

The Si Stebbins Stack

A deck in a secret order that riffles like a shuffled one. All fifty-two cards, the lookup that goes the other way, and how to rebuild it from a new pack.

slightless.com/tricks/si-stebbins/ · Published by William Coffrin, who performed as Si Stebbins, in 1898, and out of copyright.

THE TWO RULES

- Every card is **three higher** than the one before it.
- The suits run **Clubs, Hearts, Spades, Diamonds**, and repeat.
- Ace is 1, Jack 11, Queen 12, King 13. Past the King, take off thirteen: King plus three is sixteen, and sixteen less thirteen is three.

A 4 7 10 K 3 6 9 Q 2 5 8 J

The thirteen ranks in the order you meet them, then round again. Three and thirteen share no factor, so adding three reaches every rank before it repeats.

BUILDING IT FROM A NEW PACK

Split the pack into its four suits. Each suit goes in **descending** order, wrapping past the Ace round to the King — Clubs from the Ace, Hearts from the 4, Spades from the 7, Diamonds from the 10. Then deal one from each pile in turn, Clubs first, thirteen times over.

♣ Clubs A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2	♥ Hearts 4 3 2 A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5	♠ Spades 7 6 5 4 3 2 A K Q J 10 9 8	♦ Diamonds 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 A K Q J
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THE STACK IN ORDER

#	CLUBS	#	HEARTS	#	SPADES	#	DIAMONDS
1	A ♣	2	4 ♥	3	7 ♠	4	10 ♦
5	K ♣	6	3 ♥	7	6 ♠	8	9 ♦
9	Q ♣	10	2 ♥	11	5 ♠	12	8 ♦
13	J ♣	14	A ♥	15	4 ♠	16	7 ♦
17	10 ♣	18	K ♥	19	3 ♠	20	6 ♦
21	9 ♣	22	Q ♥	23	2 ♠	24	5 ♦
25	8 ♣	26	J ♥	27	A ♠	28	4 ♦
29	7 ♣	30	10 ♥	31	K ♠	32	3 ♦
33	6 ♣	34	9 ♥	35	Q ♠	36	2 ♦
37	5 ♣	38	8 ♥	39	J ♠	40	A ♦
41	4 ♣	42	7 ♥	43	10 ♠	44	K ♦
45	3 ♣	46	6 ♥	47	9 ♠	48	Q ♦
49	2 ♣	50	5 ♥	51	8 ♠	52	J ♦

WHERE A NAMED CARD SITS

Somebody names a card and you want its number, which is the opposite direction from the list on the front. Suits down the side, ranks across the top, and the position in the square where they meet.

	A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	J	Q	K
♣ Clubs	1	49	45	41	37	33	29	25	21	17	13	9	5
♥ Hearts	14	10	6	2	50	46	42	38	34	30	26	22	18
♠ Spades	27	23	19	15	11	7	3	51	47	43	39	35	31
♦ Diamonds	40	36	32	28	24	20	16	12	8	4	52	48	44

THE THREE THINGS IT TELLS YOU

1. **The card under any card you can see.** Add three to its rank, wrap past the King, and step one suit along. That is the whole method, and it needs no table.
2. **The card at any position.** Read it off the list on the front.
3. **The position of any named card.** Read it off the grid above, or work it out: count how many places the rank sits below its suit's starting rank, wrapping past the Ace to the King, call that **k**, and the position is **4k + 1** for a Club, **4k + 2** for a Heart, **4k + 3** for a Spade, and **4k + 4** for a Diamond. The King of Clubs is one place below the Ace, so k is 1 and it sits at 5.

WHAT IT COSTS

The order survives cutting, because the deck is a loop rather than a list, and a cut only changes where the loop starts. It does not survive a shuffle. Anything that genuinely mixes the cards ends the stack, so the deck can be cut as often as anybody likes and handed back, and it cannot be riffled.

From Sleightless — training tools and sleightless magic for mentalists. Every card on this sheet is generated from the two rules above rather than copied, and checked against the version that runs on the site. sleightless.com/tricks/si-stebbins/