Mahjong 101

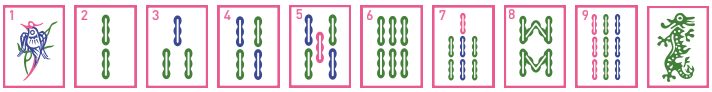
- Learn the Tiles
- Hand Groupings
- How to Use Jokers
- Understanding The Card
- Building Hands
- Selecting a Hand
- Resurrecting Dead Tiles



Mahjong Tile Talk

Suits & Tiles

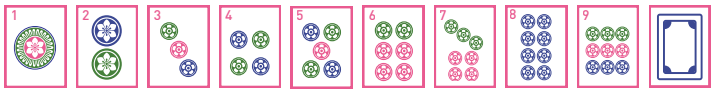
BAMS



CRAKS



DOTS



WINDS



FLOWERS



JOKER



BLANK



The DOT'S Dragon: Called a SOAP due to its shape. Aside from being the Dot's Dragon, it can also be a ZERO in 2026!

Hand Groupings

Singles **No Jokers in Singles!** *(There are no single Flowers.)*



Pairs **No Jokers in Pairs!**



Pung **Jokers (0, 1, 2 or 3)**



Kong **Jokers (0, 1, 2, 3 or 4)**



Quints **Only in #s. Jokers – Requires at least 1 Joker (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5)**



Sextet **Only in Fs. Jokers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6)**



Jokers....Your Wild Tile

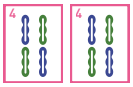
The Golden Rules of Jokers

✓

- Use in place of any numbered Crak, Bam, Dot, Wind, Dragon or Flower tiles.
- ONLY to complete ***identical*** tile groupings of **3 or more.**
- Quint & Sextet require the use of Jokers
- All tiles in grouping can be a Joker

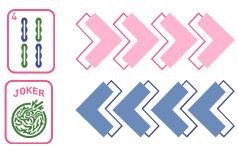
✗

- No passing in the Charleston...*Duh!*
- **NEVER** be used in a **SINGLE** or **PAIR**! (NEWS, 2026, 1234, 135, 369, Ds, Ws).
- **DEAD** on **DISCARD!** Once discarded, Joker is dead. Cannot be used for any reason.

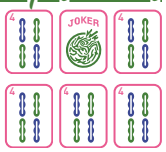
	Use a Joker?
SINGLE *or Group of Singles (NEWS, 2026, 1234...)* 	✗
PAIR 	✗
PUNG 	✓
KONG 	✓
QUINT 	✓
SEXTET 	✓

Joker Exchange

Hand



Exposed Tiles



FIRST DRAW or **CALL**

Politely request a Joker Exchange

Swap Tiles Exchange the natural for ANY joker face-up on a rack (including your rack).

Creating Hands

Green is Not a Bam
Red is NOT a Crak

On the Card
Colors are a CODE...Not a SUIT

1 Color = 1 Suit (Crak, Bam or Dot)

2 Colors = 2 Suits (Green/Red)

3 Colors = 3 Suits (Green/Red/Blue)

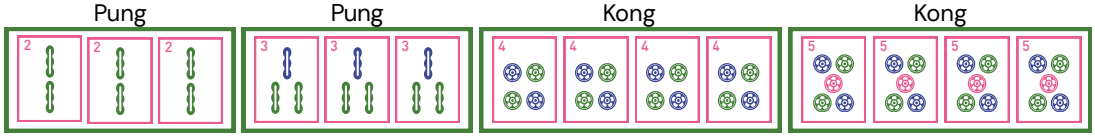
Dragons (D) Suited tiles and attached to Crak, Bam & Dot. *EXCEPT* when SOAP is a ZERO....Shown in Black.

Flowers (F) & Winds (N) Non-Suited Tiles. Shown in Black.

