

Redding Neighbor & Newcomers Poker Night

“Poker is a game of incomplete information – correct decision-making depends on many, many factors. Playing perfectly is never attainable. All we can do as players is strive to make the best decisions we can under uncertain circumstances, always having the goal of that perfect session in mind.”

The object of poker is to make the best five-card poker hand in order to win the *pot*. The pot is the money that accumulates as players who remain in the game keep raising their bets (betting is described in detailed further on). In order to play poker well, you need to know two basic skills: (1) how the cards rank, and (2) how to bet. The rest is chance and psychology.

The Very Basics

Poker is played with a standard pack of 52 cards. The cards are ranked (from high to low) Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, Ace. Note that the Ace can be high or low, but is usually high. There are four suits (spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs); however, no suit is higher than another.

All poker hands consist of five cards. When a poker game is played high, the highest hand wins the pot. When a poker game is played high/low, the pot is split between the person with the highest hand and the person with the lowest (or the best worst) hand. There are two ways to win, by holding the highest hand in the game, or by making your opponents think you've got the highest hand-in which everyone else folds leaving you to win the pot.

In games where a player has more than five cards and selects five to form a poker hand, the remaining cards do not play any part in the ranking. Poker hand rankings are always based on five cards only.

How the Hands are Ranked

The hands are ranked as follows (from high to low):

1. Royal Flush
2. Straight Flush
3. Four of a Kind
4. Full House
5. Flush
6. Straight
7. Three of a Kind
8. Two Pair
9. Pair
10. High Card

Description of Hand Ranks

1. Royal Flush

This is the highest poker hand. It consists of Ace, King, Queen, Jack, ten, all in the same suit. As all suits are equal, all royal flushes are equal.

2. Straight Flush

A straight flush is a straight (5 cards in order, such as J-10-9-8-7) that are all of the same suit. Between two straight flushes, the one containing the higher top card is higher. An ace can be counted as low, so 5-4-3-2-A is a straight flush, but its top card is the five, not the ace, so it is the lowest type of straight flush. The cards cannot "wrap around": 4-3-2-A-K is not valid.

3. Four of a kind

Four of a kind is simply four cards of the same rank - such as four queens. The fifth card can be anything. Between two fours of a kind, the one with the higher set of four cards is higher, so 3-3-3-3-A is beaten by 4-4-4-4-2.

4. Full House

A full house consists of a three of a kind and a pair, such as 7-7-7-10-10. When comparing full houses, the rank of the three cards determines which is higher. So, 9-9-9-4-4 beats 8-8-8-A-A.

5. Flush

A flush is a hand where all five cards are of the same suit. When comparing two flushes, the highest card determines which is higher. If the highest cards are equal then the second highest card is compared; if those are equal as well, then the third highest card is compared, and so on. So, K-J-9-3-2 beats K-J-7-6-5 because the nine beats the seven.

6. Straight

A straight is five cards in order, such as J-10-9-8-7. The cards *do not need* to be of the same suit. When comparing two straights, the one with the higher ranking top card is the better. An Ace can be a high or a low card in a straight, but not both at once, so A-K-Q-J-10 and 5-4-3-2-A are both valid straights, but 2-A-K-Q-J is not since the cards cannot "wrap around". 5-4-3-2-A is the lowest kind of straight, the top card being the five.

7. Three of a Kind

A three of a kind is three matched cards plus two other cards that are not a pair (otherwise it would be a full house). When comparing hands with three of a kind, the one with the higher ranking three equal cards is better. So, 5-5-5-3-2 beats 4-4-4-K-Q.

8. Two Pairs

A pair is two matching cards. In a hand with two pairs, the two pairs are distinct (otherwise you would have four of a kind), and there is an odd card to make the hand up to five cards. When comparing hands with two pairs, the hand with the highest pair wins, irrespective of the rank of the other cards, so J-J-2-2-4 beats 10-10-9-9-8 because the jacks beat the tens. If the higher pairs are equal, the lower pairs are compared. So, 8-8-6-6-3 beats 8-8-5-5-K. Finally, if both pairs are the same, the odd cards are compared, so Q-Q-5-5-8 beats Q-Q-5-5-4.

