Poker Hands Rankings – Highest Value Hand to the Lowest Value Hand
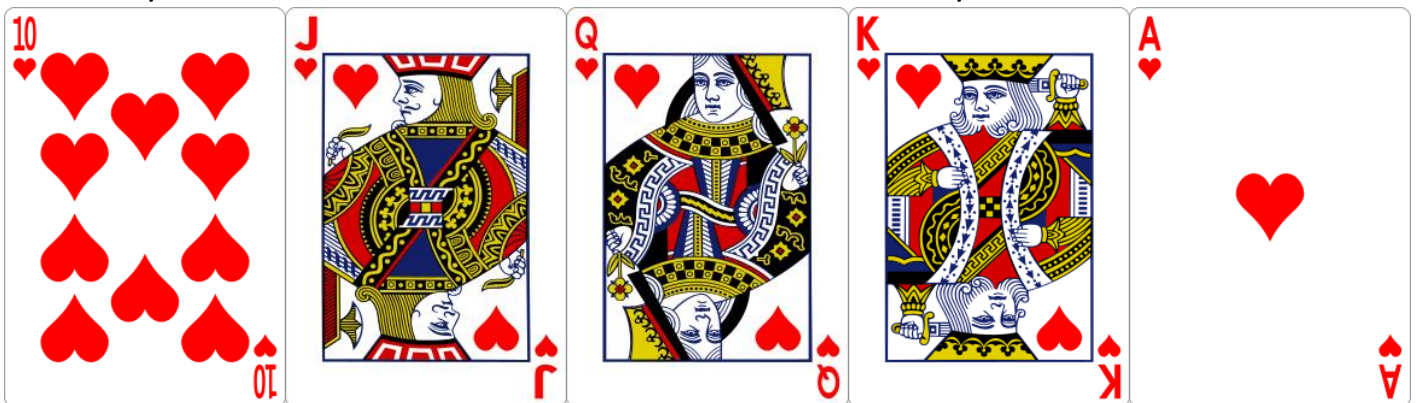
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Introduction

The playing card game of Poker has been around since the 1800's. Poker experienced a worldwide growth in popularity during the 2000's, due to televised tournaments and online (Internet based) games. If you are new to Poker you will need to learn lots about the game, starting with the ranking of winning hands. There are many, probably hundreds, of variations of Poker games, however, this list of Poker hand values applies to common Poker games, for example Texas Hold'Em. The common 54 playing card deck has the two Jokers removed, therefore, this list does not cover Poker games that use Jokers. In casual games Jokers are occasionally used as *wild cards* (a wild card can be used to represent another card). The remaining 52 cards are divided into the four *suits* commonly called Spades (♠), Hearts (♥), Diamonds (♦), and Clubs (♣). In common Poker games the suits all have equal value. The playing card suits are ordered from Ace through to King (Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King). However, the *ranking* is slightly different. The Ace card also plays as the highest ranked card (above a King). Thus, when the Ace plays as a one the ranking is the same as the ordering, Ace to King. When Ace is played high the ranking is 2 to Ace (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace).

The Poker hand rankings are based upon how common certain pattern combinations of five cards are possible from a 52-card playing deck. For example, a pair of a nines (e.g. 9♠, 9♥) would appear more often in a five-card Poker hand than three cards of the same value, also called *Trips*, (e.g. 9♠, 9♥, 9♦). Therefore, these Poker hand rankings are based on the chance of a certain five-card pattern being dealt from a 52-card deck. However, in some Poker games, like Texas Hold'Em which uses seven cards to make a Poker hand, the chances of a certain pattern may change. For example, in Texas Hold'Em a pair becomes slightly more common than a high-card hand, however, these Poker hand rankings are still used. It is possible for players' hands to be valued equally, in which case the winnings or *pot* is split equally between players, hence the term *split pot*. These Poker hand rankings, shown below, do not apply to the low card variations of Poker games, i.e. the Lowball Poker games. For Lowball Poker these rankings are inverted, however, the Lowball rankings will vary depending upon the type of Lowball being played.