Building Hands

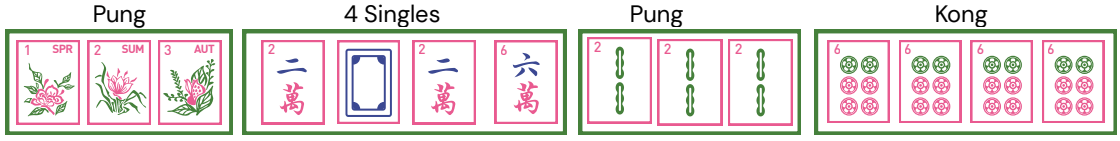
Consecutive Run 4B – 111 222 3333 4444 *(2 suits, any 4 consec #s)*

Pung | Pung | Kong | Kong



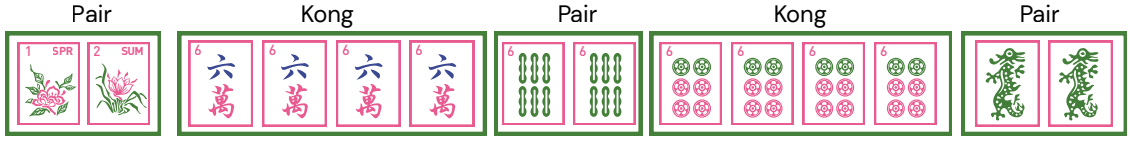
2026 3 – FFF 2026 222 6666 *(3 suits)*

Pung | 4 Singles | Pung | Kong



Any Like Numbers 3 – FF 1111 11 1111 DD *(3 suits, any Ds)*

Pair | Kong | Pair | Kong | Pair



Winds & Dragons 6 – 1 N 2 EE 3 WWW 4 SSSS *(1 suit, these #s only)*

Single | Single | Single | Pair | Single | Pung | Single | Kong



Floating Pairs – Pair can move within pattern.

13579 Line 4 - 113579 1111 1111 135779 7777 7777 135799 9999 9999

369 Line 5 - FF 3369 3333 3333 FF 3669 6666 6666 FF 3699 9999 9999

Selecting a Hand

Find Your Neighborhood First

DO NOT pick your house
before you know your neighborhood!

1 Organize Tiles Into Groups

Jokers & Flowers LEFT

Dragons & Winds RIGHT

2 Look for Clusters and Patterns in Numbers

ORGANIZE BY SUIT (1-9)
REGROUP (Number, Evens, Odds, 369)

3 Identify Multiples - Foundation of a Hand

Multiples	Sections to Consider
EVENS	**2468, 2026, Any Like Numbers, Quints**
ODDS	**13579, Any Like Numbers, Quints**
NEIGHBORING #S	**Consecutive Run, Quints**
WINDS	**Winds & Dragons, 2468** *(E & W),* **13579** *(N & S)*
369	**369**
FLOWERS & DRAGONS	**ALL Neighborhoods!** *Look for the F's & D's* › *Flowers are in OVER 50% of the hands.* › *Dragons are in 30% of the hands*

4 Exposed & Concealed Hands

EXPOSED HANDS
"Called Tile" must be exposed on rack with tiles that complete the grouping.



CONCEALED HANDS - *Avoid these hands for now*
› No exposures allowed
› Calling allowed ONLY to win with a Mahjong
› Accidental exposure kills hand. Attempt to pivot to a valid hand.

Mahjong 102

- Review
  - Learn the Tiles
  - Hand Groupings
  - How to Use Jokers
  - Understanding The Card
  - Building Hands
  - Selecting a Hand
- Blanks - Claiming Dead Tiles
- Building Walls
- The Deal
- The Charleston



Mahjong Review

1. **What is the most important thing to do before picking a hand (?)**

2. **What do the Red/Green/Blue colors on the Card tell you?**

3. **List examples of "Single Groupings."**

4. **Names for 3, 4, 5 & 6 of a Kind.**
   3.) 4.) 5.) 6.)
5. **Which color Dragon go with a) Bams b) Craks c) Dots**
   a.) b.) c.)
6. **What tile is the "Zero" in 2026 & do the #s 226 have to match the suit of the dragon?**
7. **Which tiles are "Non-Suited"**

8. **Jokers can NEVER be used in.....**

9. **When can you do a Joker exchange?**

10. **Three steps of a Turn Sequence (D-R-D).**

11. **If you claim a "Called Discard", what must you do?**

12. **What STOPS someone from Calling a Discard?**

13. **Multiple players call a discarded tile.**
    a.) **Who can claim it?**
    b.) **Unless....**

To Blank or Not To Blank



Blanks are a House Rule

NOT an official NMJL element of the game.

