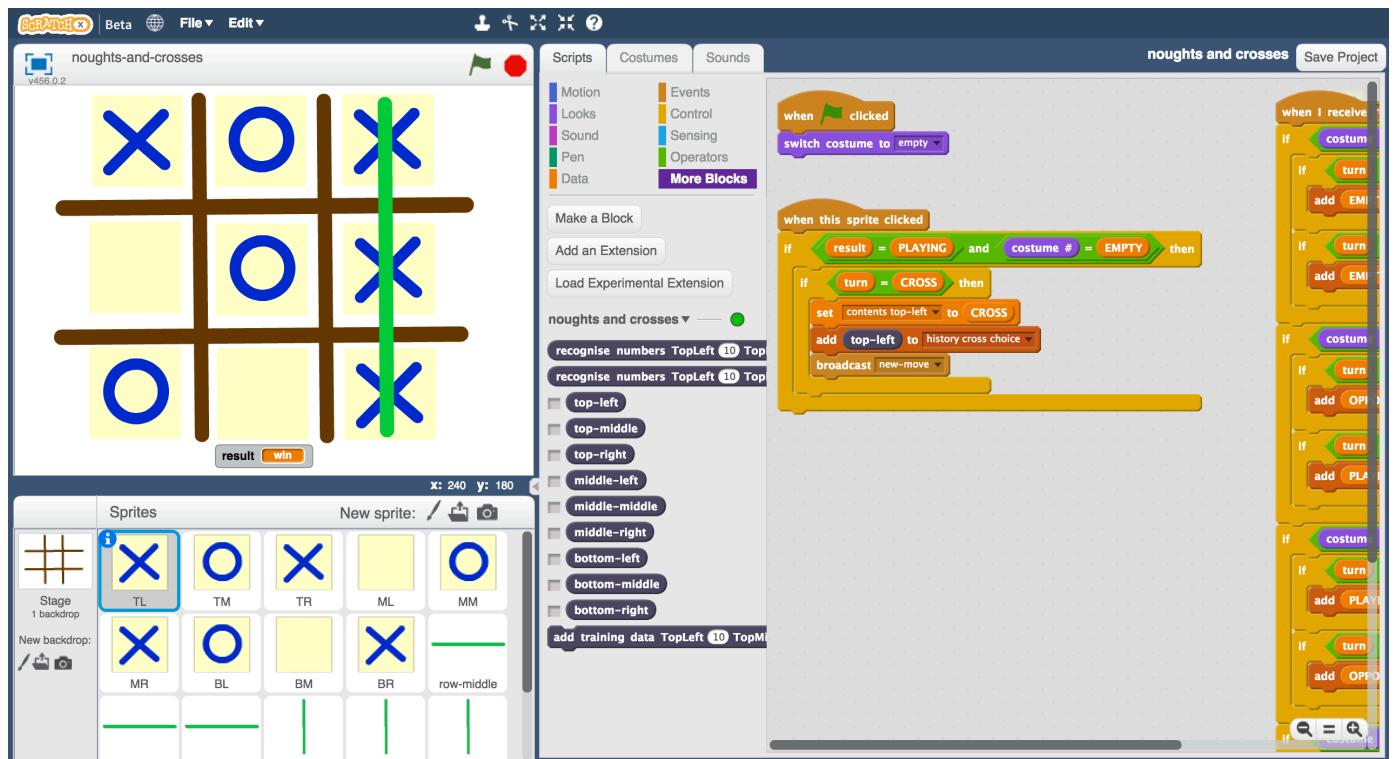


Noughts & Crosses

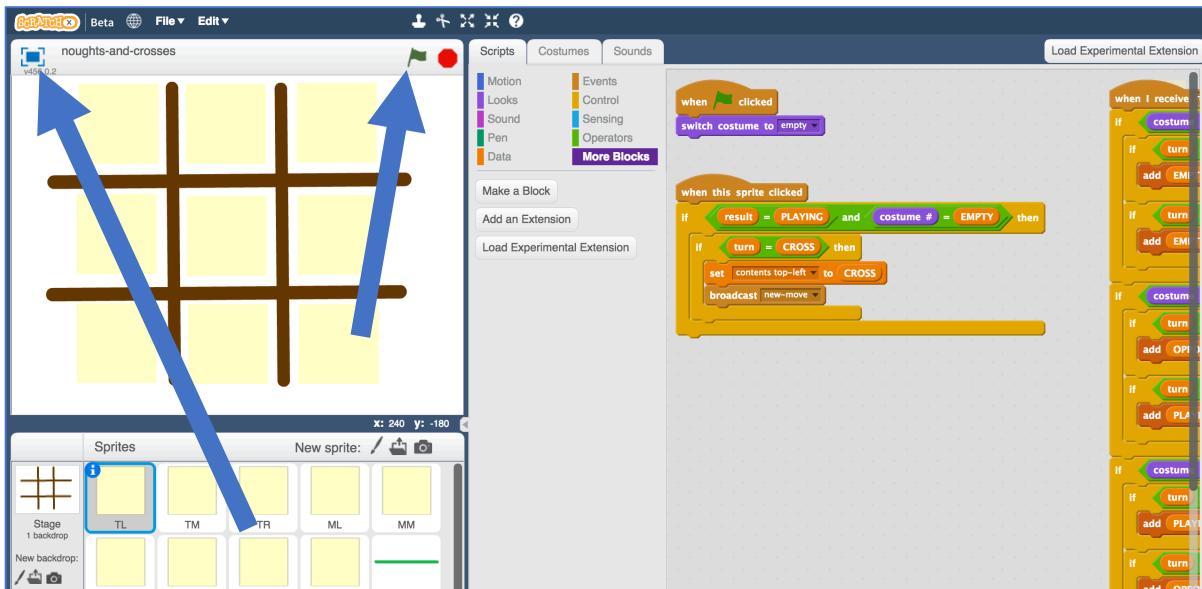
In this project you will create a noughts and crosses game in Scratch that is able to learn from how you play.

You won't give it instructions for how to play, or tell it what the objective or rules of the game are.

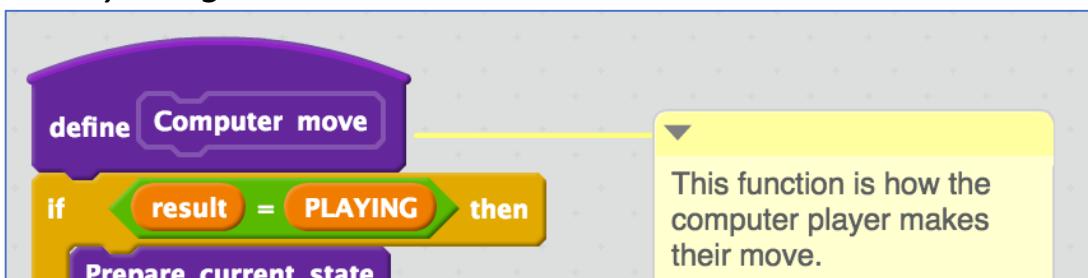
Instead, you'll show it examples of you playing the game. When it's seen enough examples to start trying to play for itself, you'll tell it when it beats you.



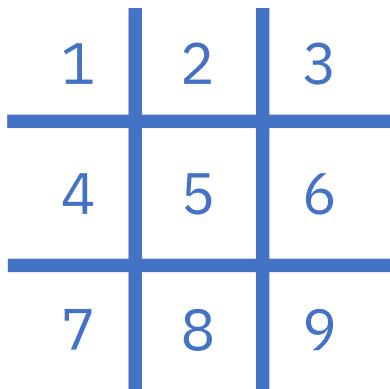
1. Go to <https://machinelearningforkids.co.uk/scratchx> in a browser.
2. Open the **noughts-and-crosses.sbx** starter file for this project.
Click File -> Load Project
If you haven't got this file, ask your teacher or group leader.
3. Click the **full-screen** button, and then click the Green Flag



4. Play a few games of noughts and crosses
You are CROSS (X), the computer is playing as NOUGHTS (O).
Click the green flag to start a new game, then click on the game board.
5. Can you see how the computer is choosing where to put its moves?
When you think you've worked out the computer's strategy, look at the Computer move block in the Stage
Were you right?