List of Poker Hand Rankings from Highest to Lowest

This list of common Poker hand rankings goes from the most valuable hand to the least valuable hand. The first three entries, Royal Flush, Straight Flush and Quads are extremely rare, and when seen are often regarded with surprise. The first two, Royal Flush and Straight Flush are both the same type of hand, a Royal Flush simply being the highest of the Straight Flushes.
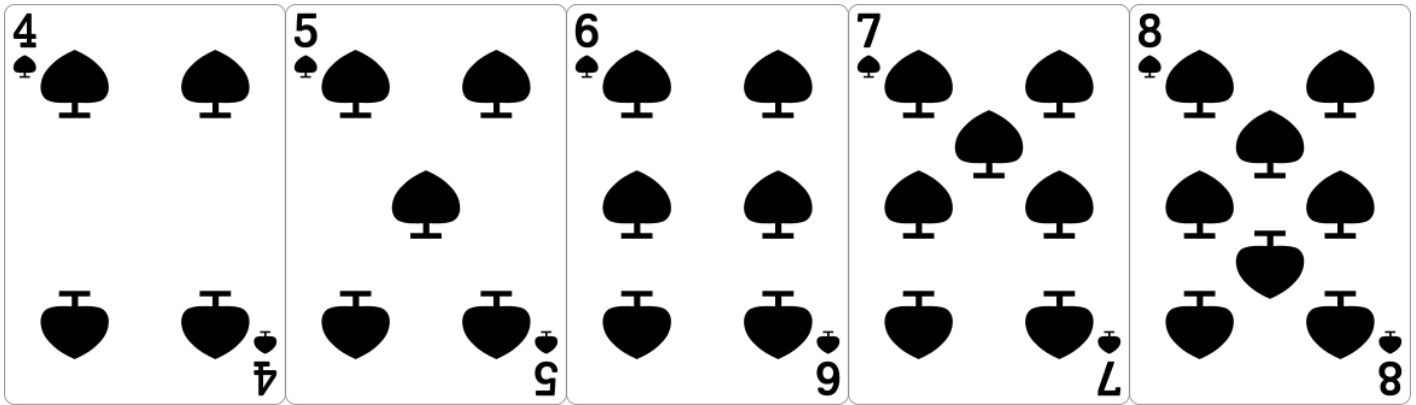
1. The Royal Flush – The Most Valuable Poker Hand – How many? 4

What is a Royal Flush in Poker? The Royal Flush in Poker is the highest Straight Flush, with the lowest value card being the ten, and the highest value card being the Ace. All the five cards in a Royal Flush are in the same suit and all the five cards form a straight increasing in value by one with no gaps. There are four Royal Flushes, one for each suit:

10♠, J♠, Q♠, K♠, A♠ - 10♥, J♥, Q♥, K♥, A♥ - 10♦, J♦, Q♦, K♦, A♦ - 10♣, J♣, Q♣, K♣, A♣

2. The Straight Flush – The Highest-Ranking Poker Hand - How Many? 36
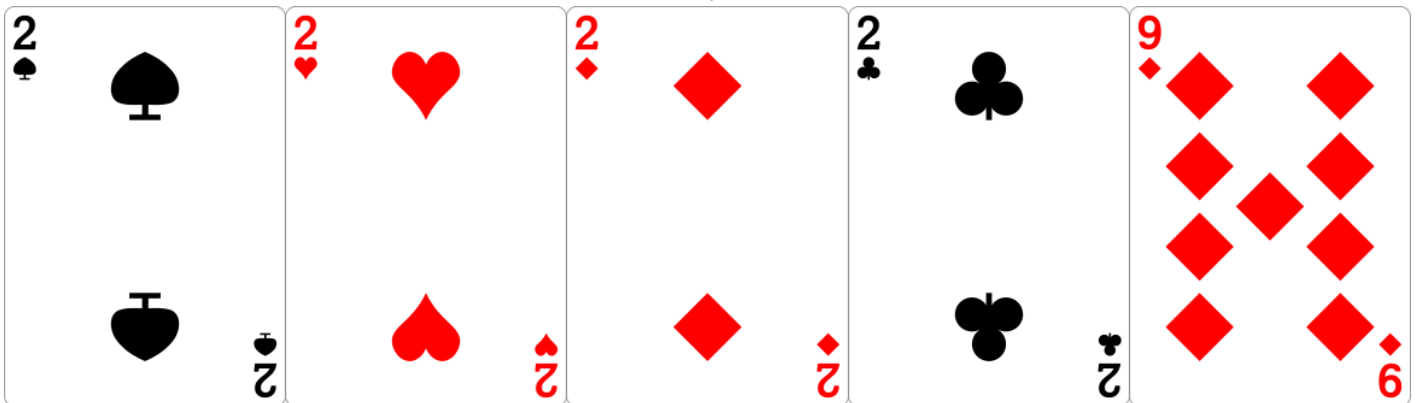
What is a Straight Flush in Poker? The Straight Flush is the highest value Poker hand, with the Royal Flush (see above) the most valuable Straight Flush and thus the most valuable Poker hand because it is the highest Straight Flush. In the Straight Flush all the cards are from the same suit and all increase in value with no gaps. The highest card in a Straight Flush determines the highest Straight Flush, therefore a 7♥, 8♥, 9♥, 10♥, J♥ beats 6♥, 7♥, 8♥, 9♥, 10♥ because a Jack is higher than a ten.

