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## What is Canasta ?

Canasta is a card game, which has been played for many centuries. It developed in the Middle Ages, and has been popular all over the world ever since.

Canasta is played with two decks of cards, with 55 cards each (52 standard cards, plus three Jokers). There are two players, and in this Windows version that means you and your computer.

A quick overview of the game:

- \* Your goal is to beat the computer by scoring more points than it does. You score points by playing cards from your hand to the table, and making as many canastas as possible.
- \* Each player starts with 11 cards 'in hand'. Yours are visible at the bottom of the window.
- \* Both players take turns in taking one card from the fresh deck, and putting one card on the old deck (in that order). The human player always has the first turn.
- \* After taking a fresh card, a player may *play* cards, i.e. move them from his hand to the table, so that they become visible to the other player. Once a card has been played, it cannot be taken back into the hand (except with the Undo option).
- \* When a player has played all the cards he wants to play, he finishes his turn by placing a card on the old deck. At that point, it is checked that his played cards conform to the canasta rules.
- \* Instead of taking a card from the fresh deck, a player may take the entire old deck. However, this is only allowed if he can directly play the top card from the old deck, and has either at least one canasta, or the value of the cards he can play to the table (using the top card) is at least the required minimum.
- \* One round is finished when one of the players has no cards left in his hand, after he has thrown away his last card. The scores of both players are then computed, and a new round is dealt.
- \* A game of canasta is finished when either one of the players reaches 5,000 points.

## The Rules

Both players must adhere to the following Canasta rules:

1. If a certain kind of card is played to the table, the total number of cards of that same kind on the table must be *at least* three at the end of the turn.
2. It is possible to add a joker to a row of cards of any kind on the table. The joker is then seen as a card of that kind (but the value remains unchanged). However, the restriction is that there may never be more jokers than other cards within one row.
3. At the beginning of a round, the top card of the fresh deck is automatically turned around and placed on the old deck. If this card is a red Three or a joker, the procedure is repeated until the top card of the old deck is neither a red Three nor a joker.
4. When a new round is dealt, the hands of both players are checked to see if they contain a red Three. This Three is then automatically played to the table, and an extra card is dealt to the hand out of which the red Three was played. This process is repeated until neither player has any red Threes left in his hand.
5. It is not allowed to keep a red Three in your hand. Playing a red Three ends your turn. Black Threes may not be played to the table.
6. It is never allowed to take a black Three or a joker from the old deck.
7. If there is a joker in the old deck (indicated by an asterisk), both players are only allowed to take the old deck if they can use the top card as if they had no cards of the same kind on the table, i.e. only using the cards in their hand.
8. The first time a player plays cards to the table in a round, those cards must form a canasta, or their total score must be at least the required minimum.

## Registering

Canasta 1.0 is a shareware program. This means that *it is not free*, but you can use it without paying *for a limited amount of time*, in this case two weeks. If you decide that you want to continue playing this game, you are required to pay the small amount of \$ 20, or f 20,- in Dutch guilders, or the equivalent in your currency.

This amount should be sent to:

Bank: PostBank, Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Account Number: 4375889  
Name: Mark-Jan Harte  
Address: St. Servaasweg 16  
5614 CB  
Eindhoven  
The Netherlands

E-mail: [mjharte@win.tue.nl](mailto:mjharte@win.tue.nl)

Please add the equivalent of \$ 15 if you transfer the money via the bank from a foreign account, because the costs of international transfers are quite high, unfortunately.

If you want to avoid these extra costs, you can also simply put the amount in an envelope and mail it to the address above. However, there is no guarantee that the same amount will arrive at its destination. Remember to make sure that your address is included !

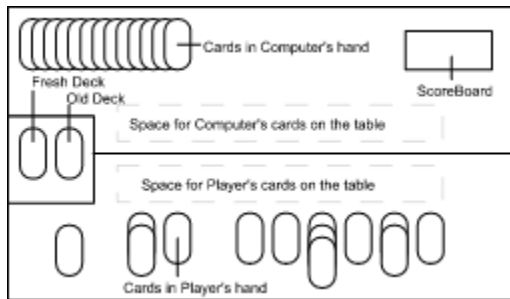
When I receive your payment, you will be sent a registered copy of Canasta 1.0. This registered version has the following advantages over the shareware version:

- \* It is legal.
- \* It does not have the annoying opening screen telling you to pay me.
- \* It is compiled using 80286 instructions, as opposed to the shareware version which is compiled using generic 80x86 instructions.
- \* It has a smarter decision-making algorithm for the computer opponent.

If you find a bug in Canasta, or have useful comments for further enhancement, *please* write to the address above, or send an e-mail to me. I will be very grateful for it.

## How to Play

When you start the game, the Canasta screen looks like this:



The meaning of the various parts of the screen is as follows:

**Fresh Deck:** The cards which have not been used yet.

At the beginning of your turn, you can take a card from the fresh deck by *left*-clicking on it with the mouse.

