

A u3a Beginners Guide to Mahjong

Introduction

The content of this book will help u3a members to teach themselves how to play Mahjong. Many people have already played the game in the past, but rules may vary wherever the game was learned.

This book is based on the 'British Mahjong Association' rules. However, if a group of people are playing together, as long as they agree the rules before they begin, and they are enjoying themselves – this should be the deciding factor.

The u3a motto is 'Learn, Laugh and Live!'

It is important to understand the tiles and learn the suits before playing the game. A quiz has been included at each stage to check understanding so far. Keeping these with the correct answers may prove to be a useful resource for the learner. Answers are, of course, included at the back of this book – also a Glossary and a bibliography for further reading, if you wish.

If you need any help let me know

Have fun playing!

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U3a Mahjong Subject Adviser

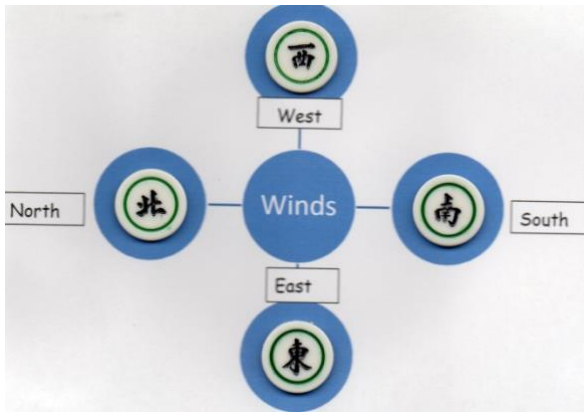
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History of the Game of Mahjong



The counters dice and wind discs have been portrayed as far back as the Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD). Records of the Chung Dynasty 960-1279AD show a similar game to Mahjong known as Ma Chuek which was played with 40 curved pieces similar to dominoes, as a gambling game. So the origin is partly based on a Chinese form of dominoes and a card game similar to rummy called '108 Brigands' popular since 17th century [There are 108 suit tiles in the game of Mahjong]

Mahjong as we know it is believed to have developed in the Ningpo region of China in the 1870s – it was further developed in China with each region having its own rules with special hands. Chinese children learned to play by watching, so there were no written instructions – no standardised rules.

Joseph P Babcock who was a rep for the Standard Oil Company in Suzhou collected and interpreted the many conflicting variations throughout China. Arabic numbers engraved on to the tiles were first intro by Mr Babcock in 1920 when he imported to the USA sets of tiles in sufficient quantity. He simplified the game and introduced a standard set of rules which could easily be understood giving us the game of Mahjong as we know it today.

In its present form Mahjong is most closely linked to rummy - Sets of 3 or 4 tiles to complete a set common in both games. It has its own terminology and suits - there are 108 suit tiles, 16 wind tiles, 12 dragon tiles, four flower tiles and 4 season tiles – total 144 [in some sets there are 4 white 'joker' tiles – if these are not available the 2 Bamboos are used as the joker tiles] If no one goes Mahjong a deciding game called a 'Goulash' is played. The game has evolved in China, Japan, NZ, US & Britain with differing national characteristics.

The Chinese game is a fast, noisy and stylised form of rummy played for high stakes, whereas the Western game appears to Eastern eyes as slow, unnecessarily complicated and of little interest as far as gambling is concerned.

The Game

Mahjong means 'Sparrow' so when moving the tiles - it is called 'Twittering' because of the sound it makes

The advanced game requires some skill, strategy and calculation - a whole game could take 5 hours. [Needless to say we stop after an agreed length of time rather than play to the end] It may not be as intellectual as chess or as easy as backgammon or as chancy as poker but it is probably not as addictive as bridge. However, no other game uses such beautiful equipment. The quality of the set adds to the pleasure of the game. It is fun to play – the outcome is determined by mental skill as well as chance.

Mahjong is a game for 3 or 4 players – usually played by 4 separate individuals. Players have a special routine for choosing who will break the 'Great Wall of China' and each player takes 13 tiles then East Wind takes a 14th – as East is first to discard a tile. To play the game -each player takes one tile from the wall at a time in turn anti-clockwise and discards the one they don't want. The idea is to form a '**Pung**' (set of three the same) or a '**Kong**'(set of 4 the same) or a '**Chow**'(a run of three tiles).