9. Pair

A pair is two matching cards. In a hand with a pair, the three other cards do not match the pair or each other. When comparing hands with a pair, the hand with the higher pair is better. So, 6-6-4-3-2 beats 5-5-A-K-Q. If the pairs are equal, the highest ranking odd cards from each hand is compared; if these are equal, the second highest odd card is compared, and if these as well are equal the lowest odd cards are compared. So, J-J-A-9-3 beats J-J-A-8-7 because the 9 beats the 8.

10. High Card

This is any hand that does not meet the definition of any of the above hands. When comparing two high card hands, the one with the better highest card wins. If the highest cards are equal then the second cards are compared; if they are equal as well, then the third cards are compared, and so on. So, A-J-9-5-3 beats A-10-9-6-4 because the jack beats the ten.

Notes on Low Poker

A hand is always considered to belong to the highest category into which it fits. For example, 7-7-7-5-5 counts as a full house, not (for example) as a pair with three odd cards that happen to match. The best low hand is 6-4-3-2-A. In other words, the best low hand is the best worst hand in poker.

Poker Hand Ranking with Wild Cards

Some games have Wild Cards, which can take on whatever suit and rank their possessor desires. Sometimes jokers will be used as wild cards, other times, the game will specify which cards are wild (deuces, one-eyed jacks, or whatever). A wild card can be used to substitute for any card the holder wishes, even a duplicate of a card the holder already has.

Even with the use of Wild Cards, the hand ranking is the same as described above. In our play, it is not possible to have five of a kind – or five cards of the same rank.

Betting

We use poker chips in place of actual money to bet with. In most games, you must *ante* something just to get dealt cards. To ante, each player is required to put a small amount of money, usually a percentage of the minimum bet, into the pot. After the ante is made, the players bet into the pot in the middle of the table. The pot grows with each bet made. At the end of the hand, the highest hand (that hasn't folded), or sometimes the lowest hand (depending on the game) wins the pot. Basically, when betting gets around to you (betting is typically done in clockwise order or starts with the highest hand shown), you have one of four choices:

Check

When you check that means you want to stay in the game, but don't want to bet. If there has been no betting before you in a betting round, you may check, which is like calling a bet of \$0, or passing your turn.

Call

When you call, you bet enough to match what has been bet since the last time you bet (for instance, if you bet a white chip last time, and someone else bet a red chip, you would owe a white chip).

Raise

When you raise, you first bet enough to match what has been bet since the last time you bet (as in calling), then you 'raise' the bet another amount (up to you, but there is typically a limit.) Continuing the above example, if you had bet a white chip, the other person raised you a white chip, you might raise another white chip. Since you owed the pot a white chip for calling and another white chip for your raise, you would put a red chip into the pot.

Fold

When you fold, you drop out of the current hand (losing any possibility of winning the pot), but you don't have to put any money into the pot. Do not show your folded cards.

Betting continues until everyone calls or folds after a raise or initial bet.

Some Standard Betting Rules

We limit the amount of times you can raise to three after the initial bet. This means that the most white chips that you could have to pay out on a single round of betting would be four. There are two exceptions to this rule: (1) the maximum bet of one white chip changes to one red chip if a pair is shown face up on the table, (2) in the last betting round, the maximum bet is changed to two red chips.

The Games

There are many variants of poker, loosely categorized as draw poker, stud poker, community card poker, and miscellaneous poker games. The most commonly played games of the first three categories are five-card draw, seven-card stud, and Texas hold 'em, respectively; each being a common starting point for learning games of the type.

In draw poker you can draw new cards from the deck after the initial cards are dealt, your cards are usually dealt face down, and you bet after receiving your initial cards and after you draw new cards. In stud poker games, you play with your initially dealt cards, some cards are face down and some are face up, and you bet after each new face up card is dealt and after the last face down card is dealt. In community card poker you play with your initially dealt cards, and some face up or community cards that every player can make use of, and you bet after each new community card (or community card group) is dealt.

