GANG OF FOUR™

RULES of PLAY



A card game for 3-4 players, ages 8 and above

DAYS OF WONDER™

INTRODUCTION

From the heart of the Orient, comes Gang of Four™ – a fun and exciting card game that conveys all the mystery, intrigue and power of ancient China. Descended from *Choh Dai Di*, the most infamous of backstreet Hong Kong gambling games, Gang of Four is the most popular card game to emerge from Asia in decades.

Conceived in China during the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution, Gang of Four embodies a never-ending struggle for power – where the weak perish and the strong dominate. Good players, like good politicians, must show cunning, flexibility and ruthlessness.

Filled with an endless variety of strategies and tactics, Gang of Four is fun, entertaining and full of surprises, yet is simple to learn and play.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to dispose of all the cards in your hand before any of your fellow players get rid of theirs. After one player has no more cards, the hand is finished and points are assessed by counting the number of cards in the remaining players' hands. Play continues until one or more players reaches a total of 100 points and the game is over. The player with the lowest total number of points is the winner.

CONTENTS

- 64 card deck
- 1 rules booklet
- 2 rule summary cards (combinations/colors and key rule points)
- 1 score pad
- 1 on-line access card

The deck is composed of 64 cards as follows:

- Sixty cards ranked 1-10 (two of each in the three colors, Green, Yellow and Red)
- One multi-colored 1
- Two Phoenix (one Green, one Yellow)
- One Red Dragon

LEARNING THE GAME NEW PLAYERS

When you are first learning the game, or when introducing Gang of Four to new players, place the two summary cards on the table to help familiarize yourselves with the allowable combinations and ranking of cards.

Likewise, we suggest you visit our web site at :

www.gangoffour.com

to play an on-line tutorial and browse through our tips and strategy section to improve your game. You can even play against other players (using the enclosed *Days of Wonder Web Card*) in an online version of the game.

PLAYING THE GAME : FOUR PLAYERS

Deal the entire deck to the four players (16 cards per person). It is recommended that you sort your hand by rank (1-10, Phoenix, Dragon) and color (green, yellow, red) within each rank before starting to play.

At the beginning of play, the player with the multi-colored 1 starts by playing a combination of one to five cards, which must include the multi-colored one. (This is only true for the first hand of the game. In succeeding hands the winner of the previous hand always plays first.)

Each player then in turn, plays a combination of cards made of the same number of cards as the opening combination in a higher rank, or passes.

The allowable combinations of cards played in Gang of Four are:

- **SINGLE CARDS** (Yellow 3; or Red Dragon)
- **PAIRS** (Red 1, Red 1; or Green Phoenix, Yellow Phoenix)
- **THREE OF A KIND** (Green 2, Yellow 2, Red 2; or Yellow 4, Red 4, Red 4)
- **FIVE CARD COMBINATIONS**
  (straights, flushes, fullhouses, and straight flushes)
  - **Straight** (5 cards in sequential order – such as 1,2,3,4,5, except a Phoenix or Dragon – of any color combination)
  - **Flush** (cards of any rank – except a Phoenix or Dragon – all of the same color)
  - **Full House** (a pair, plus three of a kind)
  - **Straight Flush** (5 cards in sequential order – except a Phoenix or Dragon – all of the same color)
- **FOUR OF A KIND** (Green 10, Green 10, Yellow 10, Red 10) – the Gang of Four

A combination is of a higher rank if:

- **The numerical value of the cards played is higher** (Red 10 > Red 8);
- **Or the numerical value is equal, but the color value is higher** (Red 3 > Yellow 3 > Green 3);
- **Or it is a five card combination of a stronger type** (Straight Flush > Full House > Flush > Straight)
- **Or it is a Gang of Four, which is always wild, and beats any ranked card or combination of any cards at any time.**

Only a higher ranking Gang of Four, or a Gang of Five, Six or Seven (the seven 1s) can be played on a Gang of Four.

A card cannot be played on exactly the same card (same rank and color), or a combination played on exactly the same combination (a Green and Yellow 2 on a Green and Yellow 2).

A player may choose to pass, even if he has cards that could be played. All play is optional, making the timing and withholding of cards strategically important.

This cycle of play continues until all players have passed. The played cards are then set aside and the winner of the cycle (i.e. the last player to have played a combination on top of the others) then opens a new cycle by playing a new combination of cards of his choice.

The process repeats itself until a player lays down his last card. Play immediately stops and the remaining cards of the other players are then counted. Points are assessed based on the number of cards remaining in each player's hand. If a player is left holding a large number of cards additional penalties are given according to the Scoring Table.

Scoring Table

1 — 7 cards	– one point per card
8 — 10 cards	– double the points per card (2x)
11 — 13 cards	– triple the points per card (3x)
14 — 15 cards	– quadruple the points per card (4x)
16 cards	– quintuple the points per card (80 points)

For example: if Player One is left holding 5 cards his score would be 5 (1x5). If Player Two were holding 9 cards his score would be 18 (2x9). If Player Three were holding 15 cards, his score would be 60 (4x15).

Use the Score Pad to record the number of points for each hand. You'll also find a copy of the Scoring Table at the bottom of the score pad. As you can see, the key to success in Gang of Four is to avoid big penalties, while at the same time, trying to catch your opponents with a large number of cards.

Once the scores are recorded, the cards are shuffled and new hands dealt and played until a player reaches 100 points. At that time, the player with the lowest score is designated as the winner.

See the *Details of Play* section for additional important rules.

