trick and starts the next trick.

You must wait until Hearts have been played in a trick (called breaking Hearts) before you can lead with a Heart.

- 6 The round continues until all cards are played.

Understanding the Rules

The following rules apply when playing Hearts:

- The highest ranking card in the suit of the first card played wins the trick.
- You must follow suit when possible. For example, if the first card played is a Spade, you must play a Spade if you have one in your hand.
- If unable to follow suit (you do not have a card in the suit being played), you can play any card.
- You cannot play a Heart or the Queen of Spades in the first trick of a round (First Blood rule).
- You cannot lead with a Heart until a Heart has been played during a previous trick.
- If the dealer quits, the game is over. If any other player quits, the computer takes over that hand and the game continues.
- The game is over when one player has scored 100 or more points. The winner is the player who has the fewest points.

Using Strategy

To be a successful Hearts player, you must keep track of what others play. After the cards have been dealt, your hand is the only hand that is sorted according to suit. Because your opponents' hands are not sorted, you cannot make any assumptions about the contents of their hands based on the relative positions of the cards they pass or play. However, if a player plays a card in a suit other than the one led, this may give you an indication of what is in their hand.

While the tricks are being played, you need to keep track of whether the Queen of Spades has been played and whether Hearts has been broken. The most important thing to track is whether all the points have gone to one person. You may have to purposely win a trick containing Hearts to thwart a player from Shooting the Moon. (Remember, Shooting the Moon is when one player wins all the Hearts and the Queen of Spades.) When this happens, that player gets zero while all other players are penalized 26 points.

The strategy you use while playing depends on whether you are trying to avoid getting any points or if you are trying to Shoot the Moon.

The Microsoft Hearts Network

Use this dialog box to join another Hearts game or be a dealer and start your own game.

The dialog box has the following options:

- ▶ Type your name in the What Is Your Name box.
- ▶ To join another game, select that option from the box.
- ▶ If you want to be the dealer, select that option from the box.

Locate Dealer

Use this dialog box to join a Hearts game.

- ▶ In the box, type the computer name of the dealer.
Choose the Browse button if you want to see a list of computer names.

