



# NONESUCH

Nonesuch is a trick-taking game with this central rule: At the beginning of each trick, the player leading it names a specific suit which other players must follow.

## DEALING AND BIDDING

Randomly decide who will deal the first hand. Subsequent hands are dealt by the player on the old dealer's left.

The dealer shuffles the basic deck plus the Excuse. Deal cards out as evenly as possible to all players: 12 each with three players; 9 each with four players. This will leave one card left over; it is dealt face up in the middle of the table. If the up card is an Ace or Crown, then its suit will be the trump for this hand. If the up card is a number rank, then one of its suits will be trump; the player holding the Excuse will decide after bidding is complete. If the up card is the Excuse itself, then there will be no trump suit.

After looking at cards but before play begins, players each make a bid. The player on the dealer's left bids first, then each player clockwise around the table bids. There are three possible bids:

A bid of **SOME** means that the player expects to take at least one trick. The player scores one point at the end of the hand for each trick they've taken.

A bid of **MOST** means that the player expects to take at least half the tricks: at least 6 with three players; at least 5 with four players. If the player takes that many tricks or more, they score two points for each trick they've won. If not, then they lose one point for each trick less than that which they've taken.

A bid of **NONE** means that the player hopes to take exactly zero tricks. If they do, they score a number of points equal to the number of tricks in the hand; 12 in a three-player game, for example. If not, they lose one point for each trick they've taken.

Once every player has bid, the player who has the Excuse reveals it and discards it. If the up card is a number rank card, then that player decides which of its suits will be trump. In any case, they take the up card into their hand to replace the Excuse.

## PLAYING THE HAND

The player on the dealer's left leads the first trick.

You may not lead a card with the trump suit until a trump card has been played in the hand, unless you have nothing but trumps in your hand.

When a card is led, the player who led it must select and announce one of the suits on the card. If the lead is an Ace or Crown, there is no choice – just say what the suit is. For number cards, you need to select which suit other players will be required to follow.

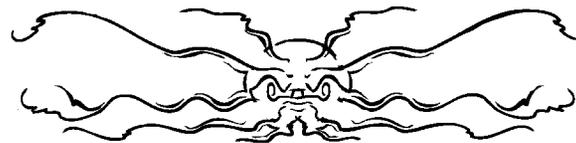
Clockwise around the table, each player plays a card that has the named suit. Players who have no cards of the named suit may play any card from their hand.

If no trump was played, then the highest card of the named suit wins the trick. If any trumps were played, then the highest trump wins the trick. (As usual – Aces lose to 2s, and 10s beat 9s.)

For the purpose of following suit, all that matters is the named suit. But a card counts as trump if it has the trump suit, even if trump is different from the named suit.

The winner of the trick leads the next trick. Once someone has played a trump, it is permissible to lead with a trump card.

◦ **EXAMPLE:** Wyrms (🐉) are trump. Tarrant plays 8🐉 and calls Suns. Each subsequent player must play a Sun (☀️) card if they have one. Raphael plays 2🐉 which both follows suit (☀️) and is a trump card (🐉). Unless someone else plays a higher trump, Raphael will win the trick.



## SCORING

Play continues until all cards have been played. After the last trick, calculate scores based on players' bids and the number of tricks they have won. The player on the dealer's left deals the next hand.

For the sake of having an official number, I recom-

mend playing until some player reaches a cumulative score of 31 points or more. The player with the highest cumulative score is then the winner.

## STRATEGY

Suppose you lead the Crown of Suns (👑☀️), and Suns are not the trump suit. If one of the other players has no Suns, then they may play a trump and take the trick. Even if all of them have Suns, perhaps one of them will play a card with both Suns and the trump suit. How likely is that latter scenario?

The answer depends on the trump suit. The following table summarizes the combinations. Look up the lead suit on one side and the trump suit on the other, and you'll see which cards have both of those suits.

If Leaves (🍃) are trump when you lead Suns (☀️), for example, then look at 🍃☀️ on the chart: x. There are no cards with both those suits in the basic deck. So no one can both follow suit and trump.

If Moons (🌙) are trump, look at 🌙☀️: 4,8,9. There are three 🌙☀️ cards – the ones at ranks 4, 8, and 9. Unless those cards are in your hand, you should probably expect someone to trump.

	🌙	☀️	🌀	🍃	🐉
☀️		4,8,9			
🌀	3,6	5			
🍃	5,7	x	2,4,8		
🐉	x	2,6	7,9	3	
👑	2	3,7	x	6,9	4,5,8

The rules for two Nonesuch variants plus the rules for dozens of other games are available on-line and in *The Decktet Book*. To learn more, visit [www.decktet.com](http://www.decktet.com)