

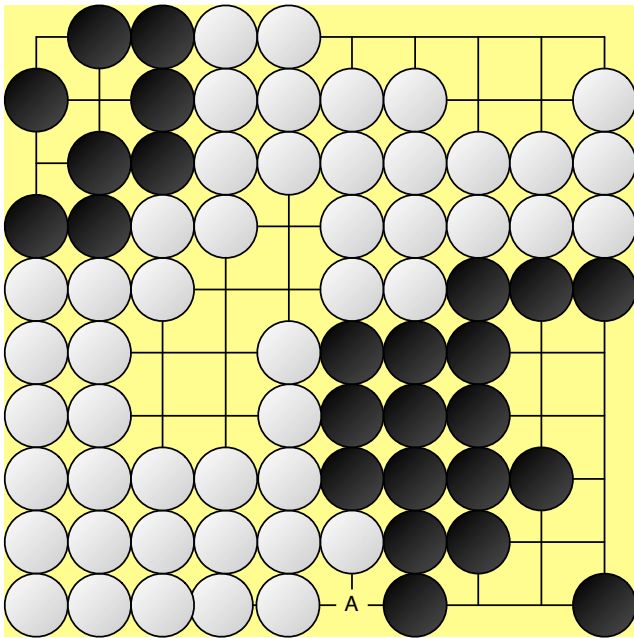
Rules of Go

Overview

- The board is initially empty.
 - Black plays first.
 - Players take turns placing stones on the intersections of the lines.
 - Play continues until both players pass.
 - At the end of the game, points are scored for surrounding empty intersections.
 - Stones may be captured by tightly surrounding them (see examples below). Captured stones are taken off the board. Each of your stones captured costs you a point.
 - It is illegal to capture your own stones.
 - It is illegal to repeat a board position (the *ko* rule).
- That's it—those are all the rules!

Scoring Example

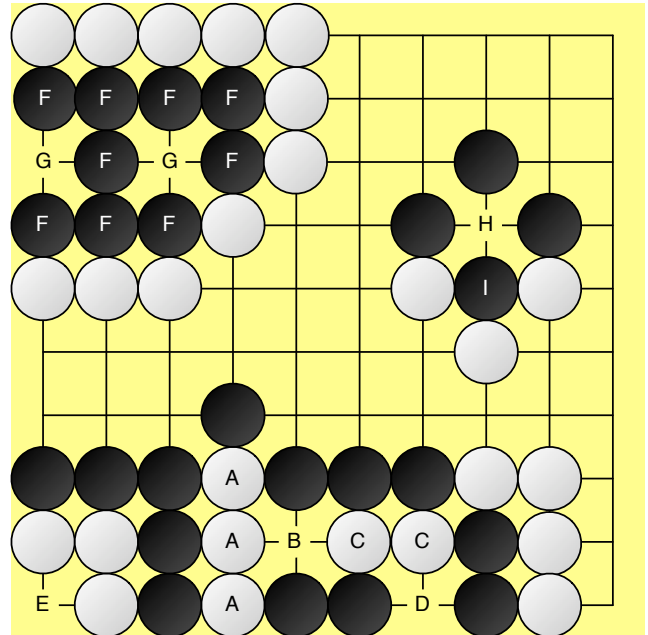
In the diagram below, white has 7 points in the center and 7 more points at the upper right, for a total of 14. Black has 3 points at the upper left and 9 at the lower right, for a total of 12. White wins. The intersection marked A at the bottom center is neutral, so it's not a point for either player.



Capturing Examples

Stones are captured in *blocks* of one or more stones. A block is a contiguous group of stones connected along the lines on the board; diagonals don't count. In the diagram at right, the three stones marked A form a block.

A block is captured when there are no empty intersections (called *liberties* or *breathing spaces*) next to it. Block A has one liberty, at B. If black plays at B, the three white stones are removed. The two stones labeled C are *not* captured, because they have another liberty at D.



It would be illegal for white to play at E, because the block of four white stones would have no liberties. Could black play at E? It looks like a suicidal move, because the black stone would have no liberties, but it would occupy the white block's last liberty at the same time; the move is legal and the white stones would be captured.

The black block F can never be captured. It has two internal liberties (eyes) at the points marked G. To capture the block, white would have to occupy both of them, but either move would be suicidal and therefore illegal.

Suppose white plays at H, capturing the black stone at I. (Notice that H is not an eye.) Black is not allowed to play back at I, recapturing the white stone, because if this were allowed it could go back and forth forever. The *ko* rule says that a full board position can never be repeated. Black *could* recapture at I on a later turn after something had changed elsewhere on the board.