BLANKS RESURRECT A DEAD TILE
that was discarded earlier in the game



✓

- ***Resurrect Any Time:*** **Except** on your turn
- ***Sneak Attack:*** Discretly swap your blank for a dead tile and place the blank into the discard pile.
- ***Singles & Pairs:*** Blanks are very valuable for claiming Singles & Pairs that you otherwise cannot claim.
- **Multiple Exchanges:** You can swap more than one blank on a turn.
- **Draw a Blank for Mahjong:** If you draw a blank and there is a dead tile that earns you a Mahjong, you can use it on your turn.

✗

- ***Not on Your Turn:*** You cannot use a blank on your turn. Your turn ends after you discard.
- **Cannot pick up a Joker:** Once discarded, a Joker FOREVER dead.
  Cannot pick up a Blank: Once discarded, a Blank FOREVER dead.
- ***Blanks are NOT Jokers:*** Cannot be used as a wild card in your hand.

PROS

- ***Resurrects Dead Tiles***
- ***Speeds up Gameplay***
- ***Sneaky Use = Fun Factor***
- ***Increases Chance for Mahjongs***
- ***Helps to Collect Singles & Pairs***

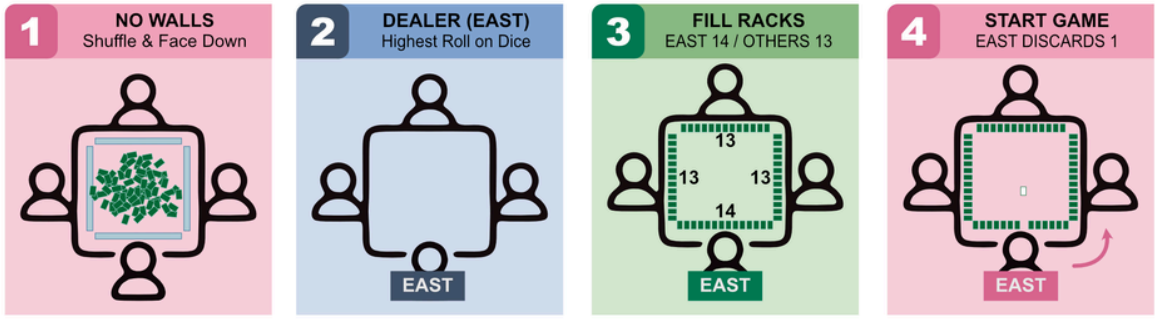
CONS

- ***No Standardized Rules***
- ***House Rules Vary***
- ***Discarded tiles are not Safe***
- ***Favors Luck over Skill***
- ***Not Used for Official Play***

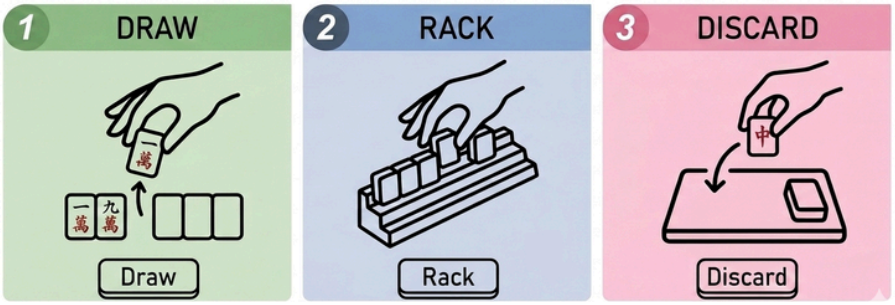
Let's Play Messy

Messy Mahjong is a quick way to play
- Eliminates wall building
- Standard dealing
- The Charleston

SET UP & DEAL



TURN CYCLE



Racking Stops "Holding" & "Calling"
Player on the RIGHT is next to draw.