There are 40 possible Straight Flushes, including the Royal flush, or 36 Straight Flushes not counting the Royal Flush:

From A♠, 2♠, 3♠, 4♠, 5♠ to 9♠, 10♠, J♠, Q♠, K♠ – From A♥, 2♥, 3♥, 4♥, 5♥ to 9♥, 10♥, J♥, Q♥, K♥
From A♦, 2♦, 3♦, 4♦, 5♦ to 9♦, 10♦, J♦, Q♦, K♦ – From A♣, 2♣, 3♣, 4♣, 5♣ to 9♣, 10♣, J♣, Q♣, K♣
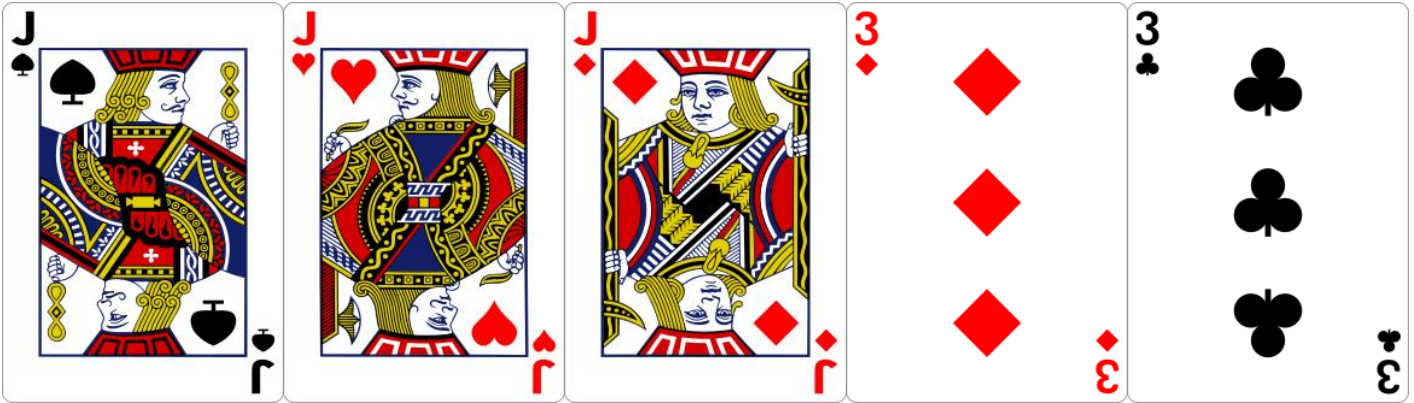
3. The Quads, a.k.a. Four-of-a-Kind – How Many? 624

What are *Quads*? It is the Four-of-a-Kind Poker hand, commonly referred to as Quads. In Quads four of the cards have the same value, and the fifth card is a random card from the desk. For example, the three of spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs (3♠, 3♥, 3♦, 3♣) is Quads, and adding another card makes the five-card Poker hand, e.g. 3♠, 3♥, 3♦, 3♣, Q♥. If two or more players have a Quads hand, then the higher ranked Quads card wins. For example, 7♠, 7♥, 7♦, 7♣, 10♦ would beat 6♠, 6♥, 6♦, 6♣, K♠. If two players have the same ranked Quads, then the highest ranked remaining card, known as the *kicker*, determines the winner. For example, in Texas Hold'Em with Quads on the board, 9♠, 9♥, 9♦, 9♣, A♦ would beat 9♠, 9♥, 9♦, 9♣, K♣.