Any of these types of games can involve either five cards or seven, and can be played in one of two ways: high or high/low. When a poker game is played high, the highest hand wins the pot. When a poker game is played high/low, the pot is split between the person with the highest hand and the person with the lowest (or best worst) hand.

Some Games:

5 Card Draw

Players: 3-7.

Initial deal: 5 cards face down to each player.

Play: A round of betting begins after the deal. After the first betting round, each player may exchange up to three cards. Another round of betting ensues, followed by the *showdown*.

Winner: High hand.

Pay For Your Draw

This is a feature that can be used to build the pot of any Draw Poker game. The dealer attaches a 'price' to drawing a card. For example, the dealer determines that it costs one dollar for each card that a player wants to draw. A player drawing three cards would have to put three dollars into the pot on top of the amount accumulated from betting.

Diablo

Players: 2-7.

Initial deal: 5 cards down to each person

Play: It takes at least a pair of jacks to open. Trips or better to win. 2's are wild. You can draw up to 2 cards. Anyone who folds cannot get in the next round.

Winner: High hand needs to be the same person who opened. Otherwise the opener must match the pot to the High Hand. In this case, the hand is re-dealt. Deal rotates.

Introduced By: J. Bernstein

7 Card Stud

Players: 3-7.

Initial deal: 2 cards face down, and 1 card face up to each player.

Play: A round of betting begins after the deal. After each round of betting, each player is dealt one card face up except for the last card, which is dealt face down. *Showdown* occurs after the last round.

Winner: High hand or High and low hands split the pot if playing high/low.

Control (Reset)

Players: 3-7.

Initial deal: 2 cards face down, and 1 card face up to each player.

Play: Same as 7 Card Stud except after the 6th card is bet, the player showing the best 4 cards has the option of resetting the hand. Play then starts from the beginning with a new deck and can continue to be reset.

Anyone who folds cannot get in the next round.

Winner: High hand.

Introduced By: J. Bernstein

Chicago

Players: 4-7.

Initial deal: Same as 7 Card Stud.

Play: Same as 7 Card Stud.

Winner: High hand and the high spade *in the hole* split the pot.

Dots

Players: 4-7.

Initial deal: Same as 7 Card Stud.

Play: Same as 7 Card Stud.

Winner: High hand and the high # of dots split the pot. Dots are represented by the middle of each card (A = 1 dot, 2 = 2 dots, 3 = 3 dots, 5 = 1 dot, 7=1 dot, 8 = 2 dots, 9 = 1 dot, 10 = 2 dots)

Introduced By: A. Wiles

Seven Card Roll Your Own

Players: 4-10.

Initial deal: 3 cards face down to each player.

Play: Players *roll* (flip over a face down card) one of their two cards and then there is a betting round.

Players are dealt another card face down and *roll* one of their remaining two down cards, followed by a betting round. This continues until all players have seven cards: three face down, four face up. *Showdown* occurs after the final round of betting. *Low hole* card in each player's hand is *wild* for that player (and all other cards of the same rank in that player's hand).

Winner: High hand.

Introduced By: JR Starnes

Bet or Drop:

This variation can also be added to any Stud game. The stipulation that it adds is that the player who opens the betting round by having the best hand showing, must open with at least the table's minimum bet or fold. The option to 'check' or 'pass' is removed, as that player is required to open with at least a minimum bet. Typically, the dealer will announce a slight increase in the table's minimum bet for purposes of this variation.

Texas Hold'em

Players: 3-10.

Initial deal: 2 cards face down to each player.

Play: A round of betting is held after the deal, then one card is *burnt* (discarded) and three cards are dealt face up on the table (this is called *the flop*). Another round of betting follows. One more card is burnt followed by one more card dealt face up on the table (this is called *the turn*). Another round of betting follows. One last card is burnt, one last card is dealt face up to the table (this is called *the river*), a final round of betting ensues, and finally a *showdown* occurs in which players make their best hands using their 2 and the table's 5 community cards.

