

# ROMAN POKER

THAT'S HOW THEY USED TO ROLL!  
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Players: 2–6

Ages: 10 and up

Duration: about 30 minutes

Dice games were extremely popular in Ancient Rome. Everybody played them—from slaves to the Emperor. They were viewed as “immoral” and often banned, but that did not deter most Romans! The sound of rolling dice was heard in tavern back rooms and Senator’s atriums. But anyone caught by the custodians of good morals had to pay four times their wager—as penance to the gods!

## GAME PIECES

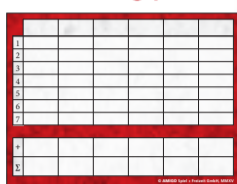
6 Roman dice



36 Action cards



1 Scoring pad



## THE GOAL OF THE GAME

Players try to roll the highest possible valid Roman numbers using the six dice, and enter these numbers on the scoring pad in ascending order. Every entry scores points, and the player with the most points wins!

Keep in mind this piece of Roman wisdom: *Si tibi tessella favet ego te studio vincam* (“Even though the luck of the die may favor you, I will defeat you through deliberation”).

## GETTING READY TO PLAY

- Write each player’s name in one of the columns on the **scoring pad**. Appoint one player to be Scorekeeper during the game. You will need a pen or pencil.



- Give each player one **set of six different action cards**. Any leftover cards can be put back in the box.



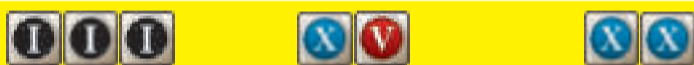
- Give all **six dice** to the player whose name is in the leftmost column. He or she will be the starting player. After that, play passes to the left (clockwise).

## HOW TO PLAY

Players take turns rolling the dice. On your turn, you start by rolling **only one die**.

### Continue or Stop

After you roll the dice, you must make a choice: **Roll one more die** or **Stop**. You may continue rolling as long as you can arrange the results of your die rolls into a **valid Roman number** (see the overview at the end of the rules).



$$1 + 1 + 1 = 3 \quad \text{or} \quad 10 + 5 = 15 \quad \text{or} \quad 10 + 10 = 20$$

A single One, or “I” can be either added to or subtracted from a Five (“V”) or a Ten (“X”).

$$1 + X = 9 \quad \text{or} \quad X - 1 = 11 \quad \text{or} \quad 1 + V = 4 \quad \text{or} \quad V - 1 = 6$$

**Example:** Julius first rolls a V and then an X. This gives him X V = 15. He decides to make a third roll and gets an I. His result now is either X I V = 14 or X V I = 16.

1. Roll

2. Roll

3. Roll

### Stop Rolling and Score Points

If you decide to stop rolling (or after you roll the 6th die) and your final result is a valid Roman number, the Scorekeeper writes the number down in your column of the scoring pad. You decide which of the seven rows you want your number to be written in (one number per row).

#### Important!

- The numbers must increase in value from the first to the seventh row!
- Any given number may only appear once in your column!

**Example:** Julius decides not to roll a fourth die, and asks the Scorekeeper to write his result of X V I = 16 in the second row of his column.

Once your number has been written down, your turn ends. Pass the dice to the player on your left.

	Julius	Agrippina	Gaius
1			
2	16		
3			

### Misthrow

Your roll counts as a **misthrow** if

- You **can’t form a valid Roman number** using all the dice you rolled. This will happen if you roll a **fourth I** or a **second V**, for example; or
- After rolling the 6th die, you realize that the result is either: already listed in your column; or
- cannot be correctly entered into any open row in your column (because of the rule of increasing values).

If you have made a **misthrow** (and only then), you must decide to either:

- Not enter a number this round and pass the turn to the next player; or
- Use one or more of your action cards to change the result of your roll. (Note that you can only use an action card after a misthrow!)

## Action Cards

You can use each of your action cards only once, then it is removed from the game.



You may reroll any number of **I** you have rolled this turn, all at the same time.



You may reroll any number of **V** you have rolled this turn, all at the same time.



You may reroll any one die you rolled this turn.



You may remove any one die you rolled this turn and ignore it for your other rolls. You can still roll any dice you haven't rolled yet.

**Example:** Agrippina has rolled **X X V I V** in that order. She plays this action card to remove the second **V** from her result, and the Scorekeeper writes "26" in her column (she decided not to roll the 6<sup>th</sup> die).



You may add a number to your column even if you already used the same number before. However, you must still follow the rule of increasing values.

**Example:** Gaius has rolled the valid Roman number **X X X I I I**. But, that number has already been written in the sixth row of his column, so he plays this action card. Now he can have "33" added in the fifth or the seventh row. He decides on the fifth position.



**Wild!** You may use this card for any one of the actions described above.

	Julius	Agrippina	Gaius
5		27	33
6		29	33
7	35		

## THE END OF THE GAME

The game will end as soon as any player enters the seventh number into his or her column: the current round of play is still completed, so that everyone has the same number of turns. **The starting player may not roll again.**

Any player who still has unused action cards at the end of the game receives a **bonus of five points** per unused card.

Each player adds up all of the numbers in his or her column, and adds this bonus to the total to determine their final score.

**Example to the right:** Gaius has won with 196 points!



	Julius	Agrippina	Gaius
1	9	18	19
2	16	23	21
3	25	26	23
4	31		28
5		27	33
6	33	29	33
7	35	37	39
+	15	20	
Σ	164	180	196

## SPECIAL CASES

- The game also ends after the current round if a player has no action cards left at the beginning of his or her turn **and** makes a misthrow that turn.
- Four **X** are only valid if it forms the number = **X X X I X**. So, a result of **X X X X** is not yet a misthrow: you may continue rolling and try to roll an **I**.
- The number „38“ cannot be made up with the six dice.
- Optional Rules:** If you're an experienced player and you want to gamble a bit more, you can roll more than one die at the same time. Also, you can allow players to use the action cards even if they rolled a valid Roman number.

## ROMAN NUMBER OVERVIEW

1 = <b>I</b>	11 = <b>X I</b>	21 = <b>X X I</b>	31 = <b>X X X I</b>
2 = <b>I I</b>	12 = <b>X I I</b>	22 = <b>X X I I</b>	32 = <b>X X X I I</b>
3 = <b>I I I</b>	13 = <b>X I I I</b>	23 = <b>X X I I I</b>	33 = <b>X X X I I I</b>
4 = <b>I V</b> *	14 = <b>X I V</b>	24 = <b>X X I V</b>	34 = <b>X X X I V</b>
5 = <b>V</b>	15 = <b>X V</b>	25 = <b>X X V</b>	35 = <b>X X X V</b>
6 = <b>V I</b>	16 = <b>X V I</b>	26 = <b>X X V I</b>	36 = <b>X X X V I</b>
7 = <b>V I I</b>	17 = <b>X V I I</b>	27 = <b>X X V I I</b>	37 = <b>X X X V I I</b>
8 = <b>V I I I</b>	18 = <b>X V I I I</b>	28 = <b>X X V I I I</b>	38 = not possible with six dice
9 = <b>I X</b>	19 = <b>X I X</b>	29 = <b>X X I X</b>	39 = <b>X X X I X</b>
10 = <b>X</b>	20 = <b>X X</b>	30 = <b>X X X</b>	

\* **Note:** While there is an alternative form of notation for Roman numbers, this game uses only the most well known one, which does not allow the same numeral to appear four times in a row.

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