

PALABRA

THE WORD GAME OF CARDS AND COLORS
©1990, Kondrick, Inc.

Introduction

Palabra is a unique new word game that blends knowledge, skill and luck into fast-paced fun.

Palabra can be played by two to six players.

The object of the game is to outscore your opponents through creative combinations of the letters and colors on the Palabra cards.

The Palabra Cards

There are 120 cards in the Palabra deck.

There are 115 cards marked with a letter of the alphabet and its point value.

The letter-cards also are marked with colors: red, blue, green and yellow. Some cards are marked with two colors. Some are green and yellow. Some are red and blue. Dual color cards can be played as either one of the two colors.

There are three "Wild Cards". A wild card can be used to represent any letter of any color.

There are two Jokers. Jokers cancel the points earned by an opponent on his or her last play.

PALABRA

FAST-START RULES

If you wish, you can start playing Palabra immediately after reading this shorthand version of the rules. As you play, and get a "feel" for the game, you can refer, as needed, to the longer, "Complete Rules," to check out the fine points.

1. Deal 7 cards to each player. (Anyone can deal.)
2. Cut cards in remaining stack to determine who plays first. Highest letter starts.
3. After each play, players draw as many cards as they have laid down.
4. How to score points:
 - a) By making a word from cards of mixed colors.
 - b) By making a word from cards all the same color (Scores double).
 - c) With a "straight" consisting of three or more consecutive letters. (Example: ABC)
 - d) Cards marked with two stars (**) or three stars (***) double or triple the value of the word with which they are played.
 - e) With a flush (Five cards, all same color, no word necessary. Starred letters lose their double or triple value when played with a flush.)
 - f) With six vowels (Scores 20) or seven vowels (Scores 40)
 - g) By using all 7 cards to make a word. Called a "Palabra" this play scores a bonus of 70 points.
 - h) By "Building" on the front and/or back of a word already played. Building down, through an already played word, is not permitted.
 - i) Last play scores triple if it uses all remaining cards in a player's hand.
5. Wildcards: There are 3. Can be substituted for any letter of any color.
6. Jokers: There are 2. They cancel points made by an opponent.
7. Playing defensively. "Point-shaving" is a tactic that takes points away from an opponent and adds them to your own. Point-shaving applies only to words. It can be done only against the opponent immediately preceding you. Point-shaving is done by laying down letters that match those in a word played by an opponent. Example: First player puts down CROWD. Second player puts down O and W. The value of the matching letters is subtracted from the score of Player #1 and added to score of Player #2. Player # 2 keeps his/her turn.
8. Players' cards remain on the table until their next turn. At that time the cards are turned face down and put in a discard pile.

PALABRA

THE COMPLETE RULES

STARTING THE GAME

Shuffle the cards thoroughly and form them into one stack.

Deal seven cards to each player. Anyone can deal.

Cut the cards remaining in the stack to determine who plays first. The player with the highest letter in the alphabet plays first ("A" being the lowest and "Z" being the highest). A Wild Card outranks even a Z. The Joker is the lowest card that can be drawn.

HOW PALABRA IS PLAYED

A. The player, who won the right to play first, opens the game by laying down cards forming a word or any of the other scoring combinations described in the "How to Score" section of the rules.

B. Player #1 declares his/her score and draws as many cards from the stack as he or she has played. (NOTE: All players follow this same procedure, thus always keeping seven cards in their hands.)

C. The cards laid down by Player #1, and all subsequent players, stay on the table until their next turn.

D. Play passes to the left.

E. Before actually making their own scoring play, players always have the opportunity to subtract points from the opponent immediately preceding them and then add those points to their own score. See rules on "Playing Defensively" for details.

NOTE: You might find it easier to play a couple of rounds of Palabra without using the "playing defensively" rules.

Then, once you have the offensive scoring part of game down pat, you can add the defensive element to further enrich the game.

F. At each turn, in addition to playing defensively, players have the following options:

1. They can "build" on plays made by any one opponent. "Builds" are accomplished by adding letters to the front and/or back of a word or "straight" played by that opponent.
2. They can play a new word or other scoring combination.

G. The cards from a previous turn are always turned face down just before a player plays again.

HOW TO SCORE POINTS

Palabra is, above all, a word game, and the majority of the points scored during the game will come from making words from the letters on the seven cards each player holds.

Counting your score

Each letter in the Palabra deck has a point value. The basic point value of a word (or other scoring combination) is determined by adding up the values of each letter in it.

Always begin by counting across the top of your cards to add up the basic point value of your play.

Scoring with ordinary words

Ordinary words are those made with cards of different colors.

Here's an example using the word, PLAY. P2 L2 A1 Y4

The basic point value of "PLAY" is 9 points since P=2, L=2, A=1 and Y=4.