Winner: High hand.

Crazy Pineapple

Players: 3-10.

Initial deal: Same as Texas Hold 'Em, except that 3 cards are dealt face down to each player instead of 2.
Play: Same as Texas Hold 'Em, except that each player each player must discard one card after *the flop*.
Winner: High Hand.
Introduced By: K. Wiles

Omaha Hold'Em High-Low Split 8

Players: 3-10.

Initial deal: 4 cards face down to each player, and 5 cards face down to the table.

Play: Identical to Texas Hold 'Em, except that the final hands must include only 2 of the player's four cards and only 3 of the table's five cards. High and low hands split the pot, but the low hand must be 8-low (no card in the low hand can be higher than an eight) or lower or the high gets it all.

Winner: High and possibly the low hands split the pot.

Anaconda

Players: 4-7.

Initial deal: 7 cards face down to each player.

Play: Each player passes three cards to the player on their left. Each player then passes two cards to the player on their left. Each player then passes one card to the player on their left. Each player then chooses five cards to keep and discards the remaining two. Each player who chooses to remain in the hand places their 5-card hand face down in front of them (in any order). Play continues with a *roll* and a betting round until each player has rolled four cards, after which time a *declare* ensues. A player secretly holds a chip in their hand if they are going high, otherwise they do not hold a chip. Every player with a chip in their hand compares their hand against the others. Similarly, everyone without a chip competes against each other.

Winner: The high and low hands split the pot.

3-5-7

Players: 3-7

To win the pot, a player must win the game 3 times (or 3 "legs"). All players are dealt three cards. Threes are wild. Players decide at the same time if they are in or not (1 2 3 drop ... drop your cards if you are not in). The players who are in exchange and look at each other's hands (players who are out do not see anybody's hand). The player with the losing hand pays the player with the winning hand an amount equal to what is in the pot. NOTE: this money does not go into the pot; it is paid directly from the loser to the winner. Everybody is dealt two more cards. Threes are no longer wild; fives are now wild. Another declare round, with the players who are in looking at each others' hands, and the loser paying the winner.

Everybody is dealt two more cards. Fives are no longer wild; sevens are now wild. Another declare round, and this time, players who are in can expose their cards to the table, since everybody is about to be dealt new cards; the loser pays the winner. The cards are collected and the game is re-dealt, starting back at three cards. Players re-ante. As noted, a player must win 3 legs to collect the pot. The only way to win a leg is to be the only player who declares in on a declare round. That player does not win any money at that time (since there is no losing player), but wins one leg. The first player to 3 legs wins the pot.

Criss Cross

Players: 3-9.

Initial deal: 2 cards face down to each player, and 5 cards face down to the table arranged in a cross.

Play: A round of betting is held after the deal. One of the table cards is flipped up (the center is flipped last), followed by a round of betting. Repeat betting until all five cards have been flipped (players keep their own cards face down). The top card on the deck is flipped up after the last round of betting. If the card is an 8 or lower then the game is high/low, otherwise the high hand wins the entire pot. Each player must use both their cards in conjunction with only one arm of the cross.

Winner: High hand (or maybe high and low hand split the pot).

Perimeter

Players: 2-14.

Initial deal: 3 cards face down to each player, and 8 cards on the table arranged in a square. 4 corner cards are up while the others are down. Top card on the remaining deck is flipped to indicate a wild card.

Play: If a player opts to play, they place a bet (\$1) on one of the down cards or in the middle of the square of cards. Once everyone declares whether they are in, the cards with a bet on them are turned over. The players can use any of the 3 cards in their hand combined with any horizontal/vertical row of 3 cards on the table. It would be a row of 2 cards if the middle card is not flipped. Losing player(s) pays the winner the amount of the pot. If no one else bets then the betting player gets a leg.