There are thirteen ranks of card, when four cards of the same rank are in a hand, the fifth card can be any one of the remaining 48 cards. Therefore, the number of hands that can contain Quads is 13 multiplied by 48, or 624:

From 2♠, 2♥, 2♦, 2♣, plus any random card up to A♠, A♥, A♦, A♣, plus any random card.

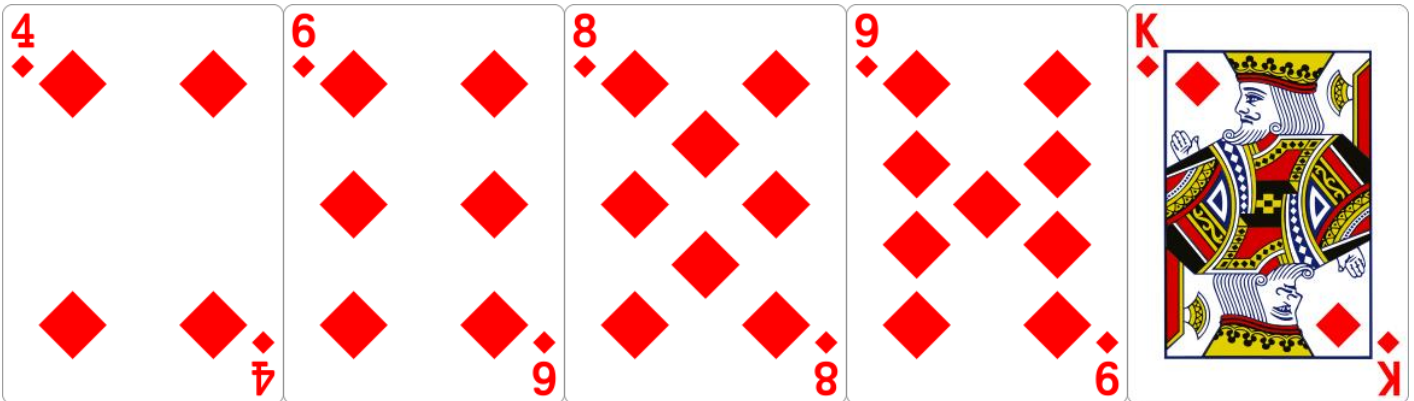## 4. The Full House, which is Three-of-a-Kind and a Pair – How Many? 3744

What is a Full House in Poker? It is a five-card Poker hand that contains three cards (known as Three-of-a-Kind or Trips) of the same rank, and a pair of cards (two cards of the same rank). The value of the Full House is determined by the highest ranked Trips, for example, 6♥, 6♦, 6♣, Q♠, Q♣ is higher than 5♠, 5♥, 5♦, K♥, K♦. If two players have the same Three-of-a-Kind, for example, when playing Texas Hold'Em, then the highest pair is counted, e.g. 9♥, 9♦, 9♣, Q♠, Q♣ will beat 9♠, 9♦, 9♣, J♦, J♣. The Trips are often referred to as being *over* the pair, for example, the previous example is nines over Queens beating nines over Jacks. The hand above is Jacks over threes.

The Full House has the nickname of *Boat*, from *Full Boat*. Maybe because of Poker's original popularity of being played on Mississippi riverboats where saying Full House was less appropriate.