The objective of the game is to obtain a complete set of 4 defined groups of three tiles ('**Pungs**') or four tiles ('**Kongs**') and one pair i.e. 14 tiles in all to call Mahjong. [NB no tile is discarded when calling Mahjong] There is a selection of 'Special' hands that can be collected to allow higher scores (P17) – these are for more advanced players. If no-one goes Mahjong then a '**Goulash**' is played (P10)

The Tiles

There are **three** suits: – Circles



Bamboo



1 Bamboo is always shown as a bird, usually a peacock or an owl.

Characters



Tiles are numbered 1-9 and there are 4 of each tile.

16 wind tiles – 4 of each wind - East, South, West, North

[ESWN - Eat Soy With Noodles -helps to remember order of play anticlockwise]

These are 'Honour' Tiles.



12 dragon tiles – Red, Green and White - 4 of each dragon – some White dragons have a 'B' or no letter. These too are 'Honour' Tiles



[Note: Shown here, the White Dragon has a 'P' on it. (See Glossary for explanation of letters on Dragon tiles) Some sets include blank tiles which can be used as 'Jokers' when playing a 'Goulash' instead of using 2 Bamboos]

-4 flower tiles – Plum Blossom, Orchid, Chrysanthemum, Bamboo – usually red numbers



and 4 season tiles – Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter – usually black numbers



Total 144 [plus 4 blank tiles if included =148][The Flower & Season tiles do not form part of the play but are used as bonuses for scoring later in the game]



Mahjong Quiz 1

1. In which suit is there a picture of a bird on the 'one' tile?
2. What is the order of the four winds?
3. How many tiles are in a 'Pung'?
4. Flower and Season tiles are used to make sets. True or False?
5. Apart from Flowers & Seasons, how many of each tile is in a Mahjong set?
6. What is a 'Kong'?
7. Does play move clockwise or anti-clockwise round the table?
8. Which set of tiles are known as Red, Green and White?
9. When is a 'Goulash' played?
10. What is a 'chow' and how many points does it score? When can it not be played?

Step by Step instructions on How to play

1. Play starts by throwing **two dice** to see who will be East Wind first. The highest score becomes East Wind. (Some groups like to sit down and play while others like to draw for the other three winds.) West Wind sits opposite East and South sits on the right of East Wind. The tiles are mixed up - sometimes called 'Twittering of the Sparrows' because of the noise it makes. NB Prevailing Wind and person opposite do not Twitter (i.e. Wind of the Round – always East first)



2. East Wind calls '**Pow**' when he/she considers them sufficiently stirred. Players each proceed to place 18 tiles in front of them and build another 18 on top (total 36) – the tiles are then moved forward as shown into a square to create 'The Great Wall of China'. [No gaps to let in 'evil spirits!']



(Note: It is usual to go **in** on the left and **out** on the right when pushing the wall into place. However, some groups just let East wind and West wind push their tiles forward and South and North move theirs to touch so as to form the 'Great Wall of China')

3. The two dice are thrown again by East Wind to decide who will break the wall. East Wind is No.1 and the numbering continues anti-clockwise – so South is No. 2, West is No 3 and North is No.4.



(So if East Wind throws a 7 – you count round anti-clockwise until you get to 7 - East being 1 – this should be West in this case) NB East is always 1,5, 9; South 2,6,10; West 3,7,11; North 4,8,12 - To assist new players just use East to make the calculations easier.

4. The person due to break the wall throws the two dice again and adds the two scores together to decide where the break should be. The tiles are counted from his/her right hand side and the two tiles are pushed out



and placed on top of the part of the wall that has just been counted – bottom tile to the right and top tile to the left. (So if West throws an 8 – he/she adds $7+8 = 15$ – counts 15 from the right - pushes these two tiles out into the middle and lifts them and places them on top of the part of the wall just counted – bottom one to the right and top to the left) Then he/she counts twelve tiles (2 rows of 6) and slides the wall gently apart towards the left = 14 tiles including the two on top.

(These last 14 loose tiles form the 'Flower or Season Wall/Kong Wall' and are only used when a player picks up a Flower or Season or forms a Kong (a set of 4 tiles the same).



