

Garbage

Players: 2

Ages: 4 and up

Math Ideas: Counting, numerical order, ten frame concepts

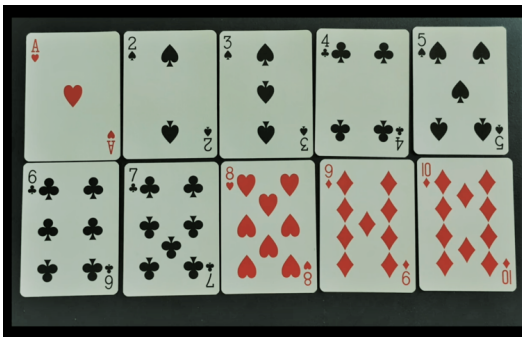
How to Play:

Garbage is typically played with two players. Each player deals ten cards face down in front of them, making two rows of five. The rest of the cards are placed in the center of the table as a draw pile.



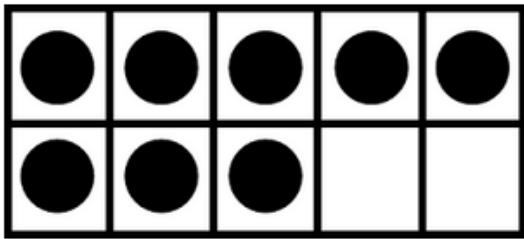
The first player draws a card, let's say a six. She counts to her sixth card, removes it and places the six face-up in its location. Then she looks at her new card and sees where she can place it.

If the first player ever draws a face card, or a number that she has already placed, her turn is over, the card is “garbage” and placed in the discard pile and the next player draws from the draw pile. The first person who fills in her entire set of ten cards is the winner.



Where's the Math?

This game seems to be tailor-made for a pre-schooler or kindergartener who is developing their counting skills. They will practice recognizing the numerals 2-10. They will practice numerical order and the position of numbers in relation to each other.



The two rows of cards have the same structure as a ten frame, where the top row contains the first five cards and the bottom row contains the cards from six through ten. This structure, which kids interact with constantly in early elementary school, is a great one to mimic in a game setting.

This game practices skills beyond the pattern of counting from 1-10. This sort of thinking is a huge shift for early math learners. Kids need to be able to count to ten, of course, but starting at one and counting up is rarely the most efficient strategy. Garbage gives the child a visual structure to help think about numbers and their relative locations to each other.

To count in a different way, I might ask "***Which player is winning? How do you know?***" In order to answer this, they either need to count the flipped over cards and compare them, or count the cards who have not yet been flipped. "***Which numbers do you still need?***" encourages the child to use their number sense to recognize which numbers are missing.

Options to make the game more interesting or complex:

Wild Card: use the King as a wild card. If drawn it can be used in the place of another number until that number turns up. It can then be moved to another position.

Multiple hands: Play the game in multiple hands. Each time a person wins, the winner starts the next round with one fewer card. For example, Player A has won 2 hands, on next deal they start with 8 cards (5 in the top row, 3 in the bottom). Player B has won 4 hands so they are starting the round with 6 cards.