

WordPoker

2 to 6 players

WordPoker is based on regular Poker. I will assume you have some knowledge of how to play regular Poker. If you have never played Poker, or would like to brush up on the rules, a good starting point is <<http://www.pagat.com>>.

The rules below describe the Five-Card Draw version of WordPoker. Other versions, such as Seven-Card Stud or Texas Hold-'Em, are left as an exercise for the reader.

Setting Up

Before you start, you will need to remove 18 cards from the deck. These cards will not be used to play WordPoker. Remove the two Wild cards, and one of each of the following 16 cards: A/E, A/I, A/O, A/U, E/I, E/O, E/U, I/O, I/U, O/U, H, L, N, R, S, and T.

Game Synopsis

Players ante up. The dealer deals five cards to each player. Players look at their cards and bid (starting from the dealer's left). After the bidding, players who are still in the game may discard up to five cards and receive enough cards to bring their hand back up to five. Players bid again, and the winner of the current hand is determined. Once the hand is over, the dealer collects the cards, and the player to his left becomes the new dealer. Play continues until an agreed-upon end point; see "End of Game" below.

Playable Words

In order for a word to qualify, it must be in a current dictionary. Words may not be abbreviations, proper nouns, in a foreign language, or plurals using the letter S. (Verbs that end with S are acceptable.)

Ranking a Hand

The winner of the hand is determined by ranking. Here is the ranking for WordPoker hands, from high to low.

Straight: Example: LMNOP
One 5-Letter Word
One 4-Letter Word
Full House: One 3- and one 2-Letter Word
One 3-Letter Word
Two 2-Letter Words
One 2-Letter Word

If there is a tie, then the player with the higher-scoring word wins the tie. If there is still a tie, then the player with the highest-scoring letter in his hand (not necessarily in his word) wins. If there is still a tie, then the tied players split the pot.

Making a Challenge

Players may challenge what they believe to be invalid words. Any player who has folded during the current hand may not make a challenge. If the challenged word is found to be illegal, then the player with the next higher hand takes the pot. If the challenged word is found to be legal, then the player who made the challenge must pay the winner half the value of the pot *from his own funds* (rounding up).

End of Game

Poker is a game that doesn't have a clear-cut ending. Players of WordPoker may continue the game until one player goes bankrupt, until all players except one go bankrupt, until everyone at the table has had three turns as dealer, or until any other agreed-upon end point.

Playing for Points

If you don't want to play WordPoker for money, you can play for points, using coins to represent the points. The coins will represent points throughout the game. Each player starts with 100 points, so you will need one dollar of coins for each player. I recommend two quarters, two dimes, three nickels and 15 pennies, but you may use whatever combination suits you best, or may use poker chips instead.