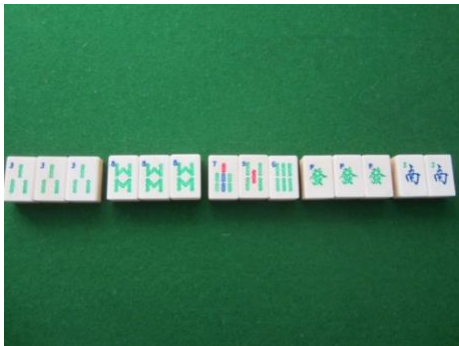
5. Players take 4 tiles each in an **anti-clockwise** direction beginning where the gap was made in the wall i.e. to the left of the Kong Wall - starting with East Wind - NB. Taking turns in an anti clockwise direction but using the wall up in a clockwise direction this time - until everyone has 12 tiles. Then 1 more each so they each have 13 – East Wind takes a 14th tile as he/she will be the first to discard a tile to start play. No-one looks at their tiles until all the tiles have been distributed.

If a Flower or Season tile is received in the draw of tiles – starting with East wind in an anti-clockwise direction, players take 1 tile from the 'Kong Wall' per Flower or Season received, making sure the inner tile is taken first on each occasion i.e. the one to the right of the person who broke the wall. The person who broke the wall in the first place then takes two more tiles from the left hand side of the Kong wall and places them on top – bottom tile to the right and top to the left.

6. The tiles remaining in the main wall are 'curtsied' to help players across the table reach them. I.e. the side to be used first – the continuing wall after all tiles have been distributed is pushed in towards the centre – this helps to remind players where the working part of the wall is located. e.g.



7. Players look at their tiles and try to decide which suit they wish to keep in order to get Mahjong. They may wish to wait and see what tiles they draw from the wall or what tiles are discarded by other players. (To form a Mahjong hand there should be 4 x 3 tiles plus a pair (i.e. to go Mahjong you do not discard the last tile but you will have 14 on your tray) e.g.



Note: the hand is 'clean' i.e. all the same suit - but can include winds and dragons.

8 Play begins by East Wind discarding a tile face up leaving 13 on his/her rack. **Players call out the name of the tile being discarded each time.** If someone wants it and already has 2 tiles the same on their rack they call '**Pung**' and take it and display it in front for all to see (It may be that some players miss their turn when someone calls '**Pung**' as play then continues anti-clockwise from the person who has punged) If you pick up a tile from the wall that makes a '**Pung**' the player keeps it on the rack '**Concealed**'.

If you have an exposed '**Pung**' and someone discards the 4th tile for your set, you **cannot** pick it up. [If, however, you take the 4th tile from the wall, you can add it to your '**Pung**' to make a '**Kong**' and take a replacement tile from the Flower/Season/Kong Wall]

If he/she has a concealed '**Pung**' and someone discards the 4th tile – the player may call '**Kong**' and place it on top of his/her rack for all to see – then take a replacement tile from the '**Kong Wall**'. [There must always be 13 tiles on each player's rack – until the very end, when calling Mahjong there will be 14]

The rules for forming a '**Chow**', which is a run of three tiles, are that if you have two tiles already you can only '**Chow**' the third tile from the person who goes immediately before you in the game – but only 1 '**Chow**' is allowed per hand and it does not attract any score. No Chows are allowed in a 'Goulash'(P12)

9 When you only need one more tile to complete your hand you let the other players know by 'calling'. If it is an ordinary hand this is often called 'waiting'. If it is a 'Special Hand' it is called 'fishing'.

10. Play continues until someone calls 'Mahjong' or all the tiles are used up (apart from the Loose Tiles/Kong Wall which remain on the table) If the game is unfinished then a 'Goulash' is played by using the 2 Bamboo as 'Wild/Joker' tiles or adding the 4 white tiles to use as 'Jokers' (if available). The rules are slightly different but the game is played in the same way.





Mahjong Quiz 2

1. At the start of a Mahjong Session, how do you decide who will be East Wind?
2. When you build the Wall (Great Wall of China) , how many tiles are in front of each player?
(Remember the tiles are stacked two deep)
3. When the tiles are taken from the wall, who gets them first?
4. What is the 'Kong box'?
5. How many tiles are in the 'kong box' at the beginning of each round?
6. If you pick up a Flower or a Season tile when you get your tiles, what do you do with it?
7. Who has 14 tiles at the start of the game?
8. What determines if a hand is 'clean'?
9. An ordinary Mahjong hand consists of.....?
10. When you discard a tile, what must you do at the same time?

