

How to Play Codenames

Pictures

As Codenames Pictures is very similar to the original Codenames, if you are familiar with the original game you can skip to the What's New section for the additional rules you need to know for Codenames Pictures.

Setup

- The players will divide into two teams. The teams don't need the same number of players but each team needs at least two players.
- Each team will choose one player to be the spymaster. The rest of the players will be the field operatives. The spymasters from both teams should sit next to one another on one side of the table.
- Randomly choose 20 of the pictures and place them into a 5 x 4 grid on the table. The symbol in the top right of the cards shows which side of the card is the top.
- The spymasters randomly choose one of the key cards and place it in the stand.
- Separate the agent cards based on their colors. Each team chooses a color and the spymaster takes the agent cards corresponding to the chosen color. The bystander and assassin cards are placed between the two spymasters.
- The color on the side of the chosen key card determines which team starts the game. The starting team's spymaster takes the double agent card (red on one side and blue on the other) as they will have to find one additional agent during the game.



Playing the Game

At the beginning of the game the two spymasters will study the key card. The squares on the key card correspond to the picture cards in the same spaces in the grid. Red squares indicate agents for the red team. Blue squares show the location of blue agents. Pale squares are bystanders and the black square is the location of the assassin.



For this code card the assassin is on the darts/calendar picture. The blue team will need to pick the left, middle and right card in the top row; the second card from the left in the second row; and the second, third and fourth card from the left in the third row. The red team has to pick the second card from the left in the first row; the first, third, fourth and fifth cards in the second row; and the first, third, and fifth card in the bottom row.

After studying the key card, the first spymaster will give a clue to their teammates. The spymaster tries to come up with a clue that gets their teammates to pick the cards corresponding to their color while avoiding the other team's color, the bystanders and definitely the assassin. When the spymaster gives their clue they will give a one word clue and a number which indicates how many of their team's cards that the clue applies to. The following rules must be followed when giving clues:

- All clue words can only be one word. The clues cannot use hyphens or spaces. If all of the players agree, this rule can be relaxed to allow two or more words that are commonly associated with one another.
- Unlike normal Codenames, you may give a clue by naming exactly what is pictured on the card.
- A player can use a clue word that has several meanings to apply to multiple cards.
- The spymaster can choose to spell out their word clue if they think that will help clarify their clue. If a player asks for the word to be spelled, the spymaster must spell out the clue.
- You may not use a clue word that corresponds to something other than the pictures themselves. For example you can't use a clue corresponding to the location of a card(s). You also can't make clues based on the letter that the picture starts with.



This team has found a bystander so they place the bystander card on the picture. The other team then takes their turn.

- Assassin: If the players choose the assassin card, the card is covered by the assassin card. By revealing the assassin, this team automatically loses the game (unless they are playing with the Assassin Ending variant rule).



The assassin has been revealed. Whichever team revealed the assassin loses the game.

End of Game

Codenames Pictures can end in one of two ways.

If a team reveals the assassin, their team immediately loses the game.

If all of the agents from one of the teams are revealed (can be done on the other team's turn), that team wins the game.



The blue team has revealed all seven of their agents so they have won the game.