



Modifying Games

The Story:

What I like most about playing cards is that they can play so many different games. But how many of those games can be adapted to play with the Dark Hand deck?

I've come up with a variety of ways to use the light and dark sides of the cards and sorted them into these categories. You can apply one or two of these categories to modify your favorite card games, or let them inspire you to create a new game from scratch.

We choose Dark:

After the deal or any time during the hand, players can decide if they want to play their light hand or dark hand. They can even change their minds later.

This style is great for games like Cribbage or Poker where you need to make the best out of the hand you were dealt.

Remember that the backs of the cards can show other players if you are looking at your light or dark hand, so don't let them use that against you!

I call Dark:

The first player to call light or dark gets a bonus if they can win with cards in that shade.

This means that you could gain an advantage if you are the first to commit to using only your Light or Dark cards. Once you call Dark you can't win the hand with your Light cards anymore. It also means that you are telling the other players a part of your strategy and they may team up against you. If you call dark you may need to risk a little more, but if you succeed you should win a little more.

Mix & Match:

All players can play both the light and dark sides of their cards as they see fit.

Now you can build a hand with both the light and dark sides at the same time. This means that you could hold two of the same card at once, but one is light and the other is dark. For example you could hold a pair of kings and they are both the King of Diamonds.

Mix & Match Advantage:

One player gets to mix light and dark cards but other players can not.

Being able to mix and match your cards when the other players can not puts you in a special position. So how do you choose the special player who can mix their light and dark cards? Maybe it is the dealer, or the player who has the lowest score. Maybe you need to accomplish something special before you can mix and match. Maybe everyone takes turns with this advantage and all the other players team up against them.



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I play Light, you play Dark:

A basic style for 2 player games. One player just plays the light cards while the other just plays the dark. So if you are playing light, you compare and match the light sides of your cards to the light sides of your opponent's cards. Your opponent will compare and match the dark sides of their cards to the dark sides of yours.

You can also play in two teams where one team plays light and the other plays dark. You might also make a rule that lets both players switch to opposite shades at the same time.

We all play Light, then We all play Dark:

All players start by playing light, then they all switch shades at the same time.

The game starts like a normal card game where everyone plays their light cards, but something triggers everyone to switch to their dark hand. Then later they can all switch back to their light hand again.

Maybe the trigger is when someone plays a special card, like an 8 or an Ace. Maybe everyone switches after a trick has been taken. Maybe whoever leads the trick gets to choose light or dark for everyone. Just remember, any time you discard a light card, you are discarding one of your dark cards too!

We play Both:

All players play their Light hand and Dark hand at the same time, but do not Mix and Match.

Essentially you are playing two hands at once, one light and one dark. Can you build a winning hand with your light and dark cards at the same time? Or win rummy with both light and dark melds?

Light connects to Dark:

Each card is a bridge between the light and dark universe. For example, the Seven of Clubs in the light universe is always connected to the Jack of Spades in the dark universe. In this way a set of light cards could connect to a set of dark cards.

We play Light vs. The Dark:

All players play light against an unseen force playing the dark cards.

While you and your opponents are playing with the light cards, an imaginary player is collecting points from the dark sides of any cards that you play. So now you must not only beat your opponent, you must also work together to keep this dark opponent from defeating you all!



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Light rules and Dark rules:

The game rules change when you switch between light and dark cards. They may even be totally different games!

I change your shade, I change my shade:

You can do something to force a player to change between their light and dark hands, or you can do something that lets you change between your light and dark hands. This can be a fun strategy if you score more points with your dark hand than your light hand.

Dark Penalty:

Everyone plays their light hand like a normal game, but if you are willing to pay a price, you can play your Dark Hand instead.

Everyone plays Light:

The Light and Dark sides both contain a complete 52 card deck. If you just want to play a normal card game you can always just ignore the dark side to play with the light side.

Some observations:

Some games work with more than one category.

You can even try making a game that shifts from one category to another.

There may be more categories I haven't thought of yet. Maybe you can come up with something new?

Some games are just impractical for the Dark Hand deck. For example, games like solitaire where you sort the whole deck by suit don't really let you use both light and dark cards.

It's all about the fun!

Don't be discouraged if you make a game that doesn't quite work out or isn't as fun as you hoped. After playing, sometimes a game needs a few adjustments to balance it out.

Ideally, a game should offer a player choices.

Winning a game should take a balance of skill and luck.



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When I write the rules for a card game, I start with this list. If you can fill in each of these categories, you should have a playable and teachable game.

Name of Your Game:

Number of Players:

(3-5 players? Solitaire?)

Summary:

(A simple description of the game. Is this like another game people enjoy?)

Object:

(What is your goal to win?)

The Deck:

(Which deck do you need for the game? Dark Hand, Jenken Deck? Do you remove any cards like the Jokers? Does the game use multiple decks? Do you need other playing pieces like dice or chips?)

The Deal:

(How many cards do you deal to each player? How do you lay out cards on the table? Make a diagram if it helps.)

The Play:

(What happens in each turn? When does the turn end? When do you draw or play cards? Are there special rules for the Jokers?) Sometimes I make separate sections of Play when the game is more complicated.

The End:

(How do you know when the game is over? How do you keep score? How do you determine the winner?)

Variations:

(Is there an easy and hard version of the game? Can you play a different version of the game with Jokers or wild cards?)

If you discover a fun game that you think others would enjoy, please share! Submit your favorite games at JankenDeck.com so players around the world can try it too.