

# SIGN



Playing material: 80 playing cards  
(16 unique symbols in 5 different colors)



## Introduction

Sign is a quick card game that tests your dexterity, mental capacity and awareness. By swapping cards from your hand with cards on the table you try to collect a quintet (five cards with the same symbol). You then give a signal to your teammates, who subsequently reveals your quintet in order for your team to score. Meanwhile, try to be constantly aware of your opponents and their actions so that you can reveal their quintet and score a point. Your opponents will also try to track you, so hide your quintet by: picking a clever sign, giving fake signs and acting very suspiciously throughout the game.



## Goal of the game

A game of Sign consists of several rounds in which a team can score a point. At the start of the game the players decide at which point the game ends: either when one team reaches a predefined number of points or when the determined number of rounds is played. Don't pick an even number of rounds, because then the likelihood of a draw is much higher. One round takes four minutes on average. If you decide to play until one team reaches three points, then the game will be over in three to five rounds and it will take around 12 to 20 minutes.



## Teams

Sign is played with two or more equally divided teams. In the player-table below, you can find the possible team divisions depending on the number of players. If equally divided teams are not an option, it is advised to group the most experienced players in the smaller team. Alternatively, the largest team can work with a substitute player. The players are seated alternately (if possible) across the table, so that team members don't sit next to each other.

Players	Teams	Cards
4	2-2	5 cards
5	3-2	6 cards
6	3-3 of 2-2-2	6 cards
7	4-3 of 3-2-2	7 cards
8	4-4	7 cards
9	3-3-3	8 cards



## Signs

At the beginning of the game each team decides separately on their sign. It is important to keep the sign secret for the other team, because it helps team members to signal each other when they have a quintet. A sign must meet the following requirements:

- The sign must be visible for all players.  
*(signaling below the table is not allowed)*
- The sign may not be a vocal sound.  
*(for example: no words or clapping)*
- The sign may not be bodily contact between players.  
*(including your opponents)*
- The sign may not be given digitally.  
*(for example: no text messages)*

Beginning players are allowed to change their sign at the end of a round. This way they can develop a sense of which signs are effective and ineffective. We suggest that more experienced players aren't allowed to change their sign or only allow it at the cost of one point.



## A round

Sign is played in multiple rounds. Every round has the following phases: preparation, swapping cards, refreshing cards, scoring a quintet, end of the round. The phases swapping cards and refreshing cards are recurring.



## Goal of a round

The goal of a round is to score a quintet by a team member or opponent. A quintet is a collection of exactly five cards with the same symbol, in five different colors. Therefore, a quintet is impossible when a player has only four cards in their hand and invalid when a player has six cards in their hand.





## Preparation

The dealer shuffles the cards and gives each player five cards. He then draws the number of cards as shown in the player-table and puts them face down in the middle of the table. The dealer then shows the bottom card of the deck to all players. After all players have checked their hand, the cards in the middle of the table are opened-up and all players can start swapping.



## Swapping cards

When the cards in the middle of the table are opened-up all players can simultaneously start swapping their cards with cards on the table. Players do not have to take turns. Swapping a card with the deck on the table must meet the following four requirements:

- Cards are swapped one by one.  
*(taking or dropping multiple cards at the same time is not allowed)*
- A player must have a minimum of four and a maximum of six cards on hand.
- All cards must be played visibly on the table.  
*(always with the symbol side up)*
- Cards are swapped only with the table.  
*(not with other players directly)*



## Refreshing cards

If none of the players want to swap anymore and have exactly five cards on hand. Then the player on the left side of the dealer takes all the cards from the middle of the table and places them face down in the discard pile. Afterwards, the dealer takes the same number as the discarded cards from the deck and opens them up in the middle of the table. All the players can start swapping again directly. When the deck is finished while new cards are required, then this round ends in a draw and no points are scored.



## Scoring a quintet

At any moment during a round a player can score a quintet. This is done by calling "Sign!" out loud and pointing at another player. The hand of this player is then checked to determine if the quintet is valid.

If the quintet is valid then the team of the player that called "Sign!" scores a point. If the quintet is invalid then it is checked, if the player that called "Sign!" and the player whose quintet got checked are in the same team. If they are, then all other teams score a point. If they are not, then only the team of the player whose quintet got checked scores a point. After scoring a quintet the round always ends, regardless of whether the quintet was valid or invalid.



## End of the round

If there is no winner yet, then the role of the dealer is passed on clockwise and the preparation phase of a new round begins.



## End of the game

When a team has scored the predefined number of points then this team is the winner of the game. Or if the predefined number of rounds is played then the team with the highest score wins. If two (or more) teams have the same number of points then the game ends in a draw.



## Game tips

- Try to remember which symbols other players are collecting. This makes it easier for you to determine if another player possibly has a quintet.
- By remembering which symbols are in the discard pile, you can avoid collecting a quintet that is no longer possible. Agreeing in advance who keeps track of which opponent, improves your team's ability to closely monitor the opposing team.
- The real goal of the game is not to collect a quintet but to score a quintet.



## Game variations for advanced players

Small alterations to the game rules make for a different gaming experience. So please look at the game variations on our website: [www.themountainmen.nl/rules](http://www.themountainmen.nl/rules). And be sure to share your own variations with us on social media, [boardgamegeek](http://boardgamegeek.com) or drop an email at: [info@themountainmen.nl](mailto:info@themountainmen.nl), so other players can also experience your ideas.

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WARNING!  
Not for children under three years of age. choking hazard.