

Mancala

A Two-Player Game Of Strategy

This ancient game is believed to have originated some 3,500 years ago in Egypt. The name is derived from the Arabic verb *naqala* which means "to move". Boards were carved of wood, cut into stone or simply dug into the ground. Playing pieces consisted of various objects including beans, nuts, seeds, stones, etc. As word of the game spread, it became popular in Asia and Africa and is now played throughout the world.

The object is to accumulate the most pieces through a series of moves and captures. Two players sit facing each other with the board between them. The board consists of two rows of 6 small pits with a large pit at each end called a reservoir or scoring pit. The small pits hold the pieces to be played and the reservoirs hold the captured pieces.

There are many different variations of Mancala games played worldwide. The rules noted within these instructions will provide challenging and entertaining forms of play for you to enjoy.

Recommended Ages 6 & Up

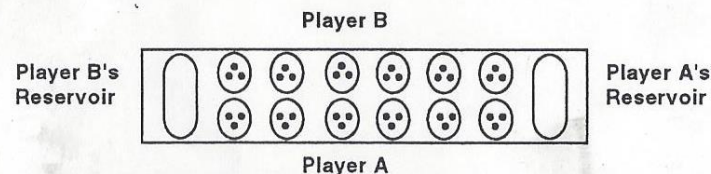


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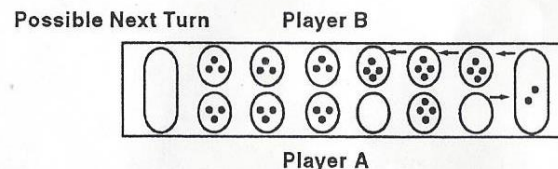
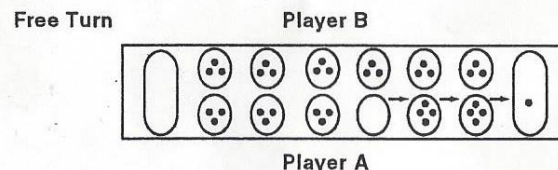
Made in Mexico

Playing The Game

Begin by setting the board between the two players and placing 3 pieces in each of the small pits. The pieces in the pits directly in front of each player are theirs to move and the reservoir on the right is their scoring pit. (See diagram below.)

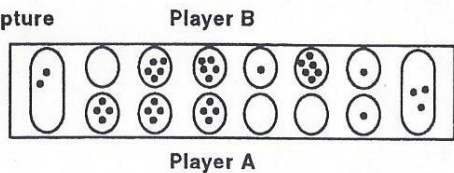


The first player picks up all of the pieces from any one of the small pits on their side. Then, one piece is placed in each pit to the right, including the reservoir. Continue moving counter-clockwise around the board placing pieces into the opponent's pits but never into their reservoir. During a move, if a player's last piece is placed in their own reservoir, they get a free turn. (See diagram below.)

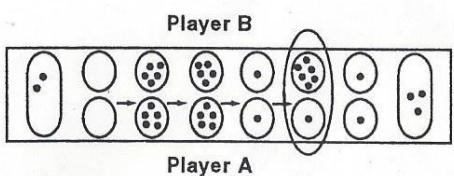


During a move, if a player's last piece is placed into an empty pit on their side of the board, a capture occurs. The opponent's pieces in the pit directly across are placed into the player's reservoir along with the capturing piece. (See diagram at top of next page.)

Set Up For A Capture



The Capture



All of these pieces are "captured" and placed in Player A's reservoir

Once a player touches the pieces in a pit, they must be played. The game is over when either of the player's small pits on their side are completely emptied. The player with remaining pieces gets to place them into their reservoir. To be the first one out is not always best. The player with the most pieces in their reservoir is the winner.

Variations

Try these various ways to play either one at a time or using a combination of rules:

- 1) To play a more advanced game, start by placing 4 pieces in each of the small pits. If you are looking for even more of a challenge try starting with 5 or 6 pieces in the small pits.
- 2) When a capture occurs, the capturing piece does not get moved into the player's reservoir. It remains on the board and in play.
- 3) The first player to clear all of the pits on their side of the board gets all of the remaining pieces.
- 4) There are no free turns.
- 5) During a move, pieces are not placed in the reservoir. The only way to accumulate pieces in your reservoir is through captures.

Strategies

The following ideas may help to develop a winning strategy:

- 1) Always look for moves that will enable you to take a free turn. Taking several consecutive free turns is allowed.
- 2) Always look for moves that will enable you to capture your opponent's pieces.
- 3) Always look for ways to force your opponent into a move that would be beneficial to you.
- 4) Always look for ways to counteract your opponent's plans.

Some different forms of Mancala games are called Kalaha, Wari and Woaley. For more information about these games, consult your local library or game store.

Replacement pieces may be available through your local game store or they can be obtained by sending \$3.00 with a note to the address on the front cover.



WARNING -- CHOKING HAZARD
This game has small pieces. Instruct all children to keep pieces out of their mouth.