Winner: First person to get 2 legs ie they are the only one to play(bet) twice

Introduced By: S. Sanderson

Bundles

Players: 2-10.

Initial deal: 4 cards face down to each player. 10 cards face down on the table: 4 rows of cards, 1st and 3rd with 2 cards, 2nd and 4th with 3 cards. Top card on the remaining deck will eventually be flipped and auctioned off.

Play: Players bet their 4 cards. Then the 1st row is turned over and players bet their cards. Then the 2nd row, etc. Each player can use any of their 4 cards but must use each card in a row. For example, they would use 3 cards from their hand with 2 from the first row. After the 4th row is flipped and the bet has been completed, the top card on the remaining deck is flipped over. An auction occurs and the winner can replace any card in a row of 3 cards or add the card to a row of 2 cards. There is then a final betting round. There is no declare and therefore cards speak.

Winner: The high and low hands split the pot.

Introduced By: M. Broach

The Circle:

This format is not as common. It involves a loop of cards, again either flipped over one at a time or several at a time by the dealer. The stipulation, as in [Merry Go Round](#), is normally that cards in the loop used by players must be adjacent to each other. That is, if a player uses three cards from the circle of cards in conjunction with his hand, those three cards must be side-by-side on the circle.

Ten-card Regrets

Players: 3-5.

Initial Deal: 10 cards down to each player. Do not look at your cards! Each player will be forming two hands: a low on the left, and a high on the right. Each round players draw two of their 10 cards, look at them, and place them to their left or right. The cards can go to different sides or to the same side at the player's choice, but neither side can have more than five cards. Once a card is placed to one side, it may never be moved to the other. When all players are ready they reveal their cards. There follows a round of betting. Repeat until all 10 cards are up. Cards speak for themselves when the last one is flipped. Hands on the left can only win low, and hands on the right can only win high. When evaluating hands, hands are only compared against other hands on the same side (lows aren't compared against highs). One card and only one card on each side can be placed down at any time.

Winner: High and low hands split the pot.

Introduced By: T. Bonanno

Loonie with a Twist

Players: 3-7.

Initial deal: 1 card face down to each player.

Play: A card is offered (face up) to the player on the dealer's left. They can keep the card or pass any of their cards. If they pass a down card they receive an up card and *go naked*. Play resumes until each player has a card. If the last person rejects a card it is *burned* by placing it into the discard. The high hand shown bets first. The next round the deal rotates so the 2nd player to the dealer's left receives first choice and so on. When each player has five cards and the betting round has finished each player has the chance to buy a 6th card. If a player wants to buy a card they secretly hold a red chip in their hand. The additional card costs each player as many red chips as are shown. Another betting round ensues. Players then declare high or low by secretly holding a chip in their hand if they are going high.

Winner: The high and low hands split the pot.

Introduced By: J. Ebers

Canadian Border

Players: 3-7.

Initial deal: 1 card face down to each player, and 4 cards face down on the table (The Border) with the leftmost card marked with a chip.

Play: A round of betting is held after the deal - each player betting on their single down card. Then all the border cards are flipped up. An up card is offered to the player on the dealer's left but before being dealt each up card, each player has the choice instead to buy his card from the Border. The first (marked) card costs one betting unit, the second card costs two units, the third costs 3 and the fourth 4. If the player chooses not to buy, an up card is dealt normally and for free. When each player has five cards and the betting round has finished each player has the chance to buy a 6th card. If a player wants to buy a card they secretly hold a red chip in their hand. The additional card costs each player as many red chips as are shown. Another betting round ensues. Players then declare high or low by secretly holding a chip in their hand if they are going high.

Winner: High and low hands split the pot.

Introduced By: A. Wiles

7's

Players: 3-8.

Initial deal: 2 cards face down to each player.

Play: 2 more cards dealt up to each player, then 2 more cards dealt up to each player.

