Beginner card tricks for kids that need no shuffling skill

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Thirteen card tricks for kids from Peabody's Card Cabinet, easiest first, sorted honestly into the ones that work by themselves and the ones with a real move.

Eight of the thirteen card tricks in the Peabody Magic Shop need no shuffling skill and no secret move at all: a peek at one card, the order the cards start in or the dealing itself does all the work. Four more need one small move you can learn in five or ten minutes. Only one is real sleight of hand, and it takes days. Every one uses an ordinary deck, and the easiest takes three minutes to learn.

A deck of cards looks like a magician's tool, so plenty of children want to start there in the Magic Shop. The trouble with most card tricks for beginners is that they quietly assume fancy shuffling, and small hands drop half the deck. So the Card Cabinet is built the other way round. A helper does the shuffling and cutting, and the trick works anyway.

All thirteen, easiest first

- Trick: The Crystal Ball Prediction · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · Learn it in: 3 minutes · What does the work: A peek
- Trick: The Magic Mind Reader · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · What does the work: A peek
- Trick: The Ace Finder · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · What does the work: Setting up
- Trick: The Countdown Card · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · What does the work: Setting up and counting
- Trick: The Rising Card · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · What does the work: One move
- Trick: The Levitating Card · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 5 minutes · What does the work: One move
- Trick: The 21 Card Trick · Level: Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 10 minutes · What does the work: The dealing itself
- Trick: The Upside-Down Card · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 10 minutes · What does the work: One move
- Trick: Do As I Do · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 7 to 12 · Learn it in: 10 minutes · What does the work: A peek
- Trick: The Four Burglars · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 10 minutes · What does the work: One move

- Trick: The Spelling Bee · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 6 to 11 · Learn it in: 15 minutes · What does the work: Setting up
- Trick: The Card Sandwich · Level: Conjurer · Ages: 7 to 12 · Learn it in: 15 minutes · What does the work: Setting up
- Trick: The Card That Keeps Coming Back · Level: Wizard · Ages: 10 to 13 · Learn it in: 3 to 6 days · What does the work: A real sleight

The order is the shop's own: easiest level first, then quickest to learn, which is also how the card tricks Top 10 ranks them. The card tricks for kids page has the full table with what each one looks like to an audience.

The eight that work by themselves

Magicians call these self-working: no secret move, because the setting up or the counting does the job.

A peek. The Crystal Ball Prediction is where I would start. You write a card on a piece of paper before anybody touches the deck; somebody cuts wherever they like; the card they cut to is the one you wrote. The shop calls it the best first card trick it has: nothing to practise, and a prediction in writing.

The Magic Mind Reader is the one to learn properly, because its secret, a key card you glimpse before you start, also runs Do As I Do and helps set up the Rising Card. Learn one, get three. In Do As I Do, you and a friend each take a deck, copy each other's every move, and turn over the same card at the end. Its page calls it the best trick in the shop for a brother or sister, because they do half of it.

The order the cards start in. The Ace Finder starts with the four Aces on top; your helper cuts and mixes following your instructions, and every pile ends with an Ace on top. The Countdown Card lands on the card you named whatever number from ten to twenty somebody picks, and it is on the shop's maths table for teachers. The Spelling Bee spells A-C-E, T-W-O and so on up to King, and the right card turns up every time, because thirteen cards were stacked in a secret order before the show. Its page says it is a closer: nothing you do afterwards will beat it.

The Card Sandwich traps a chosen card between two black Jacks. There is no hidden move; the page suggests practising the final spread in a mirror so the three cards arrive together.

The dealing. The 21 Card Trick deals three columns three times, and putting the helper's column back in the middle walks their card to the same place every time. You spell ABRACADABRA to find it.

The four with one move

These are still beginner card tricks; the move is small and the page shows it.

The Rising Card climbs out of the deck by itself; one finger behind the deck does it, so you must stay facing your audience. The Levitating Card hangs from your hand, held by a finger the front can't see; there is one angle that hides it, and a mirror finds it. Both are Apprentice tricks of five minutes.

The Upside-Down Card has one quiet turn of the deck while every eye is on the chosen card. The Four Burglars is a story of four Jacks who break into a tall building and are found back together on the roof; its only move is the fan at the start. Its page suggests letting a little one push the burglars in.

The one that takes days

The Card That Keeps Coming Back is the shop's only Wizard card trick. A chosen card is pushed into the middle and keeps reappearing on top. It runs on a real sleight called the double lift, and the page says honestly that it takes three to six days of practice, a few minutes every evening in a mirror. It fits from age 10.

Getting started

A first card show can be two tricks: the Crystal Ball Prediction, then the Magic Mind Reader with a helper. The shop's ready-made Mind Reader show for ages 8 to 10 uses the Magic Mind Reader and closes on the Spelling Bee, and the show page builds a running order from whatever your child can do. If you would rather Flick chose, Pick me a trick asks four three-box questions and hands over one trick; answer "Pencil, paper, cards or coins" to the second.

Questions grown-ups ask

What age can a child start card tricks?

Five, with the right ones. The Crystal Ball Prediction and the Magic Mind Reader both fit from age 5 and take five minutes or less to learn. Most of the rest start at 6.

Do we need a special deck?

No. Every trick uses an ordinary deck. The Spelling Bee only needs the thirteen cards of one suit, Ace to King, and Do As I Do needs two decks, one each.

My child keeps telling everyone the secret. What do I say?

That is what the Magician's Code is for. Its first promise is "I will keep the secret", because once somebody knows, the surprise is gone for ever. The Code is written as promises a child makes, and the printables have a copy to sign.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, and the Magic Shop needs no sign-up. When the deck goes back in the box, the library has stories to read together.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/beginner-card-tricks-for-kids