

# MARSHMALLOW TEST™



AGES  
10+

## THE DELAYED GRATIFICATION TRICK-TAKING CARD GAME

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60 cards (1–12 in 5 colors)

20 small & 15 large marshmallow tokens (1 & 5 points)

### OVERVIEW

Are you all about instant gratification? Or can you be patient enough to wait for a greater reward later? Test your willpower by winning tricks and collecting marshmallows for your opponents' tricks. The first player to 20 points wins.

### SET UP

1. The player who last ate something with marshmallows starts as the dealer for the first round.
2. Shuffle the deck and deal each player a hand of 12 cards. (Keep your hand secret from opponents.) Place any remaining cards off to the side, unseen.
3. Place the marshmallow tokens within easy reach of all players. Note that small marshmallows are worth 1 point each, while large marshmallows are worth 5 points each.



### HOW TO PLAY

The dealer begins the round by playing a card from their hand face up to the middle of the playing area, starting the "trick." Play proceeds clockwise, with each player adding one of their own cards face up to the trick as well. When playing a card, the following rules apply:

- Any card can be played as the first card of a trick. This card determines the trick's "lead suit."
- All subsequent cards in the trick must follow the lead suit (match the color of the first card). If none of your cards match the lead suit, you may play any card from your hand.

When each player has played a card, whoever played the highest card in the lead suit wins the trick. *Note: During the first round, there is no trump suit (see "Starting a New Round" for more).* The player who won the trick collects all of the cards from the center of the play area, and puts them **face down** in a stack in front of themselves. (As you collect further tricks, place each one in a separate stack, so that it's clear how many tricks each player has.) The winner of that trick continues the round by playing a card from their hand to start the next trick.

### GOING OUT

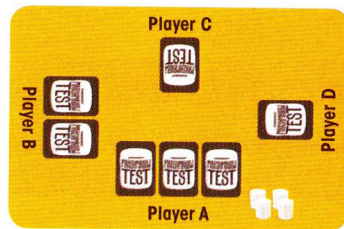
Once a player collects a specific number of tricks, they're out for the rest of the round and receive marshmallow tokens equal to the total number of all **other players'** face-down tricks. The number of tricks required varies based on the number of players, as follows:

Number of Players	2	3	4	5
Number of Tricks	6	4	3	3

After you go out discard any remaining cards in your hand to the side, face down, but leave your tricks in front of you, as these will continue to be counted toward other players' scores. Of the remaining players, the next player in clockwise order starts the next trick.



**Example:** In this four-player game, **Player A** has just won their third trick, and therefore goes out for the round. They collect a total of 4 marshmallow tokens: 2 for **Player B's** tricks and 1 each for **Player C's** and **D's** tricks. **Player B** starts the next trick.



## ENDING A ROUND

A round ends when there's only one player remaining who hasn't gone out. That player **does not** receive any marshmallows, and becomes the dealer for the next round.

**Special Rule for Five Players:** In a five-player game, it's possible that more than one player remains in the round, even after all 12 tricks have been played. When this happens, none of the remaining players receive any marshmallows. If the player who collected the most recent trick has *not* gone out, they are the dealer for the next round. However if the player who collected the most recent trick *did* go out, they receive their marshmallows as usual and the first player, in clockwise order, who still remains in the round becomes the next dealer instead.

## STARTING A NEW ROUND

The dealer for the second round (and beyond) reshuffles all the cards (including any that were set aside) and deals each player a new hand of 12 cards. Then — after the dealer has examined their cards — they declare one of the five suits as the **"trump suit."** Cards of this suit will beat all other suits for the duration of the round.



Green is trump!

The dealer begins the round, as before, and the round plays out just like the previous one, with the following addition:

- If a player is unable to follow suit and adds a trump card to a trick, all following players may also play a trump to that trick — even if they could otherwise still follow suit.

When each player has played a card, the winner of the trick is determined as follows:

- If any trump cards were played, the highest trump card wins the trick.
- If no trump cards were played, the highest card in the lead suit wins the trick.

## ENDING THE GAME

Continue playing rounds until one player collects a total of 20 (or more) points. **The game ends instantly when this happens.** The current round is not completed, and the successful player is the winner.

## A WORD FROM GAMEWRIGHT

In case you've never heard of it, the title of this game comes from "the Stanford marshmallow experiment," a series of studies on delayed gratification conducted by psychologist Walter Mischel in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the studies, children were offered a choice between receiving one marshmallow immediately or two marshmallows if they waited a little while longer. Inspired by the famous experiment, inventor Reiner Knizia created this clever trick-taking game that rewards patience. If you can figure out how to be the second-to-last to go out each round, you'll find this game to be quite gratifying!

Game by: Reiner Knizia



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70 Bridge Street, Newton, MA 02458  
jester@gamewright.com | 617-924-6006  
gamewright.com

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