



# 99 BALLOONS

**Players:** 2-10 | **Playing Time:** 20 minutes | **Goal:** Earn 99+ points.

A fast, accessible prediction game where attention matters more than experience!  
Play a card. Draw a card. Reveal a central card. Repeat.

**Second place is best!** You'll win if you can predict the **second most common** balloon in the central balloon cluster and add those to your personal collection!

## Components:

- 98 balloon cards
- 5 scoring cards: 5, 4, 3, 0 and -1

---

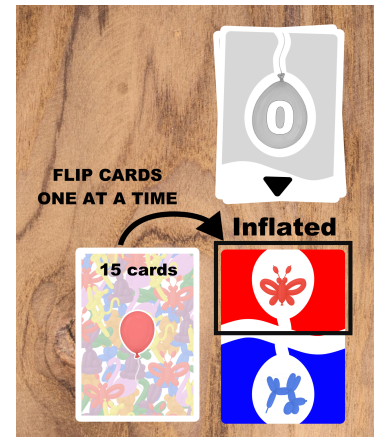
## Beginner rules

### Setup

1. Choose one player to be the Balloonist for this round only, they shuffle the deck.
2. The Balloonist gives each player **8 cards face down**. Each player **draws 3 cards** to form their starting hand, the other cards form their **draw deck**.
3. The Balloonist deals 16 cards to the centre and reveals the first card, forming the **Balloon cluster**.
  - o They **stack** the **scoring cards** together and place them **above** the Balloon cluster.

**IMPORTANT:** The colour closest to the centre of the table (scoring cards) is considered "active". The other colour is ignored. (Example: Red Butterfly)

- o *Tip:* The Balloonist may want to hold the remaining 15 cards from the centre, in hand.
- o **As players watch**, the Balloonist reveals and **stacks** 7 more cards, one at a time **face up**, onto the balloon cluster.
- o Once dealt, players **may not** review the cards in the Balloon cluster.
- o Any remaining cards are set aside, and not used this round.



## Gameplay

Once the Balloonist reveals 8 cards, the game begins. Each turn is simple:

1. **Play and draw:** All players simultaneously choose **any one card** from their hand and orient it such that the **side facing the centre of the table** is the active colour. Only the active colour will count towards their score. All cards in players' Personal collections should be stacked face up.
  - o *Tip:* Players are trying to predict and play the **second most common** balloon.
  - o Players immediately replenish their hand to **3 cards**.
  - o *Note:* For more advanced players, your Personal collection may be **face down**.
2. **Balloon cluster:** The Balloonist then reveals the next card from the centre and stacks it onto the balloon cluster.
  - o *Tip:* Make sure all players have played the same number of cards.

After 8 turns there will be a final card that must be revealed into the Balloon cluster.

## Scoring & winning

Players who correctly predicted the **second most common** balloon colour(s) **will score the most**. Once players hands are empty and the last card in the Balloon cluster is revealed:

1. **Count & rank:** Group balloons in the Balloon cluster by colour and rank them from **most** common to **least** common taking care to **never** rotate cards.
2. **Assign values:** Assign points based on the rank (ties receive the same value):
  - o **Most common** and **least common** colours must be assigned *if they can be*, the other values *may not* appear depending on the make up of the Balloon cluster.

Most	2nd	3rd	4th	Least
-1	5	4	3	0



Bear = -1 each      Butterfly = 3 each  
 Swan = 5 each      Snake = 0 each  
 Bunny = 4 each      Monkey = 0 each

3. **Tally scores:** Rotating cards is **not allowed**.  
 Players sum the values of **each** active colour (the half closest to the centre of the table) in their **collections** based on the values assigned in the **Balloon cluster**.
  4. **Balloonist:** Assign the Balloonist the same points as the **second highest scoring** player of the round. Each round, the Balloonist role rotates clockwise.
  5. **Winning:** Play cumulative rounds until one player has 99 or more, shuffle as needed.  
 The player with the **most points** in the **final round** wins. The game may end in a tie.
-

## Standard rules

Before the Balloonist reveals **each** card into the Balloon cluster, they may look and choose which colour is active (closest to the centre of the table).

---

## Advanced rules

The Balloonist draws 3 cards from the central balloon cards to form their hand. When they add a card to the Balloon cluster, they play one from their hand and choose which side is active (closest to the centre of the table). Then they refill their hand from the cards in the centre.

---

## Two-player rules

The Balloonist manages the Balloon cluster and **also** plays in the round. To balance the added advantage of playing, the Balloonist reveals cards without choosing orientation.

---

## Solo play variant

Play the game as normal using the two-player rules, try to reach 99 points or more in as few rounds as possible.

- 3 rounds (exactly 99 points): Legendary Aeronaut
- 3 rounds: Incredible Aeronaut
- 4 rounds: Stratospheric Sailor
- 5 rounds: Cruising Altitude Pilot
- 6 rounds: High Flyer
- 7+ rounds: Liftoff achiever