Winner: High hand and High Spade in the hole split the pot unless someone has a pair of 7's. In this case the pair of 7's win it all. However, three 7s is three 7s and can only win the hand if the next highest hand is no better than three 6s. You can't hide the third 7 and pretend you only have two. A player who claims a pair of 7s must show all seven of his cards. However, it doesn't matter if the player with the lucky 7s has a full house or a flush--just as long as he doesn't have a third 7. If two players each have a pair of 7s, the kicker decides the winner.

Introduced By: S. Smith

Leg Poker

This feature is more like two games in one. Most commonly played as double-legged poker, this variation requires that a player win the game twice before he can collect the pot. The game plays as it normally

would, except that when a player wins with the best hand, that player does not yet collect the pot. Instead, that player has earned a leg towards winning the pot. The pot remains in the center of the table, and the same game is dealt again, complete with betting rounds. The first player to win two legs wins the giant pot. A Three-Legged Race is triple-legged poker, where a player must win three legs before claiming the pot.

With The Bug

This is a feature usually used for the entire night. In it, one Joker is put into the deck. That Joker is called 'the bug', but it has limited wild card value. It can only be used to complete a Straight or a Flush. Otherwise, it has no value. This would be stipulated as opposed to tables that play with Jokers as wild cards that have no limited wild card value and can be designated as any card to complete any hand.

Poker Hand Slang

22 = Ducks, Quackers, Barely Legal
33 = Crabs
3A = Baskin-Robbins (31 flavors)
44 = Mid-life Crisis, Magnum, Sailboats
45 = Jesse James
55 = Presto, Speed Limit, Nickles
57 = Chevrolet, Heinz
5T = Walgreens
66 = Kicks
69 = Big Lick, Dinner for Two
72 = Beer Hand
76 = Union Oil
77 = Hockey Sticks, Mullets, Sunset Strip
7T = Split
88 = Snowmen, Piano Keys
95 = Dolly Parton
99 = Get Smart, Gretzky
TT = Dimes, Boxcars
J4 = Flat Tire (What's a jack for?)
J5 = Motown (Jackson 5)
JJ = Hooks
JA = Jackass
Q3 = San Francisco Waiter (Queen w/ a tray)
QQ = Ladies, Siegfried and Roy
K3 = Seafood
K9 = Fido, Canine
KJ = Kojak
KQ = Marriage, Mixed Marriage
KK = Cowboys, Krispy Kreme, Gorillas (King Kong)
AJ = Ajax
A8 = Dead Mans Hand
AQ = Mrs. Slick
AK = Big Slick
AA = Pocket Rockets, American Airlines, Bullets

Poker Jargon

Ante

A small forced bet that everyone at the table is required to pay before each hand. In games with an ante, these bets constitute the initial pot. When used as a verb, it means to post this bet.

Bet

To bet is to put money into the pot, usually by opening as later action in a round is a raise or a re-raise. As a noun, a bet can be the money added to the pot by a player on one turn, or the amount required in order to call. It can also be used to mean "turn to act," and lastly, especially when used in the plural, it can be used to mean the number of bets and raises.

Boat

Another name for a full house.

Bottom Pair

If there are three cards of different ranks on the flop in hold'em (or any flop game), and you pair the lowest one, you have bottom pair.

Broadway

An ace high straight.

Brush

A cardroom employee responsible for managing the seating list is sometimes called the brush.

Bump

To raise.

Burn

In order to reduce the chances of players getting advance information about cards to come, in many games the top card on the deck is discarded at certain pre-determined points in the dealing process (e.g., in hold'em, before the flop, turn, and river). These cards are the burn cards. In general, any time a card is discarded from the top of the deck it's called a burn card.

Cards Speak

Cards speak is simply the rule that the value of your hand is determined solely by your cards. You don't have to declare your hand properly in order to claim the part of the pot you deserve. The alternative to this is mainly declare games, usually played in home games for low stakes.

Chase

When you're behind, you can either choose not to contend the pot (i.e., check and fold as appropriate), try to steal it, or stick around, hoping you'll improve enough to win. To stay in a pot, with the sole hope of making a particular hand (e.g., chasing a flush). Usually chasing implies poor pot odds.