Goulash

When playing a 'Goulash' the Wind stays the same as in the last round. If available, the 4 Joker tiles are added to the others to be 'Washed/wittered/Shuffled' – set the game up in the usual way except that when building the Wall the 'Wind of the Round' player and his/her opposite player have 19 tiles each (instead of 18). When all the tiles are distributed to all the players and they have looked at their tiles and taken replacement tiles for any Flowers &/or Season Tiles, three exchanges of three tiles each will then take place.

East Wind and West Wind Exchange 3 tiles while South & North do similarly. On the second exchange East wind always goes to the right first i.e. to South wind – so South & East exchange 3 tiles each while North and West do the same. The Third exchange means that East changes 3 tiles with North while South and West exchange 3 tiles. The game begins as usual with East wind discarding the first tile.

The game is played as usual from now on i.e. the difference between the main game and a 'Goulash' is the exchange of tiles three times before play begins. **No chows** are allowed and 'Joker' tiles can be any tile you wish it to be – or 2 Bamboos if no plain tiles are available in the set.

Wind of the Round

When the game begins East Wind is always 'Wind of the Round'.

If East Wind gets Mahjong he/she keeps East Wind. This can occur 3 times before moving to the right. (if that is your agreed strategy)

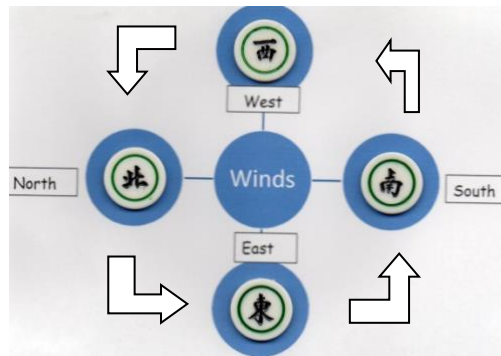
If any other player goes Mahjong East Wind moves round one place to the right

– anti-clockwise – so East moves one place to the right into South 's place originally.

South moves to West, West moves to North and North moves to East.



Mahjong Quiz 3



1. How many playing tiles should you have on your tray throughout the game?
2. How many tiles do you need to go Mahjong?
3. What must you have in your hand before you can pick up a discard for a pung?
4. All pungs and kongs must be exposed? True or False
5. Name any two types of 'Honour Tile'?
6. When is a player 'waiting' or 'calling' or 'fishing'?
7. Under what circumstances can a player pick up a discarded tile?
8. Sometimes players find themselves with 12 tiles in the middle of a game. What mistake might have been made to leave them with too few tiles?
9. Sometimes players find themselves with 14 tiles in the middle of a game. What mistake might have been made to allow them with too many tiles?
10. If East Wind is the player who calls Mahjong, the winds stay the same in the next round (So East stays East) How many times can East retain the East Wind before the winds must move round?

Penalties (BMJA)

1. Incorrect hands – If a player has too few or too many tiles – the error may not be corrected and the player cannot go Mahjong. He/she may not claim a tile from the discards if it does not leave one to discard. Too few tiles may count a score but too many tiles may not.
2. False Naming of Discard – if claimed pay player 50. If claimed for Mahjong play stops and discarder pays the Mahjongers full score and settles other players debts to the winner. No other settlement between players.
3. False Declaration of Mahjong – no penalty provided no players have exposed their hands. If one has, false declarer must pay the 3 others half the limit score (500_).
4. Wrongly claiming a tile – no penalty if corrected before next person has discarded. If not, falsely claimed set remains on table and player cannot go Mahjong.
5. Letting off a cannon – if a player discards any of the following when a player is 'calling' and just waiting for one tile
 - A tile of the same suit when 9 tiles have been exposed
 - At tile of the 4th wind when 3 pungs of winds have been exposed
 - (1s 9s green tiles)Penalty is to reimburse the other 2 players what they had to pay the winner as well as his own debt to him. No further settlement between the players.

3 handed Mahjong(using tallies)

The tallies are divided equally between all the players. East Wind is decided by throwing the dice as usual. The game is played in the normal way – if the wall belongs to the 'missing' player then the two players nearby operate it. However, East Wind cannot fall to the 'missing' player – when East Wind moves round – it may have to go two moves so that a real person is always East Wind.

5 handed Mahjong (using tallies)

The tallies are divided equally between all the players. One of each wind plus a White Dragon are placed on the table. Each player draws a tile and whoever draws the White Dragon sits out for the first hand. The other four sit in the positions of the tiles they drew and build the wall as usual. Play proceeds until someone goes Mahjong. Scores are settled. Unless East goes Mahjong, when there is a second hand with the original four players. East retires and his Wind moves on to the player who was South for the first hand.

