

Secret's Out

Number of players: two to six

Needed to play:

one deck of playing cards, with the tens and face cards removed

three dice

Object of the game: to uncover all other players' secrets before they uncover yours!

To play:

The youngest player will start. Shuffle and deal six cards to every player. These are the Secret Six. Players look at their six cards and then place them face down in front of them. Players shouldn't share their cards with anyone.

Player one rolls all three dice. He/She must then use all three numbers in a mathematical equation (addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, or a combination of any of them) to reach a total that is 9 or less.

For example:

Cara rolls a 3, 5, and 6. She can design the following equations: that total nine or less:

$$3 \times 5 = 15 - 6 = 9$$

$$5 - 3 = 2 + 6 = 8$$

$$5 + 6 = 11 - 3 = 8$$

$$6 - 5 = 1 + 3 = 4$$

Cara will decide on an equation and announce her equation and its total. All players with a Secret card matching her total must flip that card over, and let the secret out.

So, if Cara uses the equation that totals nine, and two of the other players have nines in their Secret Six, they must flip over their cards and reveal them.

*note: If a player happens to have more than one nine, he/she would only flip over one. Only one Secret per player is let out at any one time. However, the next time nine was a total during another turn, the player would then have to reveal the second Secret card.

If at least one player's Secret is revealed, then Player One's turn continues. If no one has a card matching the total, play moves to the next (clockwise) player.

Play continues until all players (except one) have had all six Secrets revealed.

Variations

To simplify: choose to limit the game to addition or subtraction; or, use two dice instead of three. Play can also be simplified (and sped up) by having all players reveal all cards of the same number in one play (so, if a player has three nines in his six cards, he must flip them all over when someone totals a nine).

To challenge: use four or five dice instead of three; have players "target" the secrets of only one other player at a time; do rounds of play that must involve a specific function (ie., round one must use addition, round two must use subtraction, round three must use multiplication and round four must use division). Add another level of complexity by shuffling and re-dealing Secret cards with every round, and use a tally or chip system to mark the "secrets lost" by every play.

To turn the tables: add two jokers to the deck. The jokers become wild cards that a player can reveal to reverse his/her fortunes, and have the roller of the dice reveal one of his/her Secret Six instead. Jokers can become a strategy tool when there a player begins to sense someone else may be near to winning.

*Secret's Out is a slightly revised version of a game called "Skeletons In Your Closet" published in *Spooky Math Games*, by Jennifer Kent (CB Products, 2000)