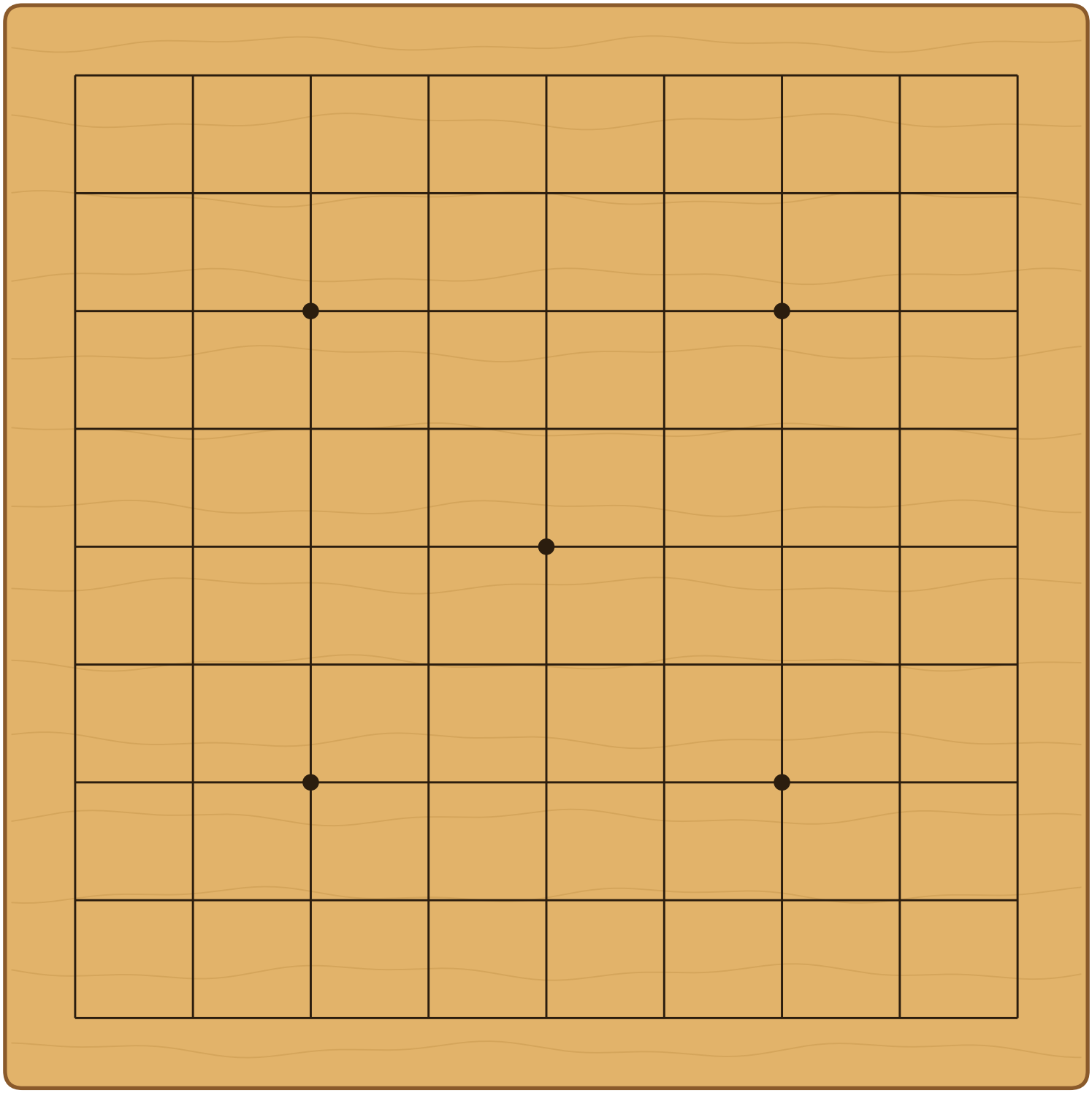
Go (Weiqi)