From 2♠, 2♥, 2♦, 3♠, 3♥ with suit variations up to A♠, A♥, A♦, K♥, K♦ with suit variations.
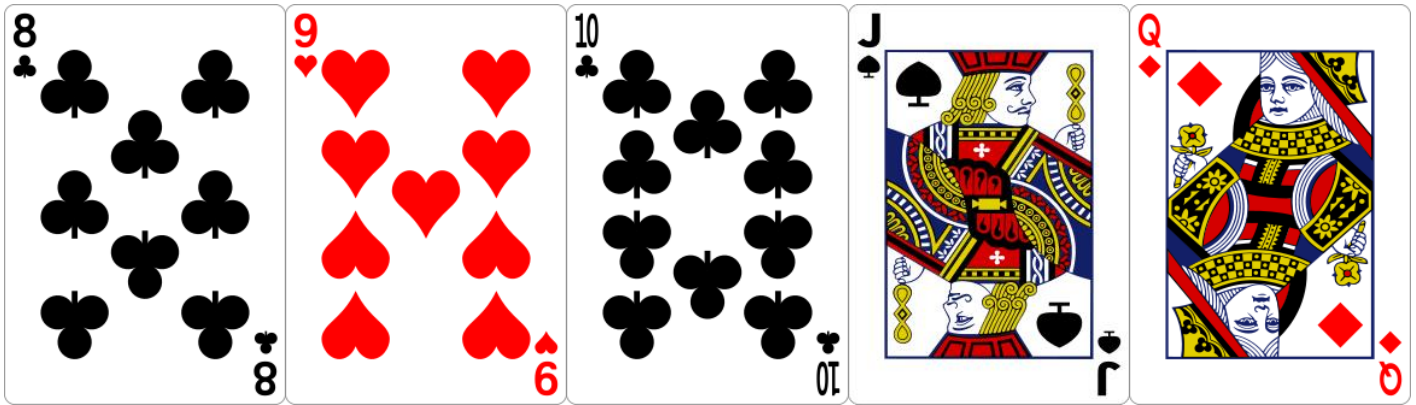
5. The Flush – How Many? 5108

What is a Flush in Poker? A Flush is a Poker hand with all five cards being in the same suit and not in consecutive rank. I.e. the five cards of the same suit must not all increase in rank by one, that would be a Straight Flush. I.e. a Flush is all five cards in a Poker hand coming from the same suit but not being a Straight Flush or Royal Flush. If two or more players have a flush then the flush with the highest ranking cards wins, for example in Five-card Draw Poker, a 3♠, 4♠, 7♠, 9♠, A♠ beats 5♥, 4♥, 7♥, Q♥, K♥ (because A is ranked higher than K), or in Texas Hold'Em, a 6♣, 7♣, 8♣, J♣, K♣ beats 6♣, 7♣, 9♣, 10♣, K♣ (because the Kings are the same but Jacks beat tens).

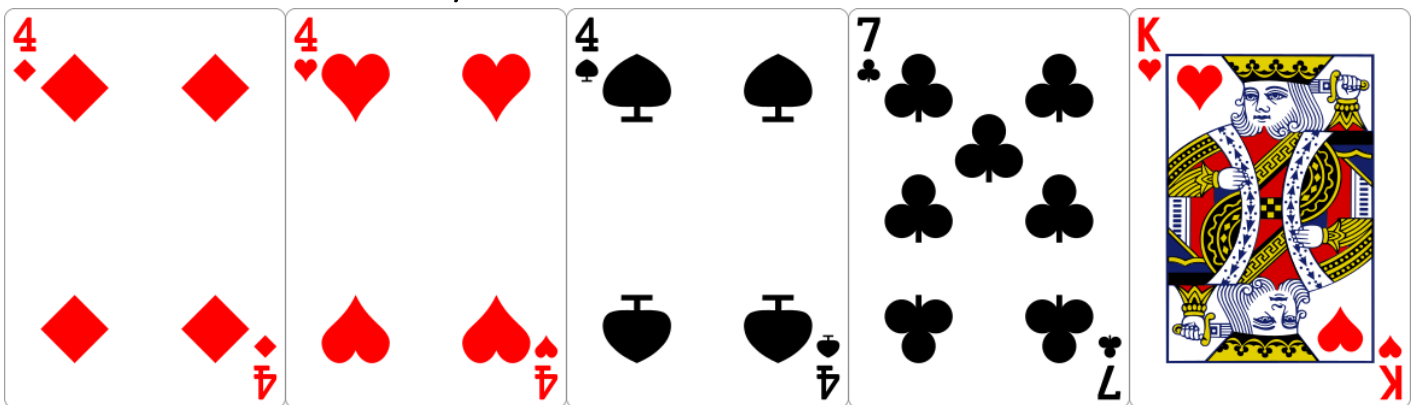From 2♠, 3♠, 4♠, 5♠, 7♠ to 9♠, J♠, Q♠, K♠, A♠ in any of the suits.

