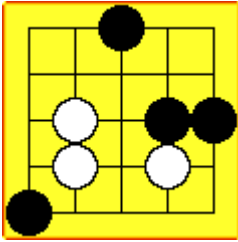


The Rules of Go

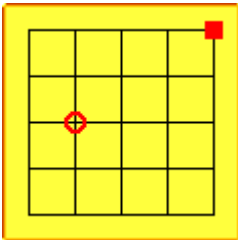
1. Board and Stones

The game of Go is played with black and white stones on the intersections of a grid.

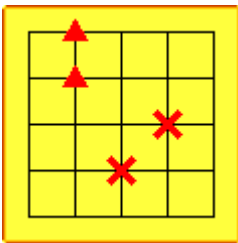


The board is a grid of horizontal and vertical lines. The 5x5 board used to give examples here is small compared to the most Go boards, but the size of the board does not affect the rules.

Go is played with black stones ● and white stones ○ on the intersections of the board, **not on the squares of the board.**



The lines of the board have intersections wherever they cross or touch each other. **Each intersection is called a point.** This includes the four corners and the edges of the board. The circle shows one point. The square in the corner shows another point. The example board has 25 points.

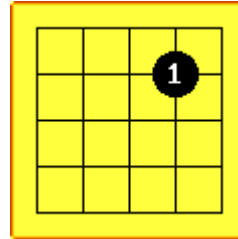


Two points connected by a line segment are adjacent to one another. The triangles are adjacent. The crosses are not adjacent.

2. Playing the Game

The objective of Go is to control more of the board than your opponent by surrounding empty points with your stones.

The game starts with all board points empty. On their turn, a player puts one of his own stones on an empty point. Black plays first.



In this example, Black chooses to start at the point ❶. This completes his first turn.

Instead of playing a stone on their turn, a player may pass. When both players pass in a row, the game is over.

Unless a player passes, he puts one of his stones on the board on each of his turns. **Remember, the stones don't move.**

3. Capturing

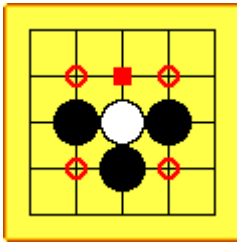
If a player surrounds an opponent's stone or stones completely, he captures those stones and removes them from the board.

Every stone on the board must be next to an empty point. **An empty point next to a stone is called a liberty.**

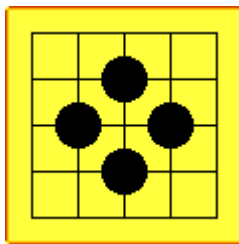
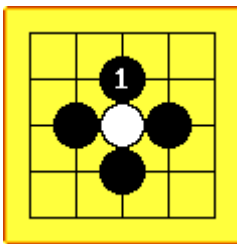
If a stone is not next to an empty point, but it's next to some other stones of the same color which are next to an empty point, that's fine too. **Strings or groups of adjacent stones share liberties.**

If there are no liberties next to a stone, or a group of stones, it is immediately taken off the board. A stone or group of stones with only one liberty left is said to be **in atari**.

Capturing One Stone

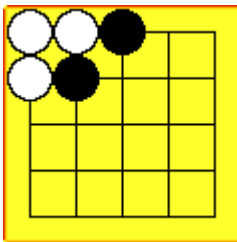


The white stone is in atari. Its only liberty is shown by the square. (Remember, only points connected by a line segment are adjacent; the circles do not count as liberties for white.)

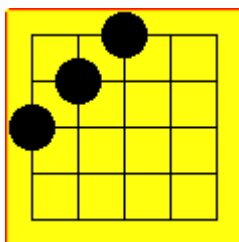
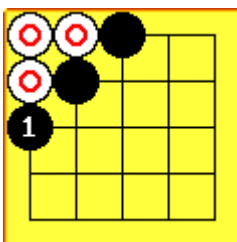


Black's move ① surrounds the white stone completely. This occupies the last liberty, thus capturing it and removing it from the board.

Capturing a Group of Stones

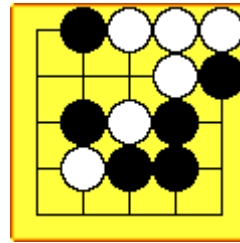


The three white stones are connected along the lines of the board, and stand or fall together.

