Code 777

"Be the First to Break the Code"

Players and duration: 2 or more players, 45-60 minutes

Basic idea of the game:

Each player has three numbers (a "code") on his or her card rack, but does not know what these numbers are. Instead, he or she must try to win a point by being the first to deduce his or her code based on clues provided by the other players. The first player with three points wins the game.

Contents:

* 28 colored number cards. Numbers are from 1 to 7, distributed as follows:
1 green one, 2 yellow twos, 3 black threes, 4 brown fours, 4 red fives, 1 black five, 3 green sixes, 3 purple sixes, 1 purple seven, 2 yellow sevens, 4 blue sevens. (So in total, there is one 1, two 2s, three 3s, four 4s, and so on up to 7.)

* 23 question cards

* Note-taking sheets

* 4 wooden cardholder racks

Preparation:

Each player is given a rack and a note-taking sheet. Place the rack in front of you, facing the center of the table.

Separate out the number cards and the question cards into separate decks. Shuffle the 23 question cards and place the deck face-down on the table. Then shuffle the pack of number cards and deal three face-down to each player. **Important: No player should look at his or her cards!**

Without looking at the cards, each player must place the three cards on his or her rack so that he or she can see ONLY the back of the cards, while all the other players can see the numbers on the front of his or her rack. In other words, each player sees all the cards on the *other* players' racks, but does NOT see those on his or her own rack. (It does not matter whether the cards lean toward you or away from you while they are on your rack, so long as you cannot see them but others clearly can.)

[*Nitpicky Note:* If a player accidentally sees one of his or her cards while putting it on the rack, this card should be discarded by placing it face-up next to the number deck, to begin the number card discard pile. A new number card should then be drawn from the face-down number card

deck, and placed on the rack without looking at it. (This rule also applies during game play; if at anytime a player accidentally sees one of his or her own cards, then he or she should confess this fact, discard the viewed card, and replace it with a new card drawn from the face-down number card deck. The other two number cards on his or her rack can remain, provided they were not seen.)]

A player sometimes will place numbers in the rack upside down without knowing this. In this case the other players should turn the cards right side up for him or her. *Note*: The highest number card is a 7. So if a number looks like a 9, this is incorrect. It is actually an upside down 6, and should be turned around.

Game Play:

The oldest player goes first.

Play in turn clockwise. On each turn, the player whose turn it is picks up a question card from the face-down draw pile of question cards. The player then ***reads the question number*** out loud, followed by the question itself. Then the player answers the question out loud. No bluffing is allowed. **Only the person who has picked up a question card answers it. The other players just listen to this answer.**

For example, if you pick up question #16, “Do you see more blue sevens or more sevens of other colors?", your answer might be "more blue," or "more of other colors." If the number is equal or if you see none of either, your answer would be "same." (The answer you give will be based on what you see on other players' racks, since you cannot see your own code.) If players are unsure how to interpret a particular question, they should agree on a common interpretation.

***IMPORTANT*: Be sure that your answer to the question on your card is correct. Check and double-check your answer before giving it. Any incorrect information could potentially lead a person to guess his or her code incorrectly, and possibly lose the game through no fault of his or her own. Should a player guess incorrectly, and be able to prove (from his or her note-taking sheet) that another player earlier gave an incorrect answer, then that other player will be assessed a -1 point penalty. (The player who guessed incorrectly still receives zero points for the incorrect guess, however, and must draw three new number cards.) All this said, try to keep things friendly. Remember, it’s only a game!**

Each question card yields at least some information to everyone except the player who answers it. This information should be entered at once on the note-taking sheet. (See *Helpful Hints* below for note taking suggestions.) If at anytime a player needs a new note-taking sheet, he or she may have one.

Place answered question cards face up in a discard pile, next to the face-down stack of question cards from which you draw. If you exhaust the draw deck of question cards, shuffle the discard pile of question cards and place it face-down on the table to form a new draw deck.

At any time (i.e. it need not be on your turn to draw a question card), if you think that you have figured out which numbers you have on your rack, say "I'm ready to declare." Then you may declare your result.

***IMPORTANT*: You *only* need to indicate the *numbers on your rack*. You do NOT need to indicate the colors of the numbers. You also do NOT need to indicate the order of your numbers on your rack (indeed, this is usually impossible to figure out.)**

If you correctly describe the code on your rack, you score 1 point. If you are incorrect, you score 0. In either case (i.e. whether your declaration is correct or incorrect) remove the three cards from your rack and place them face-up in a discard pile of number cards, next to the face-down pile of number cards. Then **without looking at the numbers on the cards,** take a new set of three number cards from the face-down draw pile, and place them on your rack. Continue playing as normal (the player who was due next to draw a question card should do so).

Reshuffle the number cards when there are only *seven* cards left in the draw pile, i.e. shuffle the discard pile of number cards and the remaining seven cards in the draw pile together to form a new, larger draw pile of number cards.

[*Nitpicky note for ultra-competitive people or tournament situations:* If two people say "I'm ready to declare" at roughly the same time, then the person who spoke first declares first, followed by the next person. However, if one person said anything other than "I'm ready to declare" [e.g. if he or she said something like "I know what my numbers are," "I'm ready to guess," or whatever], then the person who said "I'm ready to declare" goes first, even if he or she was the second person to speak. If BOTH players said something other than "I'm ready to declare," then neither can declare; they MUST say "I'm ready to declare" in order to be allowed to declare. If, though, BOTH players correctly said "I'm ready to declare" at roughly the same time and it is unclear who spoke first, then choose a player at random to declare first, followed by the other player. If both declare correctly, then both players receive their 1 point score simultaneously. [This will only make a difference to game play if both players are at 2 points each; this will mean that both players reach the 3 point threshold simultaneously. In such a case, the winner is now the first person to reach 4 points. And if – improbably – both of these same players reach 4 points simultaneously too, the winner is the first to 5 points, etc.])]

Helpful Hints:

Effective note-taking is vital to the game. On the right side of your note-taking sheet are four diagrams showing the distribution of the 28 number cards (i.e. each triangle represents the entire number deck spread out into a pyramid shape). It is often helpful to use one of the diagrams for the information that you are certain about and the others for information of which you are uncertain.

At the start of the game, cross off on the diagram all the numbers that you can see on the other players' racks. (You already know that these numbers cannot be yours.) Don't let other players see which numbers you are crossing off.

Make any notes pertaining to the 23 questions beneath the question on the left side of your note-taking sheet. (This is why it is important to say the number of the question as you read a question card, so that others can find it quickly on their note-taking sheet.) It can also be helpful quickly to jot down the first initial of the answerer's name (so you can remember who answered the question) as well as his or her answer, and then quickly note down what implications this has for the possible composition of your code. But be efficient, though: slow note-taking will slow down the game and make it unenjoyable for others.

Remember, when a player is answering a question, he or she does not see his or her own cards; therefore, disregard the numbers on his or her rack when you consider the answer.

After you declare your code, whether you declare it correctly or not, you will learn what your code is when you look at your number cards. Be sure to cross these numbers off on your sheet as you put them in the number card discard pile, since you know that the new cards that you draw for your new code will not be the cards you just discarded.

Advanced Game Variation:

For more of a challenge, all players try to determine BOTH the number AND color of the number cards on their racks. Players score a point only if, for all three numbers in their code, they correctly declare the number AND its color.