



What do I do now?

An American Mahjong set has 152 tiles: three numbered suits, plus Winds, Dragons, Flowers and Jokers. Keep this beside your rack until you can name any tile without thinking.

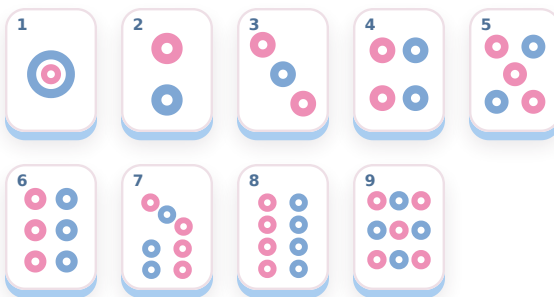
Craks

Characters, 1 to 9. Read the number in the corner. The bottom character (萬) is on every Crak.



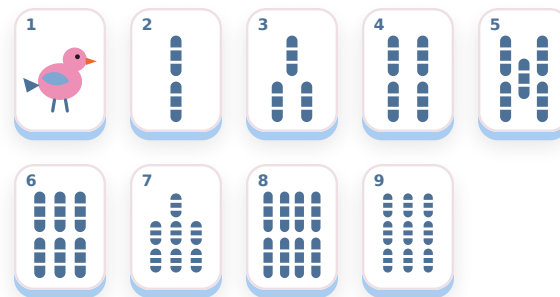
Dots

Circles, 1 to 9. Count the circles, or read the corner number.



Bams

Bamboo sticks, 1 to 9. The 1 Bam is a bird, not a stick.



Dragons



4 of each. Red matches Craks, Green matches Bams, Soap matches Dots. Soap is also the 0 on the card.

Winds



4 of each. Shown on the card as N, E, W and S. Winds have no numbers, so they never form runs.

Flowers



Any Flower

8 in a set. Every Flower counts as the same tile. F on the card.

Jokers



Joker

8 in a set. Wild, but only in groups of three or more.



Pair

No Jokers



Pung

Jokers OK



Kong

Jokers OK



Quint

Needs 1+ Joker
(except Flowers)



Sextet

Needs 2+ Jokers
(except Flowers)

The Joker rule

Jokers can fill a pung, kong, quint or sextet. Never a single, never a pair. A set has only four of each tile, so quints and sextets need Jokers; Flowers (eight in a set) are the exception.

Card shorthand

1–9 suit tiles **D** Dragon **F** Flower **NEWS** Winds **O** Soap. **Colors** show how many suits a hand uses, not which suit. **X** exposed: you may call discards. **C** concealed: no calling except the final Mahjong tile.

Count your set: 152 tiles

Craks, Dots and Bams: 36 each (1–9, four of each). Winds 16 · Dragons 12 · Flowers 8 · Jokers 8. Set blank spares aside. In the strips above, the lilac tiles are Jokers.



1 Starting hand

Look for pairs

Pairs anchor your hand, because Jokers can never stand in for them.

Notice patterns

Lots of evens? Consecutive numbers? The same number in two suits?

Keep options open

Aim at a section of the card, not one line. Keep two or three directions alive.

2 The Charleston

Keep

- Jokers, always
- Your natural pairs
- Tiles that fit more than one direction

Pass

- Isolated singles
- Winds and Dragons you don't need
- Three tiles you can live without

Right, Across, Left → optional: Left, Across, Right → optional courtesy

Rules

- **Never pass a Joker.**
- Blind pass only on the first Left and the last Right: send on up to 3 incoming tiles unseen.
- Any player may stop the second Charleston.

3 Your turn

Draw

Take the next wall tile, or call the last discard for a pung, kong, quint or sextet, or for the final tile you need for Mahjong.

Reassess

Did this tile improve your plan, or point to a better line on the card?

Exchange

Hold the natural tile for a Joker in someone's exposure? Swap it now, after you draw or expose and before you discard.

Discard

Place one tile face up in the middle and say its name. It is final once it touches the table or is fully named.

4 Hand falling apart?

Are the pairs you need still realistic? Are too many of your tiles already discarded or exposed? **Changing direction is part of the game, not failure.** Pivot before you expose tiles, because exposures lock you in.

5 Before you say "Mahjong"

- ☐ Matches one line on the current card exactly?
- ☐ Right number of suits for the colors shown?
- ☐ Singles and pairs are natural tiles, no Jokers?
- ☐ Fourteen tiles, counted twice? No Jokers at all? Say "Jokerless."