6. The Straight – How Many? 10200

What is a Straight in Poker? A Straight is a Poker hand where there are five cards in consecutive rank, but all five cards are not in the same suit. The five cards will increase in value by only one rank but at least one of the cards will be in a different suit, for example, 6♦, 7♣, 8♦, 9♦, 10♦ is a straight. If the seven was a diamond it would be a straight flush. If two players have a straight, then the highest value card decides the winner, for example in Texas Hold'Em 8♠, 9♥, 10♦, J♥, Q♦ beats 7♥, 8♠, 9♣, 10♦, J♥.

From (for example) 2♠, 3♥, 4♦, 5♠, 6♥ to 10♠, J♥, Q♦, K♥, A♦ in any mixed suit combinations.
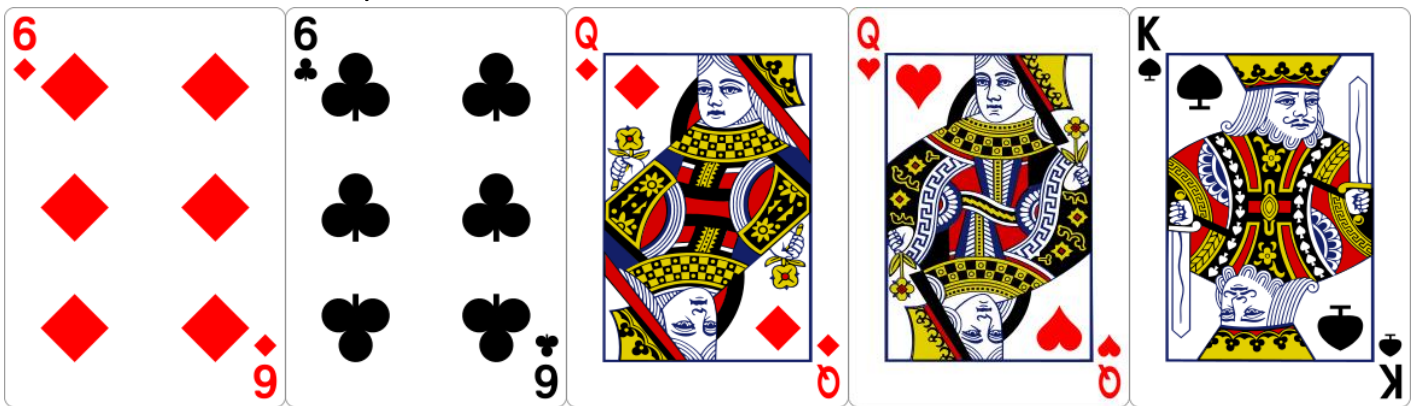
7. Three of a Kind – How Many? 54912

What is Three-of-a-Kind or Trips in Poker? Three-of-a-Kind, or Trips, is a five-card Poker hand with three of the cards being of equal value (rank). The remaining two cards are two random cards, of unequal value (i.e. not a pair) and not of the same value as the Trips (which would make the hand Quads). If two players have Trips then the highest ranking of the Trips cards wins, for example Q♥, Q♠, Q♣, 6♥, K♦ beats J♠, J♣, J♥, 6♣, A♦. If two or more players have Trips that are of the same value then the highest of their random cards, the kicker, determines the winner. For example, in a game of Texas Hold'Em, K♦, K♣, K♥, Q♦, 7♣ beats K♠, K♣, K♥, J♣, 7♣ because the Queen kicker beats the Jack kicker (if the kickers are the same then the fifth cards are compared). Trips is given the name of a *set* in Texas Hold'em when you hold a pair and the same value card appears on the board to make the Three-of-a-Kind.

