Basic Double-12 Dominoes

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Double 12 Dominoes

Double 12 dominoes can be used to play a wide variety of games—such as Mexican Train, Bergen, Tiddle-a-Wink, Matador, Four-Hand Texas, Muggins, Poker-Block, Sebastopol, and Bingo. This guide explains the rules for basic gameplay.

The Equipment

A Double-12 domino set contains 91 tiles. Each tile displays a unique pair of numbers—called pips—ranging from 0 to 12.

Basic Gameplay Rules

Basic dominoes is played over a series of rounds. To win a round, a player must play all the dominoes in their hand. The round winner earns points equal to the total number of pips remaining in their opponents' hands. The game continues over multiple rounds until one player reaches a designated target score. In a standard game, the target is 100 points. For a shorter game, a target of 50 points may be used.

Starting a Round

All the tiles are placed face down on the table and shuffled thoroughly. Each player draws seven dominoes to form their hand, making sure to keep them hidden from other players. The remaining dominoes are left face down as the draw pile, known as the boneyard. To begin the round, the player with the highest double—such as the [12|12]—places that tile in the center. If no player has a double, all tiles are returned face down, reshuffled, and new hands are drawn.
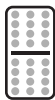
Gameplay

Play proceeds clockwise from the starting player. On their turn, each player must match one of their dominoes to an open end of the existing layout. The first few plays must be made perpendicularly off the center double. Each player's first move must connect directly to the center double. This helps form the initial layout and ensures fair access for all players.
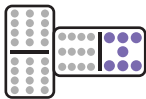
If a player cannot make a valid move, they must draw tiles from the boneyard until they can play. Only one tile may be played per turn — even if multiple tiles are drawn.
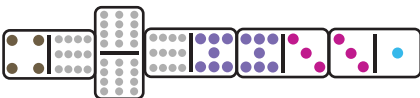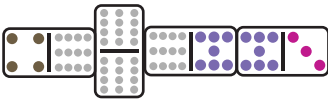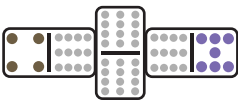
Double Dominoes

When a double tile is played, it is placed perpendicular to the tile it connects with.

Ending a Round

A round ends when one player has played their final tile, or if no players can make a move and the boneyard is empty. In the case of a blocked round, the player with the lowest total pip count on their remaining tiles is declared the winner of the round.
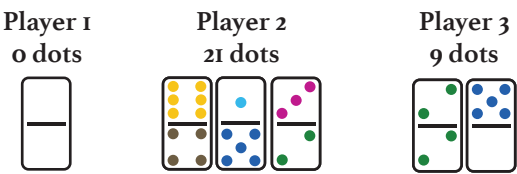
Scoring a Round

At the end of the round, the winning player totals the number of pips on all opponents' remaining tiles. From that sum, the winner subtracts their own pip total — typically zero if they have emptied their hand.

Scoring Example A

Player 1 7 dots	Player 2 21 dots	Player 3 9 dots
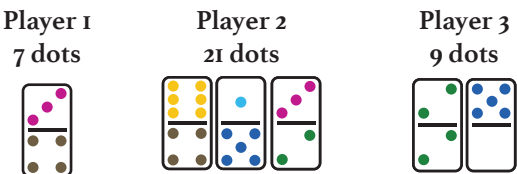
Round Winner = Player 1
Winning Score = 21 + 9 - 7 = 23

Scoring Example B

Player 1 0 dots	Player 2 21 dots	Player 3 9 dots

Round Winner = Player 1
Winning Score = 21 + 9 - 0 = 30

Winning the Game

The game continues across multiple rounds until a player reaches 100 points. For a quicker game, players may agree to a target of 50 points instead.