The incoming player (White Dragon) takes over the North Wind position at the table. He uses his own tallies and the next hand is played. At the end of each hand, unless as stated before, East goes Mahjong, the Winds move round one player. The retiring player is always the old East Wind and the incoming player is always the new North Wind.

Scoring

	Exposed	Concealed
	0	0
	2	4
	4	8
	8	16
	16	32
	4	
	2	
	2	
	2	

In addition, the player who went Mahjong gets 20 points for an ordinary hand.

If the final tile to go Mahjong is drawn from the wall (i.e. not the discard) then that player gets an extra 2 points.

Various doubles are then applied to these points, some for all players and some for the player calling Mahjong.

Scoring Doubling

Once you have worked out the points for your hand, you can then score various doubles. Some of these apply to all players and some only to the player calling Mahjong.

ALL PLAYERS



One double for every pung/kong of dragons



One double if you hold a pung/kong of your own wind



One double if you hold a pung/kong of Wind of the Round

This becomes 2 doubles if your wind is also Wind of the Round



One double if you are holding your 'own' flower

1=East, 2=South,3=West,4=North



One double if you are holding your 'own' season

1=East, 2=South,3=West,4=North



Two doubles for holding a full set of flowers (bouquet) –

This includes the double for your own flower



Two doubles for holding a full set of seasons –

This includes the double for your own season

Mahjong called

All one suit and winds and dragons – one double for being clean

No chows One double (assuming that chows were allowed in this hand)

All concealed One double

All majors One double

(1s, 9s, winds, dragons)

If you are East Wind One double

One double for any of the following ways of going Mahjong:

- With the last tile from the wall
- with the final discard
- with a tile from the kong box
- by robbing a tile from another player making a kong
- When you are fishing after your first discard (original call)

Tallies

(you can just add up the scores - not use the tallies - if it is if agreed beforehand)

It may be advisable to leave using these tokens until you have mastered the Game of Mahjong; at which point you can introduce them. You can just add up the scores on a piece of paper if you wish and instead of paying other players - just keep a straight score for each player. This is where 'agreeing the rules before you start' is important.



10 points

100 points

500 points

1000 points

Each Player gets 10

Each Player gets 9

Each Player gets 2

Each Player gets 1

Total = 3000 points - If this is not enough you can substitute a coin for 1000 points and add that to the total = 4000. If playing 5 handed these tokens are shared 5 ways/if playing 3 handed these tokens are shared 3 ways.

Introducing Special Hands

1. A Basic hand in Mahjong is 'four pungs and a pair' including winds and dragons. This can prove too easy to attain and leave you building the 'Great Wall of China' all afternoon. Better to play a 'Clean hand' i.e. one suit but including winds and dragons.
2. Special Hands allow you to collect different combinations of tiles. They are usually more difficult to complete and therefore attract higher scores (though you can be left with nothing if your gamble does not pay off!)
3. Some versions of Mahjong have lots of Special Hands hands, many of which are statistically unlikely to be completed, although a 'fishing' score may be awarded if the player is waiting for the last tile to complete Mahjong.

The BMJA (British Mahjong Association) rule book that these instructions are based on uses 19 'Special Hands'. Only 6 or 7 of these tend to come up regularly and you will incorporate these gradually into your game. 'Mahjong Illustrated' P A Thompson & Betty Maloney sets out 50 Special Hands – many of which are unattainable – but it does give a wider range of possibilities. Their follow on book 'Mahjong Players Companion' has 120 Special hands. You must decide which you are using and stick to that.

4. Some Special Hands do not use Pungs or Kongs and therefore have to be kept concealed until the very end, with all your tiles picked up from the wall rather than from discards. The particular hand you are doing will give instructions e.g. it may be that you can pick the final tile up from the discards. Some Special Hands can be exposed i.e. you can pick up from the discards, in which case they often score less.

As compensation for trying for a 'Special Hands' if you are 'fishing' when another player goes Mahjong you get a part score.