CLAIM A DISCARD

A — PAUSE THE GAME

BEFORE next player ***RACKS***
Call "Hold" or "Pause"
- 2 or more "Call", priority to next

Play pauses while tile evaluated
- Option 1: "Call" (see below)
- Option 2: "Pass" - play continues

B — CALL A TILE

Tile face up on rack with rest of group
- Groups of 3 or more
- ***NO*** Singles or Pairs ***UNLESS*** tile is called for Mahjong
- Play resumes to player on RIGHT of calling player.

END OF GAME

MAHJONG!

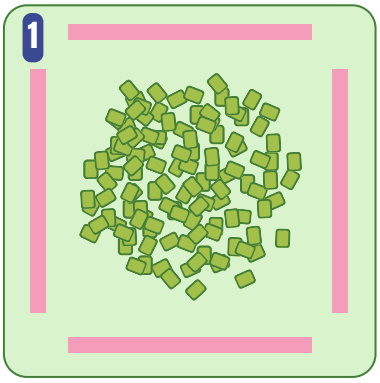
REVEAL tiles on rack & ***VERIFY*** against the card

Dead Hand? If an error is made and hand does not match card
Hand is declared DEAD & remaining players continue
Note: Only previously exposed Jokers are still available for swapping

Building Walls & The Deal

Walls to the LEFT

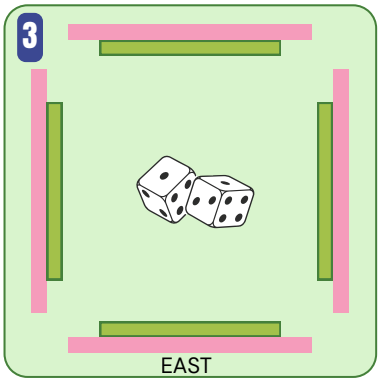
Turn the Tail. Tail points to Next Wall.



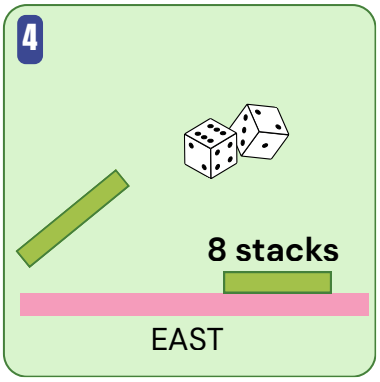
SHUFFLE
Mix tiles well. Flip tiles Face Down on the mat.



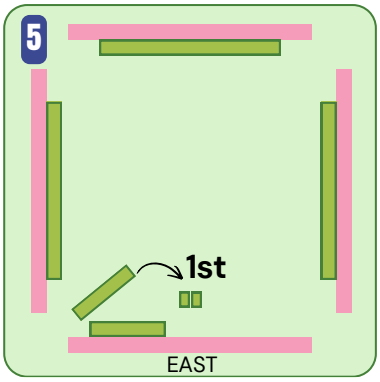
BUILD WALLS
Randomly stack walls, 2 high and 20 stacks.



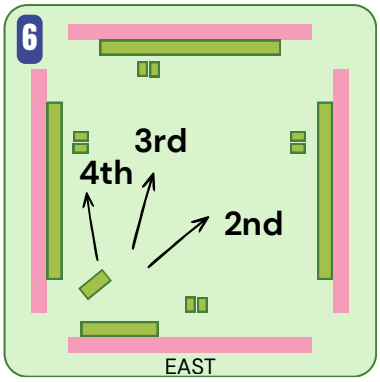
DESIGNATE DEALER
Highest roll becomes the Dealer (EAST).



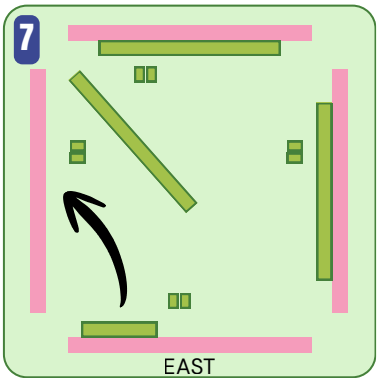
BREAK WALL
East rolls. From RIGHT edge, count the # rolled. Keep these tiles. Curtsey the rest.



