

Introduction

Congratulations on having got so far. You are now able to handle a deck of cards properly and execute practically all basic moves that are necessary for neat and elegant card handling. The tricks you have learned up to here will allow you to gain your first performing experience before a live audience. Consider this lesson as a bonus, where I will teach you three more wonderful tricks, each with a different effect:

- The first trick is an amazing *production* of the four Aces from an apparently shuffled deck.
- The second is an intriguing *coincidence*, combined with a *location* and a *prediction*.
- The third is a demonstration of an apparently *extraordinary memory*.

At the end I will briefly discuss how you can put these tricks together to obtain a little program.

Learning Goals

In this lesson you will learn...

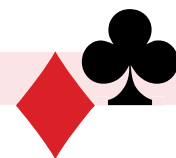
- ...three excellent tricks that can be done at any time with a normal deck of cards and how to combine them into a little program.
- ...how to use the «non-techniques» from Lesson 11.
- ...a very useful way of locating a selected card without resorting to difficult moves.
- ...various subtleties of card handling that you will be able to use for the rest of your life.
- ...yet another application of a clever mathematical principle.

Belchou Aces

This is Richard Vollmer's elegant variation on the well-known Ace-cutting trick by Steve Belchou¹, described with his permission.

Effect

The shuffled deck is cut by the spectator into four about equal packets and the top card of each packet turned face up. Cards are dealt according to the values of these cards, but in spite of the haphazard nature of the procedure, the four Aces are revealed!



A deck is thoroughly shuffled.



The spectator cuts the deck into 4 approximately equal packets.



The top card of each packet is turned over and said to have...



...a meaning. Cards are dealt on the table...



...according to the value of the card cut to. Nonetheless...



...the top card of each packet turns out to be an Ace!

Preparation

This is your first trick in this course that will require a preparation, albeit a very simple one. A group of specially arranged cards is called a «set-up» or an «arrangement» when the cards and their order are referred to, and a «stock» when just the group as a whole is meant.

The set-up is this: on top of the face-down deck are any Five, two indifferent cards, the four Aces, followed by the balance of the deck.

Prologue

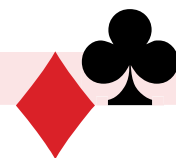
In my presentation I speak about having handled the cards for many years, every day, for many hours. I have therefore established an affinity with them, a real friendship, and *they talk to me*.

This is the prologue I use that introduces the plot, and of course it fits me because in some way it is even true. Take this as an exercise to find a text that would fit *you*.

Spectator Cuts the Deck Into Four Piles

As you give the deck a shuffle and cut - both false and maintaining the top stock as we've learned in Lesson 11 - deliver your introductory lines. Place the deck face down on the table and ask someone to cut the deck into four roughly equal piles. As he does this, keep track of the pile with the setup on top. Here we'll assume it to be farthest to your right.





For laypeople it is not easy to estimate four equal packets, but in this particular case it doesn't matter how big or small each packet is, as long as the packet with your set-up consists of at least seven cards.

You should, however, take care that if the spectator cuts unequal packets, he doesn't correct their size by putting cards from a larger packet on top of a smaller one – this could upset your set-up... To prevent this from happening ask the spectator to first cut the deck in half, and then cut each half again in half. In this way all four packets will be approximately the same size and no «correction» will be provoked.

You Have Cut Exactly to...

Turn up the top card on each pile and place it in front of its pile. Let's say these are a Four, a Seven, a King and a Five (the Five is of course the top card of your set-up).



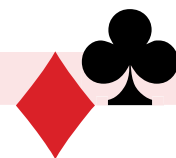
You can create some situational comedy by building this moment up as if it was an effect. You could therefore say something along these lines *before you turn up the cards*, «Please remember that the cards were shuffled and you yourself have cut the deck. You must agree, that I have in no way influenced where you cut.» Wait for the affirmative answer, and then immediately proceed by turning up the first card, «Nonetheless...you have cut *exactly* to the Four of Hearts!» Make it sound as if this was quite something. Follow up by turning the other three cards up and naming them aloud. Then look into the audience with a satisfied look, as if you had accomplished something very unusual. Your spectators will look back and wonder if you have a nut loose.

Le Carte Parlanti

Tie in with the plot established in the prologue and say that the cards are *obviously* telling us something, they are speaking to us. If you say this tongue-in-cheek, the audience will play along. Depending on how you sense your audience's tolerance and playful abilities, you can go a bit further by asking, «Do you know what they are telling us?»

Whatever they answer, explain that the Four is telling you to deal four cards – of course! Pick up the pile behind the Four and count four cards into a face-down pile in the space just occupied by the pile from which you are dealing.





Follow this by dealing one card onto each of the other three piles.



If you need a reason for this, you might say, «*Because that's the rule - and I make the rules.*» Set the remaining cards you hold onto the pile of four dealt cards.



Repeat this procedure with the other three piles, counting seven cards, ten (for the King) and five.

If you have a high card, such as a Nine, a Ten or a court card, and estimate that you don't have enough cards to reach the full count, explain, «*Besides being counted, the cards can even be spelled,*» and spell the value of the card (K-I-N-G would be just four cards). This mixture of counting with spelling actually makes the procedure more interesting.

In order to increase attention after two repetitions, on the third card you might say something like, «*Kings are wild. What value would you like it to have?*» A «wild card» in some card games is a card that can take the value of any other card, like a Joker. Your helper then determines the number to which you count or spell.

Grand Finale

When you have finished counting five cards off the fourth pile and have dealt a card onto each of the other three piles, an Ace will lie on top of all four, which you may reveal to suit any theme you wish to give this intriguing piece.



Lest I forget...

1. In theory you could simply have the four Aces with any Three on top of the deck, thus reducing the initial set-up to just five cards. However, the fact of taking away five cards on the last packet, instead of three, considerably camouflages the working.
2. Once you have gained enough confidence in the performance of this trick, you can try to *let the spectator do all the actions*. This will result in you never touching the deck, an amazing feature.