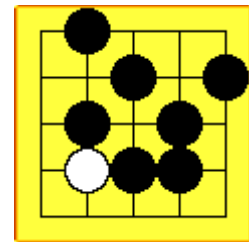
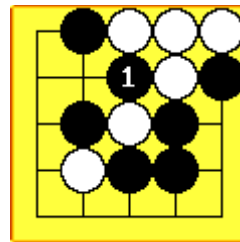


Black's move ① occupies the last liberty and captures the marked white stones, removing them from the board.

Capturing Multiple Groups

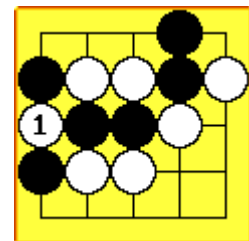
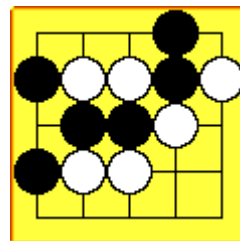


A play can also capture multiple groups of stones at the same time.

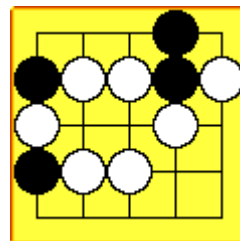


Black's move ① occupies the last liberty of the four white stones at the top *and* the last liberty of the one white stone in the middle. As a result, all the white stones are captured and removed.

Capturing without Liberties



The White play ① occupies the last liberty of the two black stones. **It does not matter that, temporarily, White's stone does not have a liberty. Black's stones are still captured.**

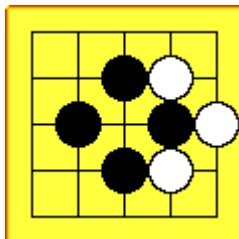


So, after execution of White's play, the stone has at least one liberty again.

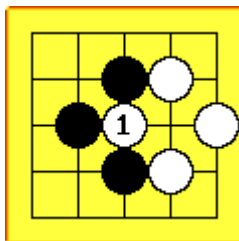
4. No Repetition

One may not play a move which repeats a previous whole board position. This is called the “rule of ko.”

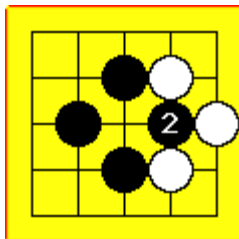
The ko rule prevents players from endlessly capturing and recapturing back and forth.



Starting position



A legal move



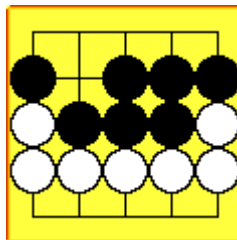
An illegal move

White's move ① removes a stone and Black's move ② would remove the stone ①. However, ② is repeating an earlier position. Since repetition of the board position is prohibited, Black cannot play at ②. *For now*, Black must play on a different point.

On subsequent turns, the same play will be available as a legal move, because it will not be repeating the same overall board position.

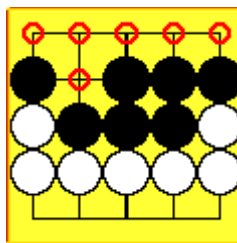
5. End of the Game

When neither player wants to keep playing, they will both pass. The player who controls more of the board wins.

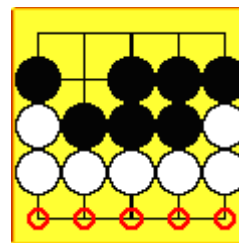


The final position

To score, each player counts the empty points surrounded by stones of his color (his territory) and subtracts any captured stones of his color.



Black has 6 points



White has 5 points

In the example, no stones were captured and Black controls more points. So Black wins!

6. Review

You now know how to play Go! Let's review.

Go is played with black and white **stones** on a grid. Stones are played on the **points** (intersections). Points connected by line segments are adjacent.

The objective of Go is to **control more of the board** than your opponent.

A stone or group must have at least one **liberty** (adjacent empty point) or it is captured.

Rule of Ko: The board position cannot repeat.

The game ends when both players pass. Your score is your **territory minus captured stones**.