

# How to Teach American Mah Jongg in Two Hours

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## Introduction

American Mah Jongg is one of the most **complex and rewarding games** you can learn. It takes time, practice, and guidance to play with confidence. One short lesson, whether 90 minutes or two hours, cannot teach the entire game. It can give students a taste of the tiles, the rhythm of play, and a sense of what makes Mah Jongg so engaging.

As the instructor, your job in an orientation is not to teach mastery, but to provide a positive, transparent first experience. Students should leave curious, encouraged, and ready for more—not under the impression that they’ve learned the whole game.

That’s why marketing and framing are crucial. When promoting your orientation, make sure students understand this is a sampler, not a full course. During the lesson itself, re-frame often: remind them they’re seeing *examples* of hands, not the entire card; one round of the Charleston, not the whole process. By being transparent, you set the right expectations—and by keeping it fun, you make the game approachable rather than overwhelming.

The purpose of an orientation is to give players a taste of the game—not to teach the full version. Your marketing must be transparent while still making the class sound fun and approachable. This builds credibility and avoids disappointing students later.

A good orientation experience ends with two things:

1. Confidence and curiosity — students feel proud that they touched the tiles, built a few blocks, and played a mini-game.
2. A clear pathway forward — students know exactly where to go for continued learning, whether through more lessons with you or ongoing resources at Mahj Life®.

This setup ensures that your introductory class delivers a clear, credible experience from start to finish. It markets transparently, with no hidden shortcuts or unrealistic promises, and continually frames—and re-frames—expectations so students understand they’re getting a taste of the game, not the whole thing. The lesson provides hands-on engagement without overwhelming beginners, allowing them to experience the rhythm of play while keeping it simple. Most importantly, it positions you as a professional instructor who offers a structured pathway for continued learning.



# Facilitator Guide & Lesson Plan

As the facilitator, your primary responsibility is to maintain a lively, engaging pace—momentum matters more than mastery in an introductory setting. Keep the energy moving while ensuring that students stay curious and comfortable. Throughout the session, continually re-frame the experience by reminding participants, “*We’re sampling, not mastering.*” Model good sportsmanship and patience in your tone and interactions so that learners feel supported, relaxed, and inspired to continue exploring the game beyond this first experience.

## Before the Lesson

Stress complexity → build respect for the game.

Opening Script: Welcome! Mah Jongg is a fascinating, complex game that takes time and practice to master. Today you’ll experience a sampler—a taste of the tiles, the Charleston, and the rhythm of play. Think of it as a first step, not the whole journey.

## Timetable

### 0:00 – 0:10 | Welcome & Pre-Frame

- Welcome students and introduce the purpose: *introductory only.*
- Frame: Mah jongg is complex, takes years to master. This is a “taste” to build curiosity and confidence.
- Re-frame: *Throughout the lesson, remind students this is a surface-level introduction.*

### 0:10 – 0:25 | Tiles Introduction

- Show and name suits: Bams, Craks, Dots.
- Show and name Honors: Winds, Dragons.
- Show and name Jokers.
- Students practice identifying.

### 0:25 – 0:35 | Block Modeling

- Demonstrate single, pair, pung, kong, quint.
- Students practice grouping tiles.

### 0:35 – 0:55 | Suit Modeling



- Demonstrate simple hands in one suit.
- Graduate to mixed suits.
- Add dragons.
- Add mixed suits with dragons.
- Stress: These are *samples*, not strategy.

### **0:55 – 1:15 | T-Zone Practice**

- Introduce categories (2468, Consecutive Run, 369, 13579).
- Explain the text in the parentheses. Pick one simple and one complex hand per category in the T-Zone.
- Re-frame: “We’re sampling categories—there are many more.”

### **1:15 – 1:25 | Random Pulls**

- Students pull random tiles and practice identifying possible categories.
- Emphasize that “identifying potential” is a skill to develop over time.
- Practice identifying which T-Zone category would be best for a given dealt hand.

### **1:25 – 1:35 | Charleston Introduction**

- Teach first Charleston round only.
- Re-frame: Two rounds exist, plus optional across—omitted today for time.
- Emphasize blind pass rule exists but is not taught today.

### **1:35 – 1:45 | Building Walls & Dealing**

- East rolls dice, players build walls, deal tiles.
- Practice mechanics.

### **1:45 – 1:55 | Mini-Game Play**

- Re-frame often: ‘We’re sampling, not mastering.’
- Focus on mechanics, not winning.
- Guide step-by-step: pick, discard, name the tile, wait.