Check

When you check that means you want to stay in the game, but don't want to bet.

Check-Raise

A check-raise is just what it sounds like -- a raise after you have already checked within a betting round. Check-raises can be used to trap a player who (for example) would have folded to a single bet, but who will open if it is checked to them.

While check-raising is legal virtually everywhere serious poker is played, there are apparently a few public cardrooms which prohibit it at the lowest limits. Home poker games, which may be more or less serious, vary more widely.

Color Up

To exchange one's chips for ones of higher value, usually in order to reduce the number of chips one has on the table. In tournaments, players are forced to color up periodically as the tourney money becomes divided among fewer and fewer players and the sizes of the forced bets go up (it makes no sense to play with \$25 chips when the blinds are \$10000).

Community (Cards)

Face-up cards that are shared by all the players in a hand. Community cards are also called "shared cards" or "widow cards".

Community Card Poker

Poker game where both community cards and hole cards are used to make up a hand. The set of community cards may be dealt in a simple line or arranged in a special pattern; rules of each game determine how they may be combined with each player's private hand.

Dealer's Choice

A format in which the dealer is allowed to select the particular poker game that will be dealt. Sometimes this means before each hand, although a more sensible system (since in many games the dealer has a positional advantage) is one in which players take turns choosing the game for an entire round.

Declare

Declare games are games in which you must declare the value of your hand in order to claim the pot. A typical example is a high-low split game in which you must declare before showdown whether you are claiming the high, low, or both pots (typically if you declare both you must win both in order to claim either). Declare games are played almost exclusively in home games. In most if not all cardrooms, cards speak.

Door Card

The first card dealt face up to each player in seven card stud is the door card.

Draw Poker

Draw poker is any poker variant in which each player is dealt a complete hand before the first betting round, and then develops the hand for later rounds by replacing cards.

Family Pot

When everyone at the table decides to enter a pot (e.g., see the flop in hold'em), it's said to be a family pot.

Fish

A bad player. A terrible player. A player who will tend to give away lots of money. Fishness can also be relative. Common poker wisdom holds that if you can't find the fish at your table, you're it. See also provider.

The Flop

A number of games, such as hold'em and omaha, are played with five community cards. The first three of these cards are dealt all at once, and are called the flop. Games with a flop can be called flop games.

To flop a hand is to make that hand on the flop. To "see" the flop is to still be in the hand when the flop comes.

Free Card

Whenever you get to see an additional card without having to call a bet, it's a free card (usually this means it's been checked around). Generally speaking, you'd like to get free cards when you need to improve, and you'd like to avoid giving free cards when you're ahead.

Hole

Your first two down cards in seven card stud. If they're both jacks, you have a pair of jacks "in the hole." See also pocket.

House

The cardroom (management, owners, etc.) is the house. The house rakes money from the pot, has house rules, and when someone walks in, you might say they're "in the house." If you're so inclined. See also full house.

Inside Straight (Draw)

An inside straight draw is a draw to a straight that's missing one of the cards in the middle (as opposed to on the end). 4578 is an inside straight, 4567 is an outside straight. Also called a one-gapper or a gutshot.

Kicker

The highest unpaired card in your hand that doesn't participate in a straight or flush - i.e., the card that does not contribute to the strength of your hand except by itself. For example, if you hold AA743, you have a pair of aces with a 7 kicker. Five card hands - straights, flushes, and full houses, - don't have kickers per se. In games with community cards, kickers are especially important, because it's easy for two players to make similar hands. For example, if you hold A8 and someone else holds A7, and the flop is AK642, you have your opponent out-kicked. Your hand is AAK86 while theirs is AAK76. And you both lose to the guy playing 53 off suit under the gun.

Lock

A lock is a hand guaranteed to win at least part of the pot. In a high-low split game, for example, the lock low is the best possible low hand. See also nuts.

Muck

The pile of discarded cards in front of the dealer, or the act of putting cards in this pile (and therefore taking them out of play).