5. Hands are scored with a 'limit' or 'half limit'. We use the limit of 1000, so half limit is 500. Part scores for players who are 'fishing' may be one fifth (400 for a limit hand and 200 for a half limit hand)
6. If you have Flowers and Seasons these can be added to your score but any doubles for having your own Flower/Season only apply to the Flower/Season total and not the 'limit' or 'half limit' figure. The 20 points for going Mahjong and other points for taking the last tile etc.do not apply when scoring a 'Special Hand'..
7. If you are East and go Mahjong with a 'Special Hand' your whole score is doubled.(BMJA) (Not if you are playing with other books – check)



Special Hands (BMJA)

Double 3 times, same when fishing

1. Purity



Pungs/Kongs of any one suit and a pair. No Winds, Dragons or Chows

Can be Exposed or concealed. Work out your point score in the normal Way and then double it three times. Fishing also gets 3 doubles.

500 Points (200 when fishing)

2. All Pair Honours



7 Pairs of Ones & Nines/Winds/Dragons. All concealed but the last tile

Can be picked up from the discard

3. Knitting



7 Pairs with the same numbers in the same 2 suits

Duplicate pairs are allowed. No winds or dragons allowed. Concealed but the last tile can be picked from the discard

4. Triple Knitting



4 Sets of 3 tiles with the same numbers in the 3 suits and a pair of the

same numbers. No winds or dragons are allowed. All concealed but the last tile can be picked up from the discard

Concealed 1000 points (400 when fishing)

5. Buried Treasure



Concealed Pungs in one suit, with Winds/Dragons and a pair

No Kongs are allowed. All tiles must be picked up from the wall.

6. The Gates of Heaven



Concealed Pung of Ones and Nines, a run from 2-8 with

A further tile from the same suit. You can Pung last tile to go Mahjong.

7. The Wriggling Snake



A pair of Ones and a run from 2-9 in the same suit, with each of the 4 Winds. Concealed.

8. The 13 Unique Wonders



One of every major tile (13 unique tiles) The 14th tile can be

any from the discard major tile. All concealed, but the last tile can be picked up from the discard.

Concealed 1000 points (400 when fishing)

(when exposed = 500 points [200 when fishing])

9. Imperial Jade



4 Pungs/Kongs of 'green' tiles and a pair

Green tiles are Green Dragons and Twos, Threes, Fours, Sixes and Eights Bamboos. Can be exposed or concealed.

10. Heads & Tails



4 Pungs/Kongs of Ones and Nines and a pair. No Winds or Dragons.

Can be exposed or concealed.

11. Three Great Scholars



Pungs/Kongs of all 3 Dragons, another Pung/Kong and a pair in one suit. Can be exposed or concealed.

12. All Winds and Dragons



4 Pungs/Kongs of Winds/ Dragons and a pair of Honour No suit tiles.

Can be exposed or concealed.

13. Four Blessings Hovering Over the Door



Pungs/Kongs of each of the 4 winds and any pair. Can be exposed or concealed.

14. Fourfold Plenty



4 Kongs and a pair. Kongs - can be concealed or exposed.
Suits can be mixed.

15. Heaven's Blessing

Mahjong immediately made by East with the original 14 tiles dealt to that player.

16. Earth's Blessing

Mahjong immediately made by West, North or South using the first discard made by East

17. Gathering the Plum Blossom from the Roof

5 of circles drawn from the Kong Box which allows a player to go Mahjong

18. Plucking the Moon from the Bottom of the Sea

1 of Circles drawn is last tile drawn from the wall which allows Mahjong

19. Twofold Fortune

Player makes a Kong, draws another tile to make another Kong, then draws another tile to make Mahjong



Mahjong Quiz 4

1. If there are only 3 players, which wind can you not use for the fourth place?
2. How many do you score for a 'Special Hand' with a 'limit'?
3. Unlike other hands, what else happens in a goulash before play actually starts?
4. True or False? At the start of a goulash, the winds stay the same as in the previous hand . i.e. East remains East etc
5. What is the difference between a pung and a kong?
6. What happens if you have a Mahjong hand but you haven't called 'fishing' or 'waiting' on your previous turn?
7. What is meant by 'Twittering' the tiles?



Mahjong Quiz 5

- 1.. How many points do you score for an exposed pung of dragons?
2. How many points do you score for a concealed Kong of 5 bamboo?
3. How many points does a player get for calling Mahjong?
4. How many points do you get for each Flower of Season?
5. How many points do you get for a chow?
6. If you have a pung of a suit exposed and someone discards the fourth tile you can't pick it up True or False?
7. You are holding a pair of South Winds at the end of the game. You are South Wind and wind of the round is East. How many points can you claim?
8. Major/Honour tiles give you more points than minor tiles.
What kind of tiles count as Major/Honour tiles?
9. Which hands are scored at the end of the game?