From (for example) 2♠, 2♥, 2♣, 3♠, 4♥ to A♠, A♥, A♦, K♠, Q♦ in any suit combinations.
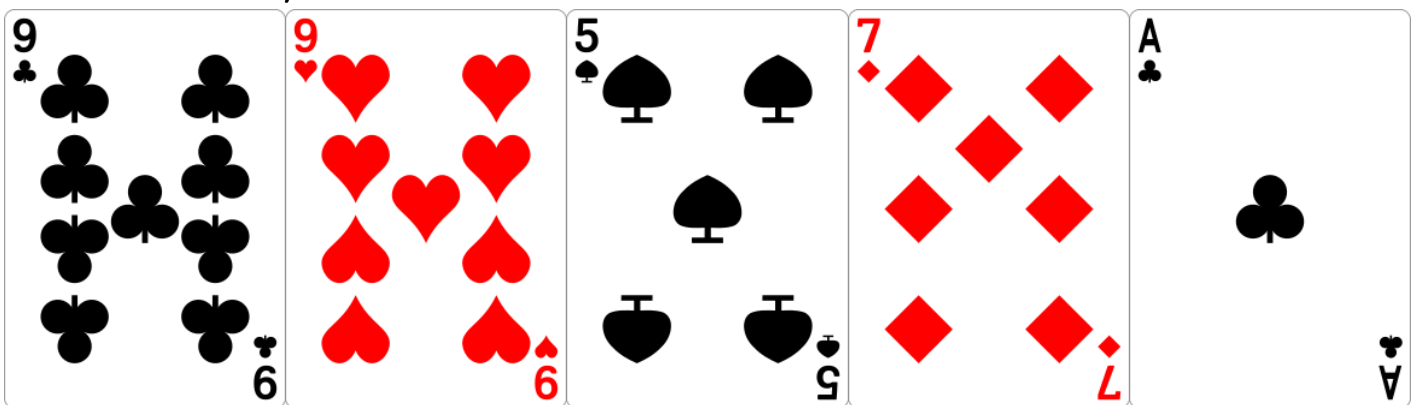
8. Two Pair – How Many? 123552

What is two pairs in a Poker hand? A two-pair Poker hand is when there are two lots of two cards with the same rank in the hand, together with a kicker that is not the same value as the paired cards (which would make the hand a Full House). For example, the Poker hand of J♠, J♣, 8♥, 8♦, 3♦ has two Jacks and two eights with a three kicker. When two or more players have a two pair hand then the highest ranked pair wins. For example, in a Texas Hold'Em game K♠, K♦, 7♣, 7♠, 9♥ beats Q♠, Q♥, 7♣, 7♠, K♦. When two or more players have both pairs of equal rank, then the player with the highest kicker will win. For example, 10♠, 10♦, 5♦, 5♠, Q♥ will beat 10♣, 10♦, 5♦, 5 ♠, J♦.

From (for example) 2♠, 2♥, 3♣, 3♠, 4♥ to A♠, A♥, K♦, K♠, Q♦ in any suit combinations.
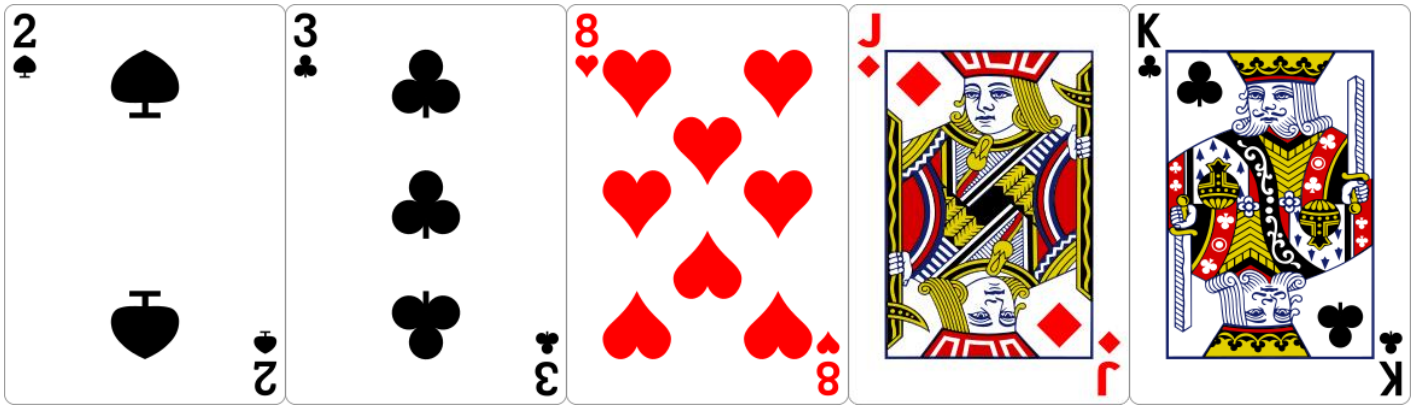
9. Pair – How Many? 1098240