### **1:55 – 2:00 | Reflections & Next Steps**



- Reflection prompt: “What felt easy? What felt confusing?”
- Provide resource list (video lesson playlists, livestreams, wiki, books).
- Re-frame: Today is *just the beginning* of a longer journey.

**Closing Script:** You’ve now had a peek into Mah Jongg. There is much more to learn, but this Orientation was designed to give you a feel for the game. If you’re excited to keep going, I’ll share how you can continue learning.



# Marketing

When promoting an American Mah Jongg Orientation, start by setting clear expectations. Let students know exactly what the class is—and what it isn't. Use transparent language such as, *"This is a 2-hour sampler class,"* rather than misleading phrases like, *"Learn to play mah jongg in two hours!"* Framing it honestly from the start ensures that participants arrive curious and receptive, not expecting mastery.

Next, emphasize the "taste test" analogy. Use inviting phrases like *"sampler platter," "dip your toes in,"* or *"get a feel for the rhythm of play."* Reinforce that this class is about experiencing the flow and excitement of the game, not achieving full proficiency.

Keep the tone positive and fun. Highlight the joy of hands-on play, tile recognition, and the thrill of discovering something new. Use curiosity-driven language such as, *"Ever wonder what all the fuss is about?"* to spark engagement and lower anxiety for beginners.

Be sure to re-frame complexity as a feature, not a barrier. Acknowledge that Mah Jongg has depth—that's what makes it fascinating. You might say, *"Mah Jongg is complex, but that's part of what makes it so rewarding. This session is your first peek into a lifetime of learning."* This helps students feel intrigued rather than intimidated.

Finally, build trust through transparency. Let students know that house rules and shortcuts exist, but clarify that this class focuses on authentic fundamentals. Use clear statements such as, *"In this class, you'll know exactly what you are—and aren't—learning."* For example, you could say, *"Today we'll try Round 1 of the Charleston. Normally there are more options, but we'll simplify to fit our time together."*

Your credibility comes from honesty. Market Orientation as *fun and limited*—not as a "complete lesson." Students who enjoy it will trust you and sign up for your comprehensive series to keep learning.

## Orientation Best Practices

DO	DON'T
Call it an <i>Orientation</i> or <i>Sampler</i>	Call it <i>"Learn the whole game in 90 minutes"</i>
Use analogies: <i>"sampler platter," "first step," "taste test"</i>	Suggest mastery: <i>"You'll know how to play by the end"</i>
Highlight what is included: tiles, basic building blocks, Round 1 Charleston, a mini-game	Hide limitations or skip mentioning what won't be covered
Say: <i>"You'll experience the rhythm of play"</i>	Say: <i>"You'll be ready to play on your own"</i>



Emphasize <i>transparency and fun</i> : “You’ll know exactly what you are (and aren’t) learning”	Add shortcuts like blank tiles or house rules without disclosure
Frame complexity as exciting: “Mah Jongg takes time to master, but this is a fun first peek”	Frame complexity as a hurdle: “This is all you really need”
Invite next steps: “This session is a springboard into future lessons”	Leave students thinking this is <i>all</i> they need

Students will *trust you more* if you are honest about what’s missing. Keep the language light and fun, but never imply this Orientation equals a complete foundation. Position it as step one in a learning journey.

Here are a few tagline options you could use in the brochure, all short and inviting:

1. A fun, beginner-friendly introduction to American Mah Jongg—learn the tiles, the Charleston, and play your first mini-game in just two hours.
2. Experience the excitement of Mah Jongg with this two-hour introductory class—simple, hands-on, and perfect for first-timers.
3. Curious about Mah Jongg? In just two hours, discover the tiles, the Charleston, and the joy of playing your first game.

## Recommendations for Event Names

- Mah Jongg: First Steps – emphasizes beginning a journey.
- Tiles & Turns: An Intro to Mah Jongg – playful but clear about the basics.
- Mah Jongg Made Simple – approachable and friendly.
- Your First Mah Jongg Game – outcome-focused and inviting.
- Mah Jongg Foundations – conveys structure and thoroughness.
- Mah Jongg: A Beginner’s Primer – aligns with your existing “Primer” branding.

## Catchy/Creative Class Names

- Peek & Play – lighthearted, playful, emphasizes “just trying it out.”
- Tiles & Smiles – beginner-friendly and approachable.
- First Peek Mah Jongg – emphasizes that it’s only a glimpse.
- The Charleston Shuffle – catchy, playful reference to the Charleston.
- Mah Jongg: Just a Taste – uses food metaphor for sampling.



- Play a Little Mahj – casual and friendly.