Glossary/Terms

B	On White dragon tile means Bai – white pure (also Pai – see P)
Basic Hand	4 Pungs/Kongs and a pair – 1 Chow allowed
Bouquet	A set of either 4 Seasons or 4 Flowers Gives player 2 doubles
C	On red dragon tile means Chung – centre or middle
Calling	When you have only 1 tile to get to call Mahjong
Chow	A group of 3 tiles with numbers running consecutively in the same suit Only 1 Chow allowed in an ordinary hand/none in Goulash unless for a Special Hand
Clean	A hand is termed 'Clean' when only 1 suit is present – may include Winds & Dragons
Concealed	A Pung, Chow or Kong collected in the hand with tiles from the wall rather than from the discards. A Special Hand may be concealed until the player goes out.
Dead Tiles	Tiles that have been discarded
Declare	Calling - 1 more tile to get -'fishing' (Special Hand) or waiting' (ordinary hand)
Discard	Place an unwanted tile face up on the table in the middle of the playing area, saying out loud what it is. Players must discard one tile each in turn unless going Mahjong.
Exposed	A pung, chow or kong claimed from another player's discard and displayed for all to see in front of the player him/herself.
F	On green dragon tile means fa means green
Fishing	When waiting for 1 more tile for a Special Hand – player should declare 'fishing'.
Flowers	1.Plum Blossom 2.Orchid 3.Chrysanthemum 4.Bamboo – are replaced from the Kong Box and placed in full view. They are counted in the final scoring.

Goulash	When no-one goes Mahjong a 'Goulash' is played by putting in 4 Joker tiles if available (Wind of the round and his/her opposite will have 19 tiles on their wall.) Then 3 tiles are exchanged 3 times – starting with East & West/North & South. Then East goes to the right and exchanges with South/West exchanges with North. The final exchange is between East & North/ West & South. NB No chows allowed. If no blank tiles are included in the set - 2 bamboos become 'Joker/Wild' tiles
Half Limit	Usually 500 points – depends where playing – house rules apply
Honour Tiles	Winds and Dragons
Jokers	Sometimes 4 white tiles are included in a set or indeed 'Joker' named tiles. These can be used for a 'Goulash'. However if not included 2 Bamboos become 'wild' tiles.
Kong	A group of 4 tiles of the same suit with the same number on each
Kong Box	The group of 14 tiles set aside at the start of the game in case someone gets a Flower or Season or indeed a Kong. Sometimes called 'Loose Tiles' or the 'Flower Wall'.
Limit	Usually 1000 points – house rules apply. Highest score a player may claim after Mahjong declared (or 3 pungs /kongs, 1 chow) Loose Tiles Taken from the end of the kong box closest to where the wall was broken and placed on the top. As loose tiles are claimed, the next pair is placed on top of the Kong Box until none of the 14 tiles remain. They do not form part of the tiles used for playing
Loose Tiles	Taken from the left hand end of the ' kong box ' closest to where the wall was first broken and placed on the top – bottom one to the right and top to the left of the person whose wall it is.. As loose tiles are claimed, the next pair is placed on top of the Kong Box until none of the 14 tiles remain. They do not form part of the tiles used for playing
Mahjong	When 4 Pungs/Kongs and a pair = 14 tiles with no discard for an ordinary hand. When 14 tiles complete a Special Hand
Major Tiles	1s 9s Winds and Dragons
Ordinary Hand	4 pungs/kongs and a pair - can include Winds & Dragons - can be exposed