Nuts (or Nut -)

The nuts is the best possible hand. This makes most sense in flop games like hold'em, where the community cards make the nuts pretty much the same for everyone. An exception is when your hole cards make a better hand impossible. If the board is AAK52, the nuts would be AA to an observer, but a player with AK would effectively hold the nuts (assuming the 2 and 5 didn't share a suit with one of the A's). In hold'em, the nuts is never less than trips. "Nut xxx" is used to refer to the best hand of a particular type, especially a straight or flush. If the table described above had the AK2 of spades, the nut flush would be the queen and any other spade.

Outs

Number of cards that can improve your hand. If the flop is QJ2 and you have 10 9, you want a king or an eight to complete your straight. There are 4 kings and 4 eights in the deck, so you have 8 total outs.

Paint

A jack, king, or queen (i.e., a card with a picture on it).

Pocket

Pocket cards are cards that are dealt face down to each individual player. They are hidden from view as if they were in a pocket. Pocket cards are also referred to as cards that are "in the hole".

The Pot

The pot is the money that accumulates as players who remain in the game keep raising their bets.

Rabbit Hunting

Rabbit hunting is the act of asking to see what cards would have come up if a hand had continued. For example, if a hold'em player folds a flush draw, but would like to know if the flush would have come in, he or she might ask the dealer to deal out the next few cards. Some cardrooms prohibit it.

Rainbow

Three or four cards of different suits, for example on a flop. (Two cards of different suits are unsuited and five is impossible.)

The River

The last of five community cards in flop games (e.g. hold'em and omaha). Sometimes called fifth street. Sometimes "river" is used to refer to the last card in non-flop games, such as seven card stud.

Showdown

When all of the players still in a hand show their cards to determine the winner.

Speeding

Someone who is caught bluffing is sometimes said to be caught speeding. See speed and table cop for more of this metaphor.

Splash (the pot)

To throw your chips into the pot, instead of placing them in front of you, is to splash the pot. Doing so can make it difficult for the dealer to determine if you've bet the correct amount, or to keep track of the action.

Split Pot

In a game that isn't high-low split, a hand in which two players show down the same hand (especially in games with community cards) results in a pot split between those two players. In a high-low split game, of course, many hands result in split pots.

Steel Wheel

A straight flush, five high. That is, A2345 of the same suit. A pretty nice hand to have in a high-low split game.

Street

The cards that come out one at a time in a card game are sometimes referred to as different numbered streets. The door card in seven card stud is third street, and subsequent cards are numbered consecutively. In hold'em and other flop games, players sometimes refer to the turn and river as fourth and fifth street.

String Bet

Most cardrooms (and serious home games) require you to make your entire bet at once. In other words, you can't raise by putting out enough to call and then reaching back to your stack for your raise. As well, since verbal statements are considered binding at most poker games, if you say "I call your bet and raise you ten more," you have called, since the raise was added afterwards. To be on the safe side, when you want to raise it's best to say "raise" so that your bet won't be mistaken. The reason for the string bet rule is to prevent players from strategically misleading other players about the size of their bet (see angle). Note that movie and television depictions of poker games are filled with egregious examples of string bets.

Stud Poker

Stud poker is any of a number of poker variants in which each player receives a mix of face-down and face-up cards dealt in multiple betting rounds. Stud games are also typically non-positional games, meaning that the player who bets first on each round may change from round to round (it is usually the player whose face-up cards make the best hand for the game being played). The cards dealt face down to each individual player are called hole cards as they are hidden from view.

Tell

A tell is any habit or behavior that gives other players more information about your hand than they would have simply from your play. For instance, you might unconsciously play with your chips every time you bluff. Or you might notice that another player blinks a lot whenever he has a strong hand. Mike Caro's "The Body Language of Poker" describes a large number of tells that can often be seen in inexperienced (and experienced) players.

Trips

Three of a kind.

The Turn

This is the fourth board card that comes out in hold'em, the card after the flop.

Wired

A pair in the hole in seven card stud is a wired pair.