PLAYING THE GAME

THREE PLAYERS

To play with three players, deal 16 cards to each player, plus a separate set of cards to be set aside as a "dummy" hand that does not get played. Once each hand is over, shuffle the dummy hand back into the deck and re-deal. At the beginning of the game, if none of the players holds the multi-colored 1, the player to the right of the dealer plays first.

All other rules remain the same as in the four players game, although strategies may differ because not all cards will be in play.

DETAILS OF PLAY

Exchange of cards — The strong get stronger, the weak weaker

At the beginning of each hand (except the first one) and before the new hand is begun, the loser of the previous hand (player stuck with the most cards) must give the highest card in his hand to the winner (player who was first to dispose of all his cards). After receiving this card, the winner then gives any card of his choice back to the loser. The exchanged cards are both shown to everyone.

In the case of a tie for most cards left, the player with the highest total score in the game is required to give up his best card. If both players have the same score, then the player closest to the winner in a counter-clockwise circle is chosen.

Last card

When a player is down to his last remaining card, he must declare "Last Card!". If a player fails to do so, he is not allowed to win; that is, the hand continues among the other players until an alternate winner is decided. The player who failed to declare his last card adds one point to his score total for that hand.

If a player goes out by playing a combination other than a single card (i.e. a pair or a flush), no "Last Card" declaration is required. However, another player can always ask any other player how many cards they have remaining.

Also, the player sitting immediately before the "Last Card" player **must** play his highest-ranking single card first, if single cards are being played. Likewise, that player **must** open new cycles in the hand with combinations other than single cards (i.e. pair, three of a kind, etc…) if he can do so. This is to ensure that an attempt is made to block the player who has declared "Last Card" from winning the hand. These rules do not apply to the other players unless the player immediately after them also declares a "Last Card!"

Order of play

Unlike most western card games, the direction of play in Gang of Four changes after each hand. The play of the hand is counter-clockwise (to the right) in the opening hand, then alternates between clockwise and counter-clockwise for each successive hand as indicated on the score pad. This insures that no player is forced to consistently play after the strongest (or weakest) player.

Dragon

The Dragon is the highest-ranking single card of the game, and can only be played as a single card, not as part of a combination of multiple cards (such as a straight or flush).



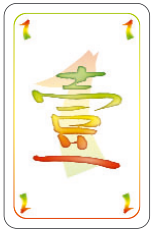
Phoenix

The two Phoenix cards are the second highest-ranking single cards after the Dragon, with the Yellow Phoenix ranking higher than the Green Phoenix. These cards can be played together as the highest-ranking pair or as a pair within a full house, but not in any other five-card combinations such as a straight, flush, or straight flush.



Multi-colored 1

The multi-colored 1 is the highest-ranking of all 1s and can be played on top of any other 1. Because the card includes all colors, a player can declare this card to be whatever color he chooses when played as part of a flush.



CHINESE STYLE OF PLAY

Choosing a dealer

In China, it is tradition that the eldest player is designated to deal the first hand. After the first hand, the winner of the previous hand always deals the next one.

Dealing the cards

The dealer shuffles the deck and the player to the dealer's right cuts. The dealer then cuts again to look at a card to determine which player the deal will begin with. Counting himself as number one, and proceeding counter-clockwise around the table, the dealer counts until he reaches the number on the card. He then begins to deal with that person.

Knock/Pass

To prevent the game from dragging, it is important to remember to pass (or "knock") if you decline to play, since the player to your right must wait for your response before he can play. In China, the game is fast and furious, making "knocking" key.

Discard Pile

Unlike in Western games, discarded cards are not picked up. No one wins and keeps discarded cards or tricks; the object of the game is to dump the hand as fast as possible. Therefore, all cards played are left face up in a pile in the middle of the table. Obviously, no touching or peeking of the discards on the table is allowed!

APPENDIX I
CARD COMBINATIONS

Single 3

Pair 3 3

3 of a Kind 4 4 4

5 card combinations

Straight 2 3 4 5 6

Flush 2 7 5 8 9

Full House 2 2 6 6 6

Straight Flush 3 4 5 6 7

Gang Of Four 7 7 7 7

Gang Of Five 7 7 7 7 7

Gang Of Six 7 7 7 7 7 7

APPENDIX II
CARD RANK ORDER

Cards are ranked by number, color and combinations.

1. Card Number – Rank Order

1 < 2 < 10 < Ph < Dr

2. Card Color – Rank Order

GREEN < YELLOW < RED

3. Five Card Combinations – Rank Order

Straight < Flush < Full House < Straight Flush

4. Gang of Four is the only wild card combination

Any combination < Gang of Four

APPENDIX III
KEY RULES

1. The number of cards played must match the number of cards of the combination in play.
2. Only a Gang of Four (or Gang of Five or Six) can be played over another combination (single, pair, etc…).
3. When ranking cards, the number takes precedence over color.
4. The Dragon is the highest single card and must be played alone.
5. The Multi-colored 1 is the strongest 1 and can be played as the color of your choice in a Flush.

APPENDIX IV
GANG OF FOUR ONLINE

If you love to play Gang of Four, but sometimes find yourself without playing partners, you can join other players in Gang of Four Online. Enclosed in your game box is *a Days of Wonder Web Card* that includes your personal access code to sign up for online play. To use it, simply visit www.gangoffour.com, and click on the New Player Signup button on the home page. Then just follow the instructions to learn how to play online.

The gangoffour.com website is filled with Gang of Four information: online tutorials; tips and strategy hints: more on the game's history; and a Gang of Four forum where you can keep up with the latest game information, rules variations, and more.

You can also learn about other Days of Wonder games or visit us at www.daysofwonder.com.



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If you have questions or comments about Gang of Four, please email us at info@gangoffour.com

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