BURNOUT

A Bidding Game for 2 Players

Burnout *is a two-player bidding game for the Pairs deck. It is shown here with Andrew Kolb's* **Las Vegas** *deck, but of course it can be played with any Pairs deck.*

Players: 2
You Need: A Pairs deck and a way to keep score

Setup: Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of 8 cards to each player.

Table Layout: Below is a diagram showing all the positions on the table. Each player has their own discard pile, as well as a pile of "reserves" that will return to their hand. There is also a shared discard pile, for cards that are no longer needed.

PLAYER 2

Reserve Pile 2	Bid 2		Score Pile 2
			Discard Player 2
	Target	DECK	Shared Discard Pile
Reserve Pile 1	Bid 1	Discard Player 1	
			Score Pile 1

PLAYER 1

First Round: On the first round of the game, turn over the top card of the deck and place it in the "target" spot. Each player selects exactly one card from their hand and plays it face down. These cards are revealed simultaneously.

The card you played is a "bid," and the higher of the two bids will capture the target, adding that card to their score pile, face up. The winning bid is discarded, face up, and the losing bid goes into that player's reserve pile, also face up.

Ties: If there is a tie on this round, discard both the bid cards and the target card into the shared discard pile. Each player draws one card, and they play another first round.

Discards and Reserves: When a card *wins* a bid, it is discarded into its owner's discard pile. When a card *loses* a bid, it is set aside in that player's reserve pile. Cards in reserve will go back into their owner's hand, when their hand is empty.

> **Example 1:** The target is a 9. Player 1 plays an 8, and player 2 plays a 6. Player 1 wins the bid, taking the 9 into their score pile, and putting the 8 into their discard pile. Player 2's 6 goes into Player 2's reserve.

> **Example 2:** The target is an 8. Both players play a 10. Because the bids are tied, all three cards are discarded into the shared pile. Both players draw another card, and replay the first round.

Normal Play: After the first round, players play rounds in turn, with the winner of the previous round playing first.

To begin each round, deal a card from the deck into the target space.

The first player may play any number of cards from their hand, face down, or they may pass.

Then the second player has the same options. The second player doesn't have to play their card(s) face down, since all cards will be revealed next.

The higher total bid wins the target. The cards(s) from the winning bid go into that player's discard pile, and the losing bid goes into that player's reserve, as described above.

Tied Bids: If the bids are tied, the target is split. This is accomplished by discarding all the bid cards and target cards into the shared discard pile. When this happens, the same player will act first on the next round.

No Bids: If both players pass, the round is *not over*. Add another card to the target from the deck, and replay the bidding sequence. The winner of this bid scores all of those cards.

Empty Hand: When a player's hand is empty, they pick up the cards in their reserve.

Note: Sometimes towards the end of the game, a player will have only one card left, and so it returns immediately to their hand each time it is played.

Burnout: When one player has no cards left in either their hand or their reserve, the game is over. The player with cards remaining must now *burn out* the rest of their hand, as follows:

> Discard your hand into your personal discard pile, and then take an equal number of cards as you discarded, from the deck into your score pile.

Scoring: Every card in your score pile is worth points equal to its rank. Every card in your discard pile is worth *negative points*. The player with the highest total wins.

Multi-Hand Scoring: You can play one hand of Burnout as a self-contained game, or you can keep score for a series of hands.

To keep score over multiple rounds, track only the *difference* between the players' scores, counting this as a positive value for the winner, and play to a total score of 30 points.
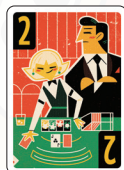
Cleaning Up: At several places in the game, you may be able to get a jump on scoring by cleaning up (discarding) any cards that total to zero points.

For example, as soon as you take a target card with a bid of the same size, this results in a net score of zero. You may put both of those cards directly into the shared discard pile.

Similarly, whenever you have cards of equal value in your score pile and discard pile, you can remove them together to the shared discard pile.

It's also possible to zero out cards from both players' piles. For example, if the same value appears in both players' discard piles, or both players' score piles, these cards can be removed and zeroed out. (This is what happens when the players zero out all cards in a tied bid.)
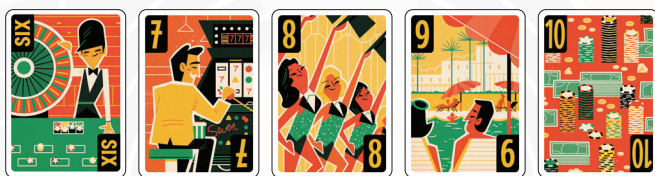
Strategy: Your basic goal is clearly to capture the most points at the lowest cost, but it can be dangerous to play too greedily, because you can end up with too many big cards that burn out, for less than they might have captured.

The average value of a random card is 7, not accounting for any cards you have seen come out of the deck, so if you burn out a hand of cards 8 and higher, each one is likely to be a loss.

You will find that large cards in your hand can be a liability, but they also have great buying power. A different strategy is needed to maximize the value of a hand of smaller cards, versus a hand of larger ones, and even the individual small cards have different uses that you will discover over time.

Remember that you can pass, and that you can play more than one card as a bid (except on the first round). Sometimes you might play a very small bid with multiple cards, as a bluff.

Pay close attention to the cards your opponent plays, because once they have all cycled through the reserve pile, you will know every card in their hand.