Double and triple words

Certain cards are marked with stars.

Cards marked with two stars (**) double the basic point value of the word they are played with.

Cards marked with three stars (***) triple the basic point value of the word they are played with.

An example of a double word:

F4** A1 I1 R1

The basic point value of the word, FAIR is 7 since F=4, A=1, I=1 and R=1. However, since the F is marked with two stars (**), the basic point value of the word is doubled to 14.

An example of a triple word:

G5*** I1 F4 T1

The basic point value of the word, GIFT is 11 since G=5, I=1, F=4 and T=1. However, since the G is marked with three stars (***), the basic point value of the word is tripled to 33.

An example when there are two starred cards in the same word:

B4*** R1 A1 V5** E1

The basic point value of the word, BRAVE is 12. However, the three-star B triples the value to 36 and the two-starred V doubles the 36 to 72 points.

Builds on words

A player may "build" on the word of any one opponent.

Builds can be made to the front and/or the back of the initial word. For example, the base word, PLAY, might become PLAYER, PLAYFUL, PLAYMATE, REPLAY, BYPLAY or (adding to both ends) DISPLAYED.

NOTE: The cards used in making a build should be added directly onto the front and/or back of the base word wherever it may be on the playing table.

A "built" word scores all the points from the basic value of the original word plus the points from the added letters. Double or triple values from the original word are **not** scored by the build. However, double and triple values from the added letters **do** score.

"Builds" may be done horizontally only, and not vertically.

Scoring with "color words"

Words composed of letters that are all of the same color score double their basic value.

A "build" on a "color word" must be done with cards of the same color. It scores double for the entire new word.

You cannot build on a "color word" with cards of a different color.

You cannot "point-shave" on a "color word" with cards of a different color.

Scoring with "flushes"

A player can score with a "flush" consisting of any five or more cards of the same color. Flushes do not have to form a word.

Flushes are scored at the basic point value of each card.

No double or triple credit is given for starred cards used in a flush.

Builds on flushes are not allowed.

Scoring with "straights"

A player can score with "straights" consisting of three or more consecutive letters of the alphabet. For example: ABC, or JKLM, or STUVWX.

Straights are scored at the face value of each letter plus any double or triple word values indicated by the letters.

Players can "build" on a straight by adding one or more letters to either end of it or simultaneously to both ends.

If a straight ends in Z, it can be extended by adding ABC, etc. to the end of it. If a straight begins with A, it can be extended backwards by adding ZYX, etc. to it.

Builds on straights are scored at the face value of each letter in the entire straight

Double or triple values from the original straight do not count for a build. However, double and triple values from added letters do count

Scoring with vowels

Players can score 20 points by laying down six vowels from the seven cards they hold.

Players can score 40 points by laying down seven vowels from the seven cards they hold.

The basic point value of the cards played does not count.

The Palabra bonus

Any player who uses all seven cards in his or her hand on a single play scores a "Palabra" which carries a bonus of 70 points in addition to the total point value of the cards.

A Palabra is subject to cancellation by the Joker.

A Palabra is also subject to "point shaving" (see "Playing Defensively" below), but this does not affect the 70 bonus points.

Builds on a Palabra are permitted.

The game-ending bonus

The last word or other scoring combination played to end the game scores triple IF it uses all the remaining cards in the player's hand and there are no more cards in the stack.

Keeping score

Points scored or lost should be immediately recorded on a scorepad after each turn.

PLAYING DEFENSIVELY:

Taking points away from an opponent

There are two ways you can take points away from an opponent.

1. Taking away points with the Joker

There are two Jokers. They have no point value.

A Joker can be used to cancel the points earned by any opponent on his or her last play. The Joker is laid on that opponent's cards; their value is subtracted from the opponent's score, and the cards are then turned face down and put in the discard pile.

The person playing the Joker may take another card to replace it, and then continue with his or her usual turn.

The person holding a Joker can play it only when it is his/her turn.

You cannot "point-shave" after having played the Joker.

2. Point-shaving with matching cards

Point-shaving involves subtracting points from a play made by an opponent and adding them to one's own score.

Point-shaving applies only to words.

Point-shaving can be done only on the word of the immediately preceding player.

Here's how it works.

Suppose Player #1 lays down C3** R1 01 W5*** D2

The basic point value of the word, CROWD, is 12 since C=3, R=1, 0=1, W=5 and D=2. However, the two-starred C doubles the score to 24 and the three-starred W triples the 24 to 72.

However, there is a way for Player #2 to reduce that score and add to his/her own score.

If Player #2 has letters that match any of those in the word played by #1, he/she can lay those letters down, add up their point values **and multiply them by any double or triple word values in the original word.**

FOR EXAMPLE: Suppose Player #2 has a C3 and an O1. Those cards have a basic point value of 4. Since the original word has both a double and triple word letter, the basic point value of 4 is doubled to 8 and then tripled to 24.

