

VANISH

designed by Will Rice



Vanish is a ladder-climbing card game that uses a traditional pack of cards, inspired by the game *Scout*. During the game cards turn backwards and “vanish”, providing no points but creating opportunities.

Number of players: 2-4

Time to play: 15 minutes

Rules version: 2.0

SET UP

1. Shuffle and deal 13 cards to each player. Players may **not** rearrange their cards.
2. In a 2 and 3 player game, make a face down deck with the remaining cards. Flip one card from the deck face up, as the “extra card”.
3. The first player is the one who suggested playing Vanish.

GAMEPLAY

Players take turns in a clockwise order playing sets to the table for points, or choosing cards to “vanish”. **A set is 1 to 4 cards of the same value**, e.g. one 7 or three Jacks.

IMPORTANT: Players cannot rearrange the order of their cards.

On each turn players must take one of the following three options:

1. **PLAY TO THE TABLE:** Play a set of **adjacent** cards (*ignoring “vanished” cards, see more detail overleaf*) from their hand onto the table. The set **must be higher value** than the **last set played to the table this round**. If no set has yet been played to the table in this round, any set can be played.
2. **PLAY A VANISHING SET:** “Play” a set of any cards in their hand, **that do not need to be adjacent**, by turning them backwards so they “vanish”. The cards are not placed on the table. The set **must be higher value** than the **last set played to the table**.

A **higher value set** is either a set of the **same number** of cards with **higher value** (e.g two 8s beats two 7s), **or** a set with **more cards** (e.g. two 3s beats one 9). Aces are low.

3. **VANISH A CARD AND SWAP A CARD:** If a player cannot or does not want to play a set they **must** turn any one card backwards so that it “vanishes”. Then if they wish they may swap a card with another player, or with the “extra card” (in a 2 or 3 player game only). See *SWAPPING A CARD* for more detail.

VANISHED CARDS

Cards that are turned backwards in your hand are considered to have “vanished”. **For you, vanished cards behave as if they do not exist.** If any number of cards would be next to each other if it were not for vanished cards between them, then **they are treated as if they are adjacent, and may be played as a set** if they are matching values. If a set played **to the table** has vanished cards in the middle, these vanished cards are placed on the table as part of the set and are no longer available to be swapped with other cards.

Example: In his hand, Will has 2♠, 2♥, a backwards “vanished” card, and 2♦, all in a row. These four cards may be played as a set and are treated as a set of three 2s.

SWAPPING A CARD

When you swap a card (after vanishing a card) you may swap one of your **forward-facing** cards (i.e. one that hasn’t vanished) with one of the **backwards “vanished”** cards from another player’s hand (i.e. one of the cards you can see in other players’ hands that are facing away from them and towards you).

In a 2 or 3 player game, you have an alternative option which is to swap one forward-facing card with the face up “extra card”. Also, if you do not like the extra card, then **once per turn** you may flip over a new “extra card” from the deck to replace it.

END OF A ROUND

If after a set is played to the table all other players take their turns without playing a higher set to the table, a new round is started by the player who played the last set to the table.

END OF THE GAME

The game ends immediately when one player has either played their final card(s) as a set to the table, or has turned all of their cards backwards.

SCORING

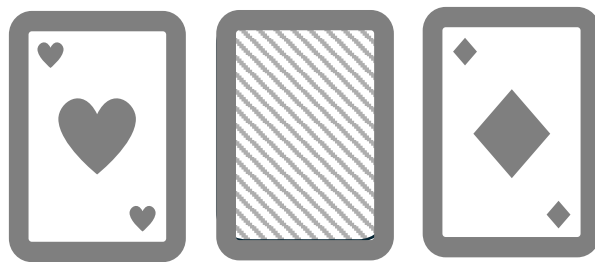
- Players score **1 point** for **every set** they have played to the **table**.
- The player who played the **highest value set** to the **table** scores an extra **2 points**. Any face-down vanished cards on the table are ignored and do not count in any set.
- The player who **emptied their hand and finished the game** (by playing a set or turning all their cards backwards) scores an extra **2 points**. Cards remaining in players hands, vanished or otherwise, are not worth any points.

The player with the most points is the winner. For a longer game, play multiple times, equal to the number of players, rotating the start player, and total the scores.

Had fun?
Suggestions?
Interested in future games?

Contact me at
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**A ladder-climbing game
played with a deck of cards**