

Spellcraft Streamlined

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Foreword

This is an abbreviated set of rules for the Spellcraft Card Game. The full rules provide guidelines for custom characters and make frequent reference to concepts and setting elements from a story world I created. If you're interested in a more flavourful and in-depth game with some roleplaying elements, keep checking <http://jaredhunt.ca> for more details as I release them. Otherwise, keep reading.

Spellcraft Streamlined is suitable for 2-8 players, though 3-6 players is ideal.

CHAPTER ONE

Parts of the Game

Cards

You'll need a standard 54-card deck of playing cards (with both jokers). This will be referred to as the **deck**.

You can play the game without the jokers if you prefer, but they add some fun twists and I recommend using them.

Trump

If you have a second deck available, you can play a variation where each player receives a **trump** card.

Sort out the face cards and aces from the second deck and set aside all the numbered cards. This will leave you with 16 cards. During Setup, shuffle these cards and deal one to each player, face down. The player may look at his own card, but should keep it hidden from other players.

A player can score extra points by playing his trump card and/or suit (See Scoring Your Hand).

Chips

Each player should start the game with the same number of chips. 20 chips each will usually make for a game that lasts about 15-30 minutes, depending on the number of players. You can adjust that time up or down by adding or subtracting chips, but twelve is about as low as you'll want to go.

Poker chips are a natural choice for this purpose, but beads, coins, or any other type of small counters will do.

The chips controlled by each player are referred to as that player's **stack**.

Chips in the middle of the table that are available to be won are called the **stakes**.

CHAPTER TWO

Playing the Game

The game is divided into **Rounds**, in which each player receives 5 new cards to form their starting **hand**, and **Turns**, in which players **exchange** and then **bid** on exposed cards that can be added to their hands. A Round ends when a player **knocks**, which prompts a **showdown** to determine who has the highest-scoring hand. The player with the highest-scoring hand takes half the chips from the **stakes** and adds them to his **stack**. The rest of the chips are removed from the game.

Setup

Each Round starts with the following steps:

1. Shuffle. One player ensures there are 54 cards in the deck and randomizes them thoroughly.
2. Cut for Deal. The player that cuts to the highest card becomes the dealer for the Round (Alternatively, the deal can be rotated clockwise after the first Round).
3. Shuffle again.
4. Deal. The dealer gives each player 5 facedown cards to form their hand. Players may look at their cards, but should keep the contents of their hands hidden from their opponents.
5. If you are playing with trump, deal one trump card face down to each player. Players may look at their trump cards, but should keep them hidden from their opponents.
6. Proceed to Turn Order.

Turn Order

Turns proceed in the following order:

1. Exchange (not on the first turn).
2. Lay out the field.

3. Bid.
4. Call for Knocks (not on the first turn).
5. Go back to step 1.

Exchanging

Starting with the dealer and proceeding clockwise around the table, each player has the option to take two cards from her hand and add them to the field. In exchange, she may either take a single card from the field or from the top of the deck.

Note that since there are no cards on the field yet, no one is able to exchange cards on the first Turn.

The Field

The dealer lays out the **field** by revealing one card from the top of the deck for each player, plus one additional card, and placing them face up in the middle of the table. (ie - in a three player game, four cards are revealed).

The number of cards revealed each Turn remains the same regardless of the number of cards currently on the field. This means that, each Turn, the number of cards available to choose from increases by at least one.

Bidding

Each player secretly decides to bid from 1-4 chips (No one is allowed to bet 0 chips. See All In).

After all players have made their decisions, all bids are revealed simultaneously. This can be done by holding bids in closed fists and exposing them after a countdown, or by having each player extend a number of fingers equal to their bid. Again, it is important that all bids be revealed at the same time.

After determining the highest bidder, all chips that have been bid are added to the stakes.

The player with the highest bid gets the first pick of cards on the field. She may instead choose to draw a card from the top of the deck. If two players are tied for highest bid, priority goes to the high bidder who is next in clockwise order after the dealer.

After the high bidder takes a card, proceed around the table in clockwise order, with each player taking one card and adding it to their hand.

All In

A player who has no chips left to bid is all-in. An all-in player always chooses his card last in each bidding phase (this is an exception to the normal clockwise order). He may still exchange cards and participate in a showdown.

A player must have at least one chip at the beginning of a Round in order to be dealt cards.

Knocking

Starting with the dealer, and proceeding around the table in clockwise order, each player may knock on the table (or say the word out loud), indicating that they believe they have the best hand. Note that no one is allowed to knock on the first Turn.

If someone knocks, each other player takes a single card from the field or the top of the deck and adds it to their hand. All players then choose the cards from their hand that are worth the greatest number of points (see Scoring Your Hand) and reveals them. This is called the showdown.

The player with the highest-scoring hand wins the showdown and takes half of the chips in the stakes (round up) and adds them to his stack. The remaining chips are removed from the game. This ends the round.

If the player who knocked does not have the best hand, that player must give each other player one chip. If the player does not have enough chips to give one to each other player, all his remaining chips are put into the stakes for the next round.

If no one knocks, the Round continues. Proceed to Exchanging.

Scoring Your Hand

Each player chooses a single suit and counts only cards of that suit.

- 1 point for each card of the chosen suit.
- 1 additional point for each card that is part of a sequence of 3 or more cards (multiple sequences are allowed).
- Additional points equal to the value of the highest card of the suit (face cards are all worth 10).
- The red joker is a wild card (It can be used to represent any other

card, even if the actual card is held by another player). It's value is calculated as the value of the card it is representing.

- The player with the black joker discards it and chooses an opponent. That opponent must discard a card they were counting for points.

If you are playing with trump:

- 2 points for playing the trump suit.
- 2 points for playing the trump card.

In addition to the points for your chosen suit, if you have four of a kind:

- 10 points If you have four cards of the same value from 2-10.
- 11 points if you have four face cards of the same value.

If, at any point in the game, you collect five of a kind (four of one card plus the red joker) you score 35 points and trigger an immediate showdown, regardless of what part of the Turn or Round you're in.

Ending the Game

The game ends when only one player has chips remaining in his stack after a showdown (or when all the players agree that one player is far enough ahead that continuing won't be fun).

If at least two players have chips remaining in their stacks and want to continue playing, go back to Setup and follow the steps in order.