These 24 points are **subtracted** from Player #1's score, thus "shaving" it from 72 to 48.

In addition, Player #2 gets to **add** 24 points to his/her score.

What's more, Player #2 can then draw two new cards from the deck and proceed with his/her next turn.

Note 1: You cannot shave more points than the number scored by the play being shaved.

Note 2: You cannot point shave a second time with the new cards you have drawn.

Note 3: You cannot play the Joker after having point-shaved.

Note 4: Starred letters used for point-shaving lose their double or triple value.

WILD CARDS

There are three "wild cards".

A wild card can be used to represent any letter of any color (but not, of course, the Joker). The player of the wild card must specify what letter it represents, and that letter cannot be changed.

Wild cards have no point value.

Wild cards cannot be used for point-shaving.

EXCHANGING CARDS

A player may exchange any number of cards up to seven. To make the exchange, the player mixes the discards into the middle of the stack and draws an equivalent number of replacement cards from the top of the pile.

Exchanges are penalized with the loss of turn.

PASSING A TURN

A player may elect to pass a turn at any time without penalty.

DISPUTED WORDS

A player may challenge a word played by an opponent as being "no such word".

Challenges are settled by consulting any dictionary agreed upon at the start of the game.

If the challenged word is correct, it scores double.

If the challenged word cannot be found in the dictionary, its player loses that turn.

The cards from an incorrect word are returned to the player's hand.

WORDS NOT PERMITTED

Proper names or nouns beginning with a capital letter are not permitted. Hyphenated words or words using an apostrophe are not permitted.

Foreign words, unless found in the dictionary, are not allowed. Abbreviations are not permitted. Prefixes and suffixes standing alone are not allowed.

ENDING THE GAME

The game is over when there are no more cards in the stack and any player lays down the last card(s) in his or her hand. In this case the last word or other scoring combination scores triple.

The game may also end when no player is able to make another word or letter combination. In this case nobody earns the triple-score bonus for ending the game.

The letter value of the cards remaining in players' hands at the end of the game (including any double or triple word values) is subtracted from their scores.

TIPS ON PLAYING

1. When making a play, turn your cards around so your opponents can see your scoring combination.
2. Don't overlook the potential of "point-shaving." It can take a lot of points away from your opponents while, at the same time, adding to your own score. Plus, you can do it without losing your regular turn.
3. Point-shaving is also a good way to get rid of unwanted letters since the player doing the shaving gets to replace the cards used for this purpose with fresh cards from the stack.
4. Because they score double, "color words" can be powerful high scorers, especially when used with two-star and three-star letters.
5. The Joker is a powerful card, but it has its disadvantage. Remember that as long as you hold it, you are playing with just six scoring cards while your opponents are playing with seven.
6. Keep your turned-over discards in a neat pile off to the side.

7. The question of compound words that use prefixes and suffixes is a difficult one to resolve. However, as a rule of thumb, common compound words should be accepted even if not found in the dictionary. For example: repaint, readable, wellness, etc.
- On the other hand, uncommon compound words might open one to challenge. In such case, the dictionary will be the decider and the player making the word will have to accept the consequences for tries such as disbox, lookable, moonly.
8. Keep in mind, especially at the end of the game, that there are only two permissible one-letter words: "A" and "O."

PALABRA CARD DISTRIBUTION

BLUE	RED	BLUE RED	GREEN	YELLOW	GREEN YELLOW
A 1	A 1	C 3	A 1	A 1	J 9
A 1	A 1	D2**	A 1	A 1	K6**
A 1	A 1	J9	B 4***	B4	M3***
B 4	B 4	K6***	C 3	C 3 **	P 2
E1	E1	L2	D2	D2***	Q 10
E 1	E 1	N1	E 1	E 1	R1
E 1	E 1	Q 10	E 1	E 1	R 1
F 4**	F4	R 1	E 1	E 1	T 1
G5	G5***	S 1 **	F 4**	F4	U 1
H4	H4**	T 1	G5 **	G5	V5
I1	I1	T 1	H4	H4**	W5 **
I1	I1	W5	I1	I1	X8
I1	I1	X8	I1	I1	Z 10
M3	M3***	Z 10	L2	L2 ***	
N1	N 1 **		N1***	N 1	
O1	O 1		N1	N1	
O 1	O 1		O 1	O 1	
P2***	P2		O 1	O 1	
R1**	R 1		S 1	S 1 **	
S 1	S 1		T 1	T 1	
U 1 **	U 1		Y 4**	Y4	
V5	V5**				
Y4***	Y4				
23	23	14	21	21	13

JOKERS: 2 WILD CARDS: 3 TOTAL CARDS:120