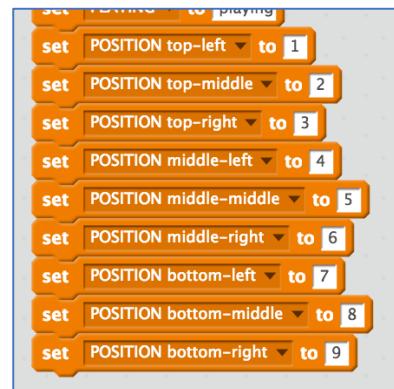


Representing noughts and crosses in Scratch



The positions of spaces on the noughts and crosses board are numbered from 1 to 9.

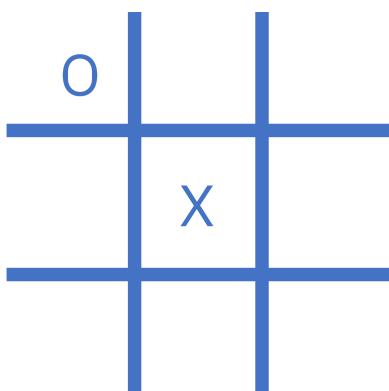
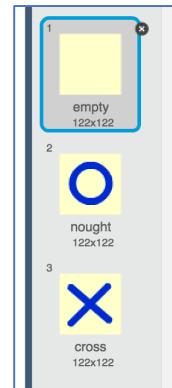
Data constants are used to make it easier to refer to them in scripts.



Empty = 1
O = 2
X = 3

An empty space is shown in costume 1.
A nought is shown in costume 2.
A cross is shown in costume 3.

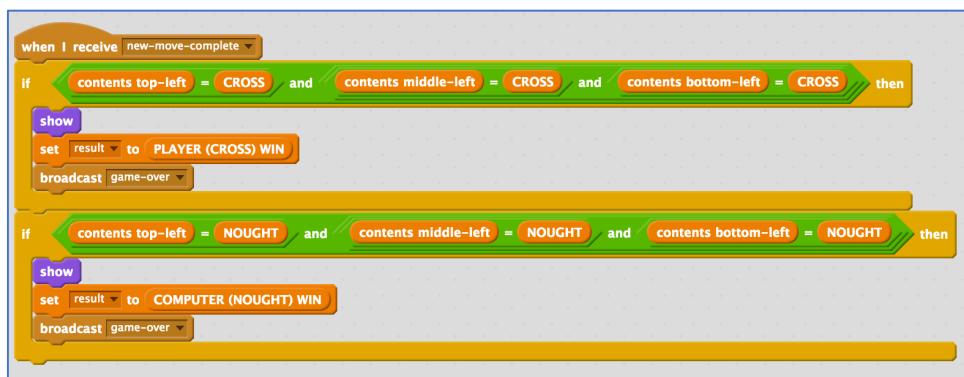
Data constants are used to make it easier to refer to these in scripts.



Variables are used to store the current state of the game.

For example, at this point:

contents top-left = 2
contents middle-middle = 3
contents bottom-right = 1



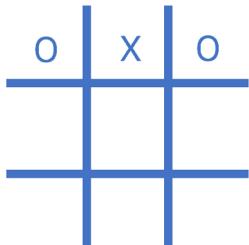
Each of the green row and column sprites check to see if someone has won.

This happens after every move.

What are you going to do?

You're going to train a computer to play noughts and crosses. You'll do this by showing it examples of how you play the game.

Imagine the board looks like this and it's X's turn.

