

Notes Concerning *Checkers*

Level: Intermediate/advanced

Recommended # of players: 2

Materials: Checkers board; 24 checkers (12 each of 2 colors)

Relationships: spatial reasoning; strategies

Notes:

References to games similar to *Checkers* have been found as far back as 1400-1600 BC. Versions of *Checkers* are played worldwide. *Checkers* has endured for so long in part because it provides so many opportunities for the development of strategies. Players can think several moves ahead and set up traps for the other player's checkers.

Although the game is enjoyed by many adults, it can also be played successfully by young children. The game provides children with many opportunities to engage in spatial reasoning. Children also have opportunities to plan moves in advance and play both offensively (trying to capture the other player's checkers) and defensively (trying to protect their own checkers from capture).

The official rules of *Checkers* state that if a player can make a jump, the jump must be made, and that if a player can make a multiple jump, the player cannot stop partway through the multiple jump (regardless of the consequences). This rule was dropped here because it is too advanced for young children who frequently miss jumps because they do not notice them.

Creating new *Checkers* rules is common among both children and adults, and is to be encouraged.

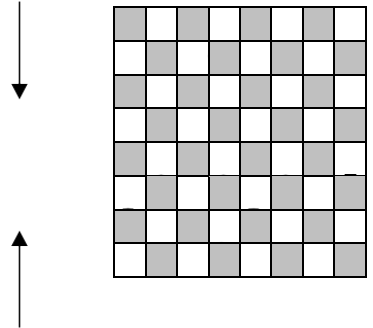
Checkers

Materials: Checker board, 24 pieces (12 of each color)

Objective: To be the first player to capture all of the other player's pieces.

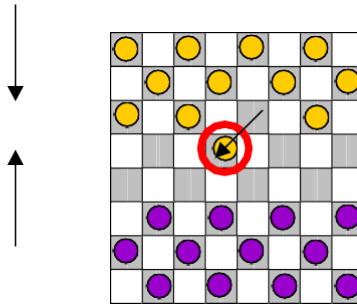
How to Play:

1. Each player takes all of the pieces of a matching color and arranges them as in the diagram to the right (all pieces are placed on the dark squares). The row nearest a player is called that player's "home row" (see diagram, right).

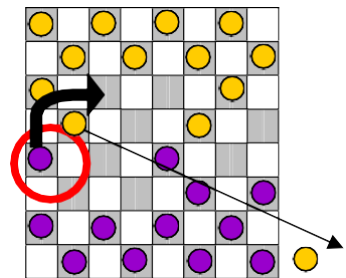


2. Players decide who goes first.

3. Players take turns moving one of their pieces. Pieces can only move diagonally (from dark square to dark square) toward the other player's home row.

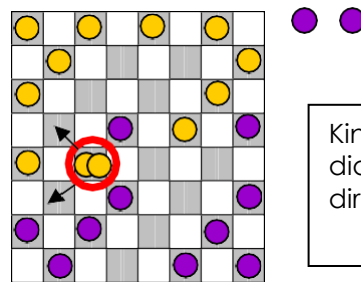
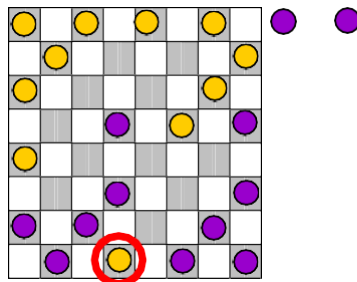


4. If an opponent's piece is on an adjacent space (as in the diagram, right) and an empty space is on the other side, a player may jump it and keep the checker that was jumped. This is called capturing.



5. Once a piece reaches the other player's home row, a captured piece of the same color is placed on top of it. Now the piece is a "king", and may move in any direction.

Home row →



Kings can move diagonally in any direction.

Home row →

6. Players continue to take turns until all of one player's pieces have been captured or trapped.