Own Flower	If you are East Wind you are 1 – so if you have a Flower with a 1 on it – that is your own (so South=2, West3, North4 – counting round anti clockwise when East Wind is the Wind of the round. If another Wind is Wind of the Round they become 1.
Own Season	If you are East Wind you are 1 – so if you have a Flower with a 1 on it – that is your own (so South=2, West3, North4 – counting round anti clockwise when East Wind is the Wind of the round.
P	On white dragon tile means Pai – white pure (can be B – Bai)
Pow	The call by the East Wind or the person who is Wind of the Round to stop ‘twittering’ (shuffling) the tiles
Precedence	If two players call for a tile at the same time – if it is to go Mahjong that takes precedence. However if two people call for a tile at the same time and its not for Mahjong - the next one in an anti clockwise direction gets precedence. NB Pung has precedence over Chow
Prevailing Wind	Wind of the Round. Always East First. (Order of Winds ESWN = Eat Soy With Noodles)
Pung	A group of 3 tiles the same suit with the same number on each
Robbing the Kong	A move in which a player takes a tile from an opponent’s exposed kong and immediately goes Mahjong
Run	A run of 3 consecutive tiles in the same suit is called a ‘Chow’. Cannot be used in a ‘Goulash’ unless for a Special Hand
Seasons	1.Spring 2.Summer 3.Autumn 4 Winter - are replaced from the Kong Box and placed in full view. They are counted in the final scoring.
Sets	Sets of tiles are called pungs, chows or kongs. A full Mahjong set comprises of all the playing pieces, jokers, Flowers and Seasons, dice and tallies, plus wind discs and plain replacement tiles.
Scoring	When someone goes Mahjong scores are added up – see ‘Scoring/Terms’ – then the 3 players who did not go Mahjong settle up with the person who did and then with each other.
Shuffling	sometimes called ‘Twittering of Sparrows’ because of the noise made. Also called ‘washing the tiles’ – mixing the tiles up before Wind of the Round calls ‘Pow’.
Special Hands	There are 19 Special Hands according to the British Mahjong Association – some may add others to their repertoire
Suits	Circles, Bamboos or Characters
Tallies	Sticks included in the Mahjong set with dots on used for scoring

Twittering	This is shuffling the tiles – sometimes called ‘Twittering of Sparrows’ because of the noise made. Also called ‘washing the tiles’ - mixing the tiles up before Wind of the Round calls ‘Pow’
Waiting	If you are doing an ‘ordinary hand’ (4 pungs/kongs and a pair) and you need one more tile to go Mahjong - you are calling or ‘waiting’
Washing the tiles	Another term for shuffling the tiles
Wild Tiles	Blank tiles used in a ‘ Goulash ’ as Jokers or Wild Tiles. If no blank tiles are included in a set – 2 bamboos become Wild Tiles
Wind of the Round	Always starts with East Wind. If East wind goes Mahjong he/she keeps it. If someone else goes Mahjong the Wind moves round one place anti-clockwise. (If playing with 3 people East wind cannot be given to the absent player position – so it would move round two places) When each player has been East Wind, South Wind becomes Wind of the Round, and so on in an anti-clockwise direction i.e. ESWN.
Winds	East South West North (Eat Soy With Noodles)
Winning tile	The final tile needed to complete a hand to enable the player to go Mahjong

Quiz Answers

Quiz 1

1. Bamboo
2. Eat Soy With Noodles (ESWN)
3. A set of 3 tiles the same
4. False
5. 4
6. A set of 4 tiles the same
7. Anti-clockwise
8. Dragons
9. When no-one goes Mahjong
10. A run of 3 tiles. Scores 0 points
Cannot be played in a 'Goulash'

Quiz 2

1. Throw 2 dice – highest is East Wind
2. 36
3. East Wind
4. The group tiles set aside at the
Start of the game – Loose Tiles.
5. 14
6. Place it in full view and get a replacement
from the Kong Box – in order of ESWN
7. East Wind
8. All the tiles from same suit (inc. winds&dragons)
9. 4 groups of 3/4 tiles and a pair (may inc. Chow)
10. Call out the name of the tile

Quiz 3

1. 13
2. 14
3. Two tiles the same
4. False (may be hidden if taken from wall)
5. Winds & Dragons
6. When only 1 more tile needed for Mahjong
7. Two tiles the same/for chow from player before
If have 2 consecutive tiles in hand
8. Have not taken a replacement tile when a
Flower/Season Tile was picked up or when
Kong formed
9. Have not discarded at the appropriate time
10. 3

Quiz 4

1. Wind of the round e.g.

4. True

East (as East has duties to perform

e.g. shaking dice, taking tiles first etc)

2. 1000

5. Pung is 3 tiles the same Kong is Four tiles the same

3. Three exchanges of 3 tiles

6. Play continues until it comes back to you then you can declare 'fishing' or waiting'.

7. Shuffling the tiles.

Quiz 5

1. 4

6. True (can only get 4th tile from wall)

2. 16

7. 2

3. 20 + extras e.g. double for clean

8. Winds, Dragons 1s & 9s

4. 4

9. All

5. 0

Bibliography

Further Reading

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Mah-Jong British Rules (on line BMJA)

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