Game board · Ancient China · 9 x 9 beginner board · 2 players



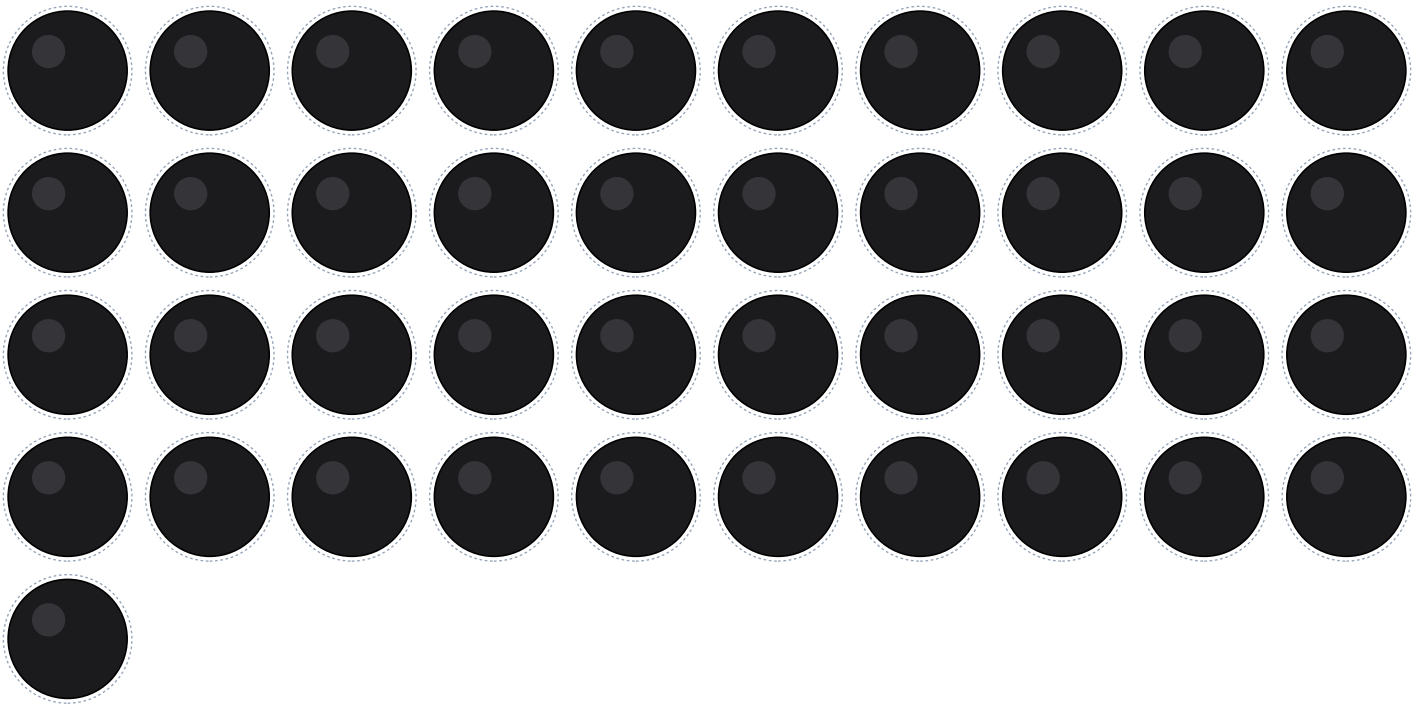
Play on the points where the lines cross, not in the squares. The 5 dots are star points, just landmarks.

The rules are on the "How to Play" page.

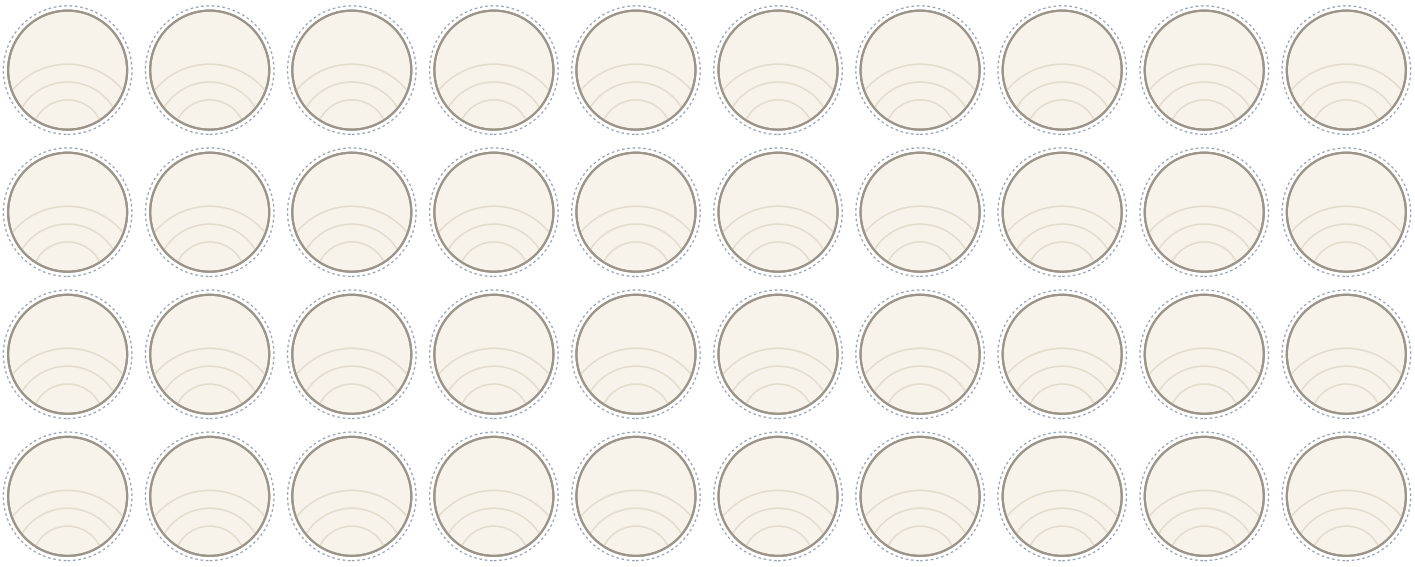
Go: Stones

Cut out 41 black and 40 white stones. Or play with two colors of beans, buttons or coins.