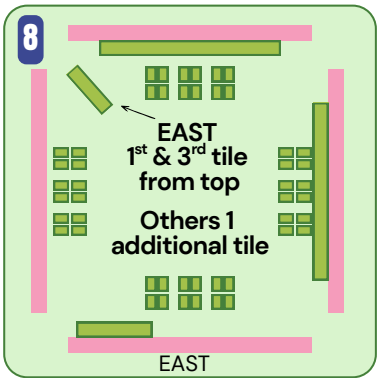
START DEAL
Dealer takes 2 stacks (4 Tiles)



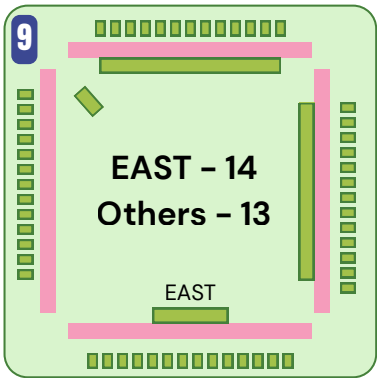
DEAL TO OTHERS:
Dealing to the RIGHT, each player receives 2 stacks (4 tiles) until partial wall is depleted.



NEXT WALL
Player on LEFT brings out next wall. Continue deal to RIGHT until each player has 6 stacks (12 tiles)



FINISH DEAL
EAST takes 1st & 3rd tile from the top layer (2 tiles). Completes EAST's hand 14 tiles

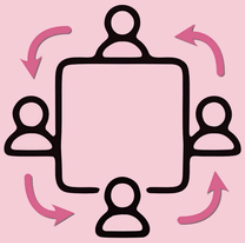


DEAL COMPLETE
EAST - 14 tiles
Other players - 13 tiles

The Charleston

First Charleston (R-O-L)

R RIGHT - Pass 1



O OVER - Pass 2



L LEFT - Pass 3



OPTION TO STOP

- One player can "Stop" the Charleston.
- No explaination or reason is required.

Second Charleston (L-O-R)

L LEFT - Pass 4



O OVER - Pass 5



R RIGHT - Pass 6



COURTESY PASS (Pass 7)

- Final, cooperative tile swapping step.
- Pass ACROSS.
- Exchange 0-3 tiles. The lower number offered is the pass.

Blind Pass

1st Left & 2nd Right

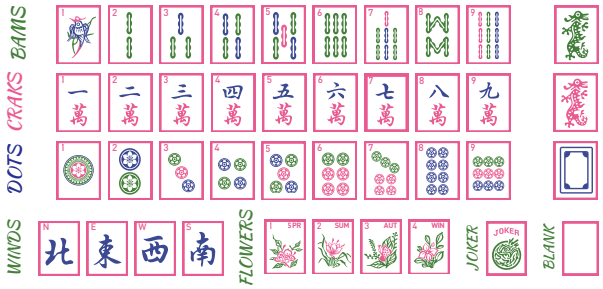
If a player does not want to pass 3 tiles, they may elect to do a Blind Pass.



- Place your unwanted tiles (0, 1 or 2) face down for the pass.
- Wait for tiles being passed to you.
- Blindly, grab the shortfall from their stack & add to your stack. No Peaking!
- Rack the remaining tiles passed to you.

Mahjong Cheat Sheet

Tiles & Suits



Set Up & Building Walls

- Shuffle Tiles
- Without Blanks - 19 stacks of 2 tiles
- With Blanks (6) & Extra Jokers (2) - 20 stacks of 2 tiles

Determine Who is Dealer (East)

- Each player rolls dice - Highest roll becomes dealer
- Dealer rolls dice to break the wall
- Balance of wall starts of the deal

The Deal *To the Right* Walls *To the Left*

- Starting with 2 STACKS to East.
- Continue to the Right with 2 stacks around the table until wall is distributed.
- Curtsey the next wall to the Left
- Turn the Tail of the dragon (tail points to next wall)
- After each player has 6 stacks (12 tiles), EAST takes tile 1 & 3 off top stack, remaining players get 1 tile
- East receives 14 tiles and other players receive 13 tiles.