What is a Pair in a Poker hand? A pair in Poker is when two of the five Poker hand cards are the same rank and the remaining three cards are of random values, and not of the rank of the paired cards (which would give Trips or Quads), for example, 8♠, 8♥, 10♠, 3♥, 4♦. When two or more players have the same pair, then the highest kicker card determines the winner. For example, in a game of Texas Hold'Em, K♠, K♦, A♦, 10♣, J♥. beats K♣, K♦, Q♦, 10♣, J♥. If the kicker cards are equal, then the next highest ranked cards determine the winner and may require the lowest value cards to determine the winner. For example, Q♥, Q♠, J♣, 10♥, 9♦ beats Q♦, Q♠, J♣, 10♥, 8♦.

From (for example) 2♠, 2♥, 3♣, 4♠, 5♥ to A♠, A♥, K♦, Q♠, J♦ in any suit combinations.

10. High-Card – How Many? 1302540

What is a High-Card Poker hand? A High-Card hand in Poker is when all five cards are not in the same suit and there are no identical value cards (no Pairs, Trips or Quads), and all five cards do not run consecutively. As the name suggests, when two or more players have High-Card hands, the highest ranked card will win. For example, in a game of Texas Hold'Em 2♠, 6♥, 8♦, 9♠, A♥ beats 2♠, 7♣, 8♦, 9♠, K♦. When the highest cards are the same then the next highest kicker card counts and so on. For example, 4♥, 5♦, 7♠, J♣, K♠ beats 4♥, 5♦, 7♠, 8♦, K♦ because the Jack kicker beats an eight kicker.

From (for example) 2♣, 3♥, 4♣, 5♠, 7♣ to 9♠, J♣, Q♦, K♣, A♦ in any suit combinations.

A Summary of Poker Hand Rankings

The commonly used Poker hand rankings are:

1. Royal Flush, e.g. 10♠, J♠, Q♠, K♠, A♠.
2. Straight Flush, e.g. 7♦, 8♦, 9♦, 10♦, J♦, the highest-ranking card determines the winner when there are two or more Straight Flushes.
3. Quads (Four-of-a-Kind), e.g. 6♠, 6♥, 6♦, 6♣, Q♠, the highest-ranking kicker determines the winner if there are other Quads hands.
4. Full House (Boat), e.g. J♠, J♥, J♦, K♥, K♦, the highest-ranking trips, followed by the highest-ranking pair determines the winner if there are multiple Full Houses.
5. Flush, e.g. 4♠, 5♠, 6♠, 7♠, 8♠, the highest-ranking card determines the winner if there are two or more Flushes.
6. Straight, e.g. 9♦, 10♣, J♥, Q♦, K♥, the highest-ranking card determines the winner if there are two or more Straights.
7. Trips (Three-of-a-Kind, Set), e.g. 9♦, 9♣, 9♥, Q♦, 8♣, the highest-ranking Three-of-a-Kind determines the winner if there are multiple Three-of-a-Kind hands, followed by the highest-ranking kickers if the Three-of-a-Kind are equal.
8. Two Pairs, e.g. 10♣, 10♦, 4♦, 4♠, J♦, highest ranked pair wins, then next highest, then the highest kickers determine the winners if all pairs are equal.
9. Pair, e.g. J♥, J♠, 9♣, 8♥, 5♦, highest ranked pair wins, and the highest kickers and ranked cards determine the winners if equal pairs.
10. High-Card, e.g. 3♠, 5♣, 9♦, 10♠, A♦, highest ranked cards determine the winners.

Finally, it is interesting to note that other five card patterns from a 52-card deck are possible. For example, all-black or all-red cards, or numbered odd or even cards. The Jacks, Queens and Kings, known as the court cards or face cards (because they all have *faces* on them), or *paint* cards, could form a hand, i.e. all five cards being face cards (a Poker hand that has the name *Blaze*). However, all these other patterns are just High-Card hands in common Poker games. There are some obscure games of Poker, house rules or home games that use uncommon hands, but those games are unusual. The uncommon hands are used to increase the chances of a win for players. It is best sticking to the

commonly used hands above and learning the odds for any given situation, that way you minimise potential losses and increasing the potential winnings from a game.