### **Professional/Structured Class Names**

- Mah Jongg Foundations – structured, emphasizes fundamentals.
- American Mah Jongg Primer – ties into your book branding.
- Mah Jongg Orientation – transparent and professional.
- Mah Jongg Basics – simple and clear.
- Mah Jongg: First Steps – emphasizes journey.
- Mah Jongg Fundamentals – straightforward, trustworthy.

## **Event Description (long form, two examples)**

### **American Mah Jongg Orientation**

You've just taken your first step into the fascinating world of American Mah Jongg. In this Orientation, you learned how to recognize the tiles, saw how hands are built, sampled the Charleston, and experienced the rhythm of play through a guided mini-game.

Remember to refer to the back of the card to play the game on your own until you gain confidence in the flow of the game.

What's Next?

Mah jongg is a complex game that takes time and practice to learn thoroughly. Today's session was just the beginning—there is much more to discover!

### **Recommendations for Continued Learning**

- Connect with [your teaching practice] for additional lessons. They can guide you step by step through the full rules, strategies, and gameplay until you feel confident to play independently.
- Visit Mahj Life® (<https://mahjlife.com>) for wiki articles and resources to support your journey. Mahj Life offers ongoing training and a community of players who are passionate about the game.

Remember, learning mah jongg is like learning a new language—you've learned the alphabet today. With practice and guidance, you'll soon be reading and speaking fluently at the table!

### **American Mah Jongg in Two Hours: A Beginner's Primer**



American Mah Jongg is one of the most complex and rewarding versions of the game. It takes years to master and several hours just to learn the basics thoroughly. This *introductory* class is designed as a first step for curious beginners who want to experience the flow of the game without being overwhelmed.

In two hours, you'll learn:

- How to recognize and name the tiles.
- The basic building blocks of the game (pairs, pung, kongs, and quints).
- How hands are grouped into categories.
- The Charleston (first round only).
- How to deal, build walls, and play a short practice game.

**Important Note:** This is not the *full game*. Strategy, advanced mechanics, and many details will not be covered. You will leave with a foundational understanding and the confidence to continue learning, but it will take additional lessons or guided play to become comfortable and independent.

*This class is for you if you're curious about mah jongg, want to get a feel for the tiles and gameplay, and prefer a gentle, structured introduction.*

## Event Description (short form, two examples)

### **American Mah Jongg Orientation (90 minutes)**

Curious about Mah Jongg? This quick, hands-on orientation is the perfect way to get started. You'll learn how to recognize the tiles, see sample hands, practice the Charleston (first round only), and play a guided mini-game. Think of it as a sampler platter—you'll leave with a taste of the game, not the full recipe! Mah Jongg takes time and practice to learn thoroughly, but this session is a fun, transparent first step into a fascinating game.

### **American Mah Jongg in Two Hours**

Discover the excitement of American Mah Jongg in this fun, beginner-friendly introduction. In just two hours, you'll learn how to recognize the tiles, build simple combinations, practice the Charleston, and play a guided mini-game. This is a high-level introductory class—no strategy or advanced rules yet—designed to give you a taste of the game and the confidence to continue learning.

## Facebook Post (long form)

### **American Mah Jongg in Two Hours**



## *A Beginner's Primer with Mahj Life®*

American Mah Jongg is one of the most **complex and rewarding versions** of the game. It takes time to learn and years to master—but you can start your journey here!

### **What you'll learn in this 2-hour intro session:**

- How to recognize and name the tiles
- The basic building blocks (pairs, pungs, kongs, quints)
- How to read a hand and understand categories
- The Charleston (first round only)
- How to build walls, deal, and play a guided practice game

What this class is (and isn't):

- A gentle, hands-on introduction
- A chance to feel the rhythm of play
- A stepping stone to future lessons
- Not full strategy or advanced rules (those come later!)

*Think of this as learning the alphabet—you'll need more lessons before you can “read novels” in Mah Jongg.*

**Next steps:** You'll leave with resources and options for continued learning so you can keep building confidence and skill.

[Location or Online link]

[Date & Time]

[Price if applicable]

Taught by [Your Name], Mahj Life® Certified Instructor

Register now at: [Link]

## Facebook Post (short form)

Have you ever wanted to learn Mah Jongg but felt overwhelmed?

Join me for *American Mah Jongg in Two Hours*—a beginner's primer that covers the basics without the stress.

You'll learn how to recognize the tiles, build simple hands, practice the Charleston, and play a guided mini-game. This is an **introductory class only**—no strategy yet, just a fun first step into a fascinating game.



[Location]

[Date & Time]

[Price]

Register here: [link]

*Mah jongg is a journey—let's take your first step together!*



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Questions? Send an email to [care@mahjlife.com](mailto:care@mahjlife.com)