



The mission of Texas Hold'em Poker is to be able to construct your five-card poker hands using the best available five cards out of the seven total cards (your two-hole cards and the five community cards).

You can do that by using both your hole cards in combination with three community cards, one hole card in combination with four community cards, or *no hole cards*. If there's a better combination, you can also play all five community cards.

So how do you play Texas Hold'em?

- In a game of Texas Hold'em, each player is dealt two cards face down (the '*hole cards*').
- Over several betting rounds, five more cards are (eventually) dealt face up in the middle of the table.
- These face-up cards are called the '*community cards*.' Each player is free to use the community cards in combination with their hole cards to build a five-card poker hand.

The Blinds

The blinds are forced bets that begin the wagering. Before every new hand begins, two players at the table are obligated to post small and big blinds – those two players being the people positioned to the left of the dealer.

Without these blinds, the game would be very without action because no one would be *required* to put any money into the pot and players could just wait around.

Betting Rounds

Preflop

The first round of betting takes place right after each player has been dealt two-hole cards.

The first player has three options to call (match the amount of the big blind), raise (increase the bet within the specific limits of the game) – in this instance, ensure you announce the raise before putting your chips into the pot or fold (throw the hand away).

If the player chooses to fold, they are out of the game and no longer eligible to win the current hand. The amount a player can raise to depends on the game that is being played. After the first player acts, the play proceeds in a clockwise fashion with each player being able to call, to raise, or fold.

Once the last bet is called and the action is 'closed,' the preflop round is over and play moves on to the "flop."

The Flop

In the flop, the first three community cards are dealt and a second betting round proceeds. Along with the options to bet, call, fold, or raise, a player now has the option to '*check*' (pass the action to the next player in the hand) if no betting action has occurred.

It also can happen that every player simply chooses to check around the table, which also ends the betting round.

The Turn

The fourth community card, called the turn, is dealt face-up following all betting action on the flop.

Once this has been completed, another round of betting occurs. Continuing the previous rounds, players have the option to options to check, bet, call, fold, or raise.

The River

The fifth community card, called the river, is dealt face-up.

After all betting action has completed, the remaining players in the hand with hole cards now expose their holdings to determine a winner. This is called the showdown.

The Showdown

The remaining players show their hole cards, and with the assistance of the dealer, a winning hand is determined. The player with the best combination of five cards wins the pot.