

Go

Go is one of the oldest board games in the world, originating in ancient China more than 2,500 years ago.

How to Play

Go is a game between two players, Black and White. The game starts with an empty 19x19 board.

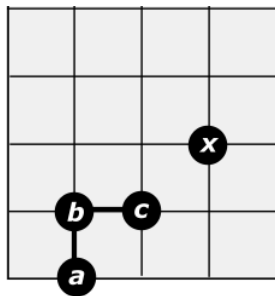
The object of the game is to control the greatest amount of territory. Territory is gained by surrounding it with your stones.

Players take turns, placing one of their stones on a vacant point at each turn. Black plays first. Stones are placed on the **intersections** of the lines, rather than in the squares, and once played stones are not moved. Any vacant point is valid to play, including those on the outside edges and corners of the board. Players also have the option to pass, rather than placing a stone, by handing the opponent a stone.

STRINGS

One or more stones occupying horizontally or vertically adjacent points form a string.

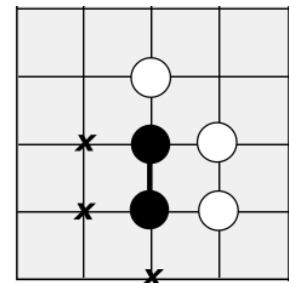
Stones a, b, and c form a string. Stone x is a separate string.



LIBERTIES

Any empty points horizontally and vertically adjacent to a stone, or a string of stones, are known as liberties.

The vacant points marked with an 'x' are the liberties of the Black string.



CAPTURING

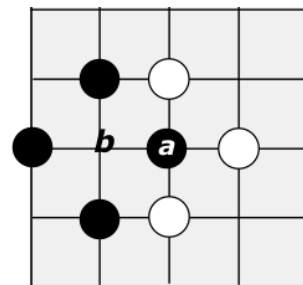
At the end of a turn, any stone or string of stones belonging to the opponent which is completely surrounded by the player's own stones, leaving no liberties, is captured. These stones are removed from the board, and kept by the capturing player as **prisoners**.

SPECIAL RULES

Suicide - You cannot place a stone such that it or its string has no liberties, unless one or more of the enemy stones surrounding it would then be captured.

Ko - You cannot place a stone so as to exactly recreate a previous full game board configuration, with the same player to move.

A common example is shown at right: White can play at point (b) to capture the Black stone at (a). The ko rule would prevent Black from then playing at point (a) on the next turn, because it would result in a repeated board configuration.



End of the Game

When you think you can't gain any more territory, reduce your opponent's territory or capture more strings, you pass your turn and hand a stone to your opponent. A Black pass followed by a White pass ends the game (since Black played first, White must play last).

Any remaining stones which both players agree would be captured if the game continued are termed dead stones. If the players can agree on the status of all such groups, they are removed from the board as prisoners of the player who could capture. But if there is disagreement over the status of any group, the stones are not removed, and play is resumed until the next Black pass followed by a White pass.

TERRITORY SCORING

After removing dead stones, count the number of empty points on the board which are entirely surrounded by your stones, then subtract the number of prisoners taken, to obtain your score.



A common scoring technique is for players to fill in their opponent's territory with their prisoners, arranged in a way that simplifies counting.

Finally, since Black has a natural advantage by playing first, White is compensated with an additional 7.5 points, called **komi**.

The player with the highest score wins!