Start The Game East discards 1 tile.

The Charleston - R.O.L. ? L.O.R. / Courtsey

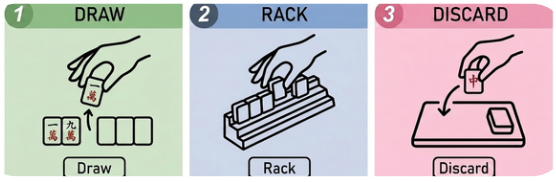
R - 3 Tiles passed to RIGHT
O - 3 Tiles passed OVER
L - Blind Pass to LEFT: 0, 1, 2 or 3 tiles

Option to Stop **Continue** to 2nd Charleston **or Stop** *(To Courtesy Pass)*

L - 3 Tiles passed to LEFT
O - 3 Tiles passed OVER
R - Blind Pass to RIGHT: 0, 1, 2 or 3 tiles

Courtesy Pass Pass OVER: 0, 1, 2 or 3 tiles

Turn Cycle - Don't Forget to RACK



The Card - Reminders

- **Read the Parentheses!!!** Hands are defined here.

- Colors are a Code: Green ≠ Bam Red ≠ Crak
- 1 Suit: **Black**, 2 Suits: **Red**/**Green**, 3 Suits: **Red**/**Green**/**Blue**
- **Dragon Color:** Matching or Opposite to suit Crak/Bam/Dot
- **Zero (SOAP):** Shown black when used as a Zero in 2026
- **Flowers & Winds:** Always black (non-suited).

- **Concealed Hands:** No exposure allowed - More difficult

Golden Rules of Jokers

✓ Swap for any # Crak/Bam/Dot, Wind, Dragon or Flower
✓ Only completes identical groupings of 3+
✓ All tiles in a Pung/Kong/Quint/Sextet can be Jokers

✗ Never in Single or Pair (NEWS, 2026, 1234, 135, 369, Ds, Ws)
✗ No passing Jokers in the Charleston
✗ Dead on discard — once tossed, forever dead

Joker Exchange: On your turn, a player can swap a matching natural tile for an exposed Joker in another player's rack.

Blanks - House Rule (not NMJL rule)

✓ Any time nott on your turn
✓ Be Sneaky
✓ Place blank into the discard pile & picked up tile into hand
✓ Consider saving for Singles & Pairs
✓ Swap more than one blank on a turn
✓ Draw a Blank & Call Mahjong on your turn

✗ Not on your turn
✗ Cannot pick up Jokers
✗ Blanks are not wild tiles (jokers)

Calling a Tile - Pause / Call or Pass

Before Next Player Racks: Players may pause play and consider calling the discarded tile.

Pause: 2 or more pause play by calling "Hold or Call"
If 2 or more "Call", priority to next player in rotation.
Play pauses while tile evaluated
- Option 1: "Call" (see below)
- Option 2: "Pass" - play continues

Call: Place tile face up on rack with rest of grouping
- Groups of 3 or more
- NO Singles or Pairs UNLESS tile is called for Mahjong
- Play resumes to player on RIGHT of calling player

MAHJONG!

- ***REVEAL*** tiles on rack & ***VERIFY*** against the card
- **Dead Hand** If hand does not match The Card
- **Remaining** players continue
- **Previously Exposed Jokers** are available for swapping

Practice at Home

Mahjong 4 Friends

Play American Mahjong online for FREE. (NMJL - No Blanks)
No downloads required and full screen.
Join a room and practice against against bots.

CHECK OUT THE **HELP/TUTORIAL** RESOURCE

- **Single Player**
- **New Game**



- **American**
- **2026 NMJL**
- **Start**





- **Practice building hands**
- **The Charleston**
- **Playing out a hand**
- **Don't like the way it is going....Start a new Game!**