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The aim of the game is to surround more territory than your opponent; points are also scored for capturing pieces (called stones).

Start with an empty board. Black plays first. When there is a difference in strength, Black places between 2 and 9 stones on marked points of the board.

Players then take turns to place a stone on a vacant intersection. Once played, stones do not move.

A stone is captured and removed from the board when all intersections directly adjacent (not diagonally) are occupied by the opponent. Solidly connected strings of stones are captured as a whole. Captured stones are held by the player who made the capture for scoring at the end of the game.

Example 1 shows four places where a black stone could be played to capture White. E.g. Three white stones are captured by A as they are a string connected by the lines. B and C show where one White stone can be captured.

Playing a stone so that your stone (or string) has no empty adjacent intersections is an illegal move, unless you capture some opponent’s stones as a result. This means that a group of stones with one ‘eye’ can be captured, but a group with two or more ‘eyes’ is permanently safe from capture (a living group).

Repeating a former board position is an illegal move; you must play elsewhere first.

When there are no useful plays left, you may pass, handing over a stone as a capture. When both players pass (and White must pass last), the game ends.

Stones that cannot evade capture, even if not totally surrounded, are removed from the board and treated like other captures. If you cannot agree which stones are in this state, just play on.

The player with the greater number of empty points surrounded, plus stones captured, is the winner.

Example 3 shows the end of a game:

During which Black captured one stone at X and has surrounded 15 points of territory, 10 in the lower right (including X), and 5 at the top. Adding the capture and a pass stone, Black has 17 points. White has surrounded 17 points of territory, though adding a pass stone makes 18 points. **White wins the game!**