

Official Rules for the 24 Challenge Tournament

PROCTORS – Ask for volunteer to act as proctors. You need one per table. Take all proctors aside about 30 minutes before the tournament begins and review the rules.

REVIEW RULES – Once a consensus is reached on the rules with the proctors, review these rules with students at the start of play, so they understand how the tournament is conducted.

SEATING – Students sit three or four to a table by grade level (5th) or event (grades 6-8 combined).

PUTTING CARDS INTO PLAY – A proctor puts a card into play by “cupping” the card in the palm of one hand. The proctor places the “cupped” card into the center of the table and then withdraws the hand to reveal the numbers.

STUDENTS’ HAND POSITION – During play, students’ fingertips should be no closer than 8 inches from the center of the table where the cards are placed. If a special tournament playing mat is used, students must keep their hands on the blue area and outside of the yellow circle.

MAKING A DECLARATION – When a student has a solution, he/she declares by touching the card. The student may touch anywhere on the card but with no more than three fingertips. This rule prevents students from slapping hard with the whole hand as a way of dominating play. The first student to make a valid declaration is allowed to give the solution. If the answer is correct, the student takes the card and places it in front of him. The proctor then puts the next card into play. At the end of the round (when all cards have been claimed), the proctor tallies all the points on the cards each student has won.

GIVING THE SOLUTION – The proctor determines the first student to touch the card. That student must announce the pattern (last step of the solution to make 24; e.g., “3 times 8” or “15 plus 9”) within 3 seconds of touching the card. The final solution (all three steps) must be completed within 15 seconds. A student cannot change the pattern that he states within the first 3 seconds, and must complete his solution using this same pattern.

A student may correct himself and change the first and second steps of his solution until he “fixes” the solution by saying “equals, makes or is 24”.

PENALTY FLAGS – If a student cannot give the solution or gives an incorrect solution, he/she receives a penalty flag (use Post-it brand notes or token). Students who receive three penalty flags in a round, during rounds 1 and 2, are disqualified from further play *during that round*. **Students are allowed only two penalty flags in during rounds 3 and 4.** Disqualified students may keep the points they scored up to the point of disqualification. They are eligible to play in any subsequent round and start without any penalty flags. (NOTE: In their eagerness to win, students sometimes touch the card first and then try to solve it. This may turn the play into a “slapping match.” This penalty rule disqualifies students who continue this approach.)

The proctor takes the card out of play when a student gets a penalty flag. Proctors put that card into the middle of the deck from which they are dealing to be played again later.

FIVE WAYS TO DRAW A PENALTY FLAG:

- 1) Does not announce a pattern within three seconds.
- 2) Does not complete solution within 15 seconds.
- 3) Gives an incorrect solution.
- 4) Touches card with more than 3 fingertips.
- 5) Touches proctor’s hand before it is withdrawn.

***NOTE:** Students who touch the “unsolve-able” cards in the Single Digits tournament receive a penalty flag. Students **must not** tap the card to claim that it is an “unsolve-able” card. The card stays in play for 15 seconds and is then treated as a stumped card.

STUMPED CARDS – If all students at the table agree that they are stumped, or if no student makes an attempt to answer a card after 15 seconds, the proctor removes that card for later play.

NUMBER OF ROUNDS PLAYED – Most tournaments are played with four rounds, each lasting 10 to 15 minutes. Points won by each student in Rounds 1 and 2 are added to determine who advances to the Semi-final Round 3. Semi-final round 3 and Final Round 4 are face off rounds with the highest scoring student at each table advancing forward.

Students should be given an 8-minute break between rounds. If the players at a table finish early, they should sit and wait for the round to end at other tables, so as to not disturb other students.

NUMBER OF CARDS PLAYED – A fixed number of cards are played in each round. This approach is preferred over a “timed round” because it is not dependent upon the speed with which proctors put the cards into play and does not put a table with a “slow” proctor at a disadvantage.

ROUND 1 – Play for 48 cards. Take the rubber-banded half of the 96 card deck and flip the cards so that all the red sides (color of center square on the cards) are facing up. (The first half of the deck will give you 12 one-point, 24 two-point, and 12 three-point cards.) Shuffle the cards, and you are ready to begin. Make sure that all tables are using the same cards. All students play.

ROUND 2 – Flip the above 48 cards over and play the white side. Students change tables to get a chance to play with different players in their own grade or event. All students play.

SCORING – Proctors tally points at the end of each round. Remember to count points and not just the number of cards, as a difficult card may be worth three points. Look for the number of dots in the card’s corner to determine the point value. Proctors enter each student’s score on his/her score card. Scores from Rounds 1 and 2 will be added together. The sixteen highest scores from each grade or section level advance to the Semi-final Round 3. Semi-finalists are seated four to a table.

SEMI-FINAL ROUND 3 – Play for another 48 cards (second half of the 96 card deck), red side. This third round is a “face-off” round. Only the points earned in this round are used to determine the winners, the scores from the previous rounds are disregarded. **This round determines the bronze, silver, and gold medal winners. Semi-finalists play to determine the silver and gold medal winners; other table winners receive bronze medals.**

The highest scoring student at each semi-final table advances to compete in the Final Round 4 to determine the grand champions.

FINAL ROUND 4 – Flip over the above 48 cards and play the white side. The highest scoring student in this final round is the overall grade or event champion. As in round 3, all previous scores are disregarded.

MISCELLANEOUS – In the case of a tie, tied players play a 5-minute round. In case of a protest, it is up to the proctor at each table to settle the protest. To encourage mental math, we suggest that pencil and paper not be used by students during play.