Black stones (41)



White stones (40)

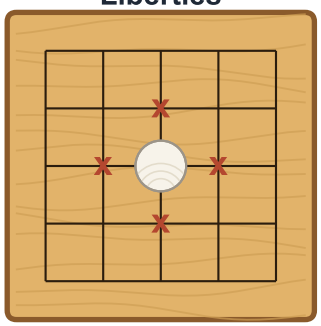


Tip: glue the sheet to thin card before cutting, so the stones are easy to pick up.

Go (Weiqi): How to Play

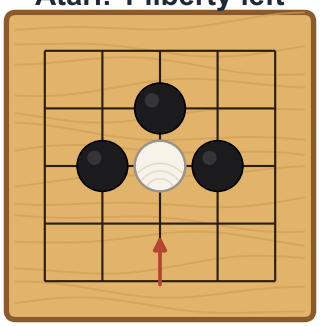
2 players · Capture Go 10 minutes, full game about 30 minutes · ages 7 and up

Liberties



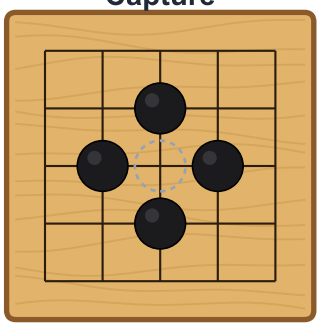
This stone has 4 liberties (x).

Atari: 1 liberty left



Black plays at the arrow...

Capture



...and the white stone is captured.

1. **Set up**
   The board starts empty. One player takes black, the other white. Black goes first. (If one player is new, let them take black.) You need about 40 stones of each color: the stone sheet, or buttons or coins.

2. **Place a stone**
   On your turn, put one stone on any empty point where two lines cross. Stones never move once they are placed. You may pass instead of playing.

3. **Liberties**
   The empty points right next to a stone, along the lines, are its liberties. Stones of one color that touch along a line are a group and share their liberties.

4. **Capture**
   When you fill the last liberty of a stone or group of the other color, take those stones off the board. Keep them as trophies: they do not count in the score.

5. **Two rules about where you may not play**
   No suicide: you may not play where your stone would have no liberties, unless that move captures. Ko: if one stone has just been captured, you may not capture back straight away when that would make the board look exactly as it did before. Play somewhere else first.

6. **Game 1: Capture Go**
   Start here. The first player to capture any stones wins. No passing in Capture Go.

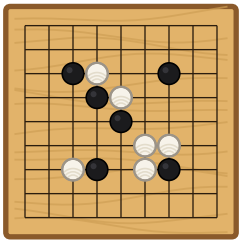
7. **Game 2: the full game**
   When both players pass one after the other, the game ends. Take off any stones that both players agree are trapped (if you don't agree, keep playing until they are captured). Your score is your stones on the board plus the empty points surrounded only by your stones. White adds 7 points for going second. The higher score wins; a tie is a draw.

About these rules: Go's rules have been written down for many centuries and are the same everywhere, apart from small differences in how the score is counted. This sheet counts stones plus surrounded points, the Chinese way. Beginners start on this 9 x 9 board; the full board has 19 lines each way.

Go (Weiqi)

Name _____

Read about one of the oldest board games still played today.



A game in progress on the 9 x 9 board.

Go is a game of black and white stones placed on a grid of lines. In China it is called weiqi, which means "the surrounding game." Players take turns placing stones, trying to surround more of the board than the other player. The rules take minutes to learn, but people spend their lives getting better.

Go is one of the oldest board games still played today. Its first known mention in writing is in an old Chinese history book, the Zuo Zhuan, which describes something that happened in 548 BC. A Chinese legend says it is even older: an emperor named Yao invented it to teach his son patience and careful thinking.

The earliest boards had 17 lines each way. By the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) the board had grown to the 19 lines used today. Go became one of the four arts an educated Chinese scholar was expected to learn, along with calligraphy, painting and playing a stringed instrument called the guqin.

Between about 400 and 700 AD the game spread to Korea, where it is called baduk, and then to Japan. English speakers use its Japanese name, go. Today millions of people play around the world. In 2016 a computer program called AlphaGo beat Lee Sedol, one of the best players on Earth, which amazed experts.

Questions

1. What does the Chinese name weiqi mean?

2. What is the oldest known book that mentions Go, and what year does it describe?

3. Name two of the other arts an educated Chinese scholar was expected to learn.

4. What is Go called in Korea, and which country gave the game its English name?