**Old Deck:** The cards which have been discarded.

At the end of your turn, you must add a card to this deck by *right*-clicking on the card you want to be added.

Below the old deck is a number, indicating how many cards there are on it. An asterisk (\*) before this number means that the old deck is *blocked*, i.e. there is a joker in the old deck.

At the beginning of your turn, you can take the entire deck by *left*-clicking on it (if you can use the top card).

If the old deck is blocked, or if you have no cards on the table of the same kind as the top card of the old deck (e.g. the top card is an Eight, but you have not played any Eights to the table yet), you will first only receive the top card.

When you have added two cards from your hand to the top card (so that there is a row of at least three cards), you receive the rest of the old deck. However, if you had zero points on the table before taking the old deck, you must also have made a canasta, or you must have at least the minimum amount of points.

If you left-clicked on the old deck by mistake, you can put the top card back by left-clicking on the old deck again. However, this is only possible if you have not yet received the rest of the old deck in your hand, and it carries a penalty of 50 points.

**Cards in Player's hand:** The cards you have in your hand.

These cards are not visible to the computer (it does not cheat).

Playing a card to the table is done by *left*-clicking on it. If you want to undo your last move, use the Undo option in the Game menu.

Placing a card on the old deck is done by *right*-clicking on the card. This ends your turn.

Adding a joker to a row of cards on the table is done in the following way:

1. Press the left mouse button on the joker you want to add.
2. Keeping the left mouse button pressed, move the arrow to the spot where you want the joker to be added.
3. Release the left mouse button.

Note that adding a joker to a row of cards is only possible if this row is non-empty.

**Cards in Computer's hand:** The cards the computer keeps in his hand.

**Space for Player's cards on the table:** The area of the screen where the cards you play from your hand to the table, are placed.

**Space for Computer's cards on the table:** The area of the screen where the cards the computer plays from its hand to the table, are placed.

**ScoreBoard:** Here the current score for the Player and the Computer is recorded. It may be negative.

A **Canasta** is a set of at least seven cards of the same kind (e.g. seven Kings). If all cards are non-jokers, the canasta is *pure*, otherwise it is *weak*.

## Scoring

The score counting in Canasta is rather complicated.

The values of the cards are as follows:

Black Three, Four, Five, Six	:	5 points
Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Jack, Queen, King	:	10 points
Two, Ace	:	20 points
Joker	:	50 points
Red Three	:	100 points

The following bonuses are awarded:

- \* A **pure canasta** is worth 500 points, and a **weak canasta** 300 points.
- \* The player who finishes a round, gets a bonus of 100 points.
- \* If a player has all four **red threes** on the table, their score (400 points) is doubled to 800 points.

At the end of a round, the total score is calculated as follows:

1. The sum of the values of the cards on the table forms the initial score value.
2. Bonuses for canastas, finishing and red threes are added to the score.
3. The values of the cards in hand are deducted from the score.

However, this calculation is only valid if there is *at least one canasta* ! If not, a negative score results consisting of the sum of the values of the cards in your hand *and on the table*.

It is therefore always wise to get a canasta quickly, so that you don't run the risk of holding a large collection of cards when the computer finishes the round.

The first time in a round that cards are played to the table, these cards must form a canasta, or the sum of their values must be at least a certain minimum. This minimum is dependent on the score in the ScoreBoard, in the following way:

Score	Minimum
Less than 0	15
Between 0 and 1500	50
Between 1500 and 3000	90
More than 3000	120

Note that the values of any red Threes on the table do *not* contribute to the required minimum score.



A red Three is a Three of Diamonds or a Three of Hearts.

A **joker** is either a real Joker, or a Two of any suit.

## The Game Menu

The Game Menu has the following menu options:

### **New**

This option start a new game; the scores on the ScoreBoard are set to 0, and a new round is dealt.

### **Deal Again**

This option deals a new hand of cards. The scores on the ScoreBoard are unaffected.

### **Undo Move**

This option undoes the last movement of a card. It is only available immediately after a card has been played to the table.

### **Exit**

This option exits from Canasta.

## The Help Menu

The Help Menu has the following menu options:

### **Index**

This option brings up the [index](#) of the Canasta help system.

### **Rules**

This option brings up the help topic about the [rules](#) of Canasta.

### **How to Play**

This option brings up the help topic about the screen layout and mouse control in [playing](#) the game.

### **Scoring**

This option brings up the help topic about the [scoring rules](#) used in Canasta.

### **Registering**

This option brings up the help topic explaining how to [register](#) your copy of Canasta.

### **About**

This option brings up a dialog box which gives information about the author of Canasta.

## Shortcut Keys

The following keys can be used as shortcuts for options in the game menu and help menu:

<b>Key</b>	<b>Menu Equivalent</b>
F1	Help   Index
F2	Game   Deal Again
Shift + F2	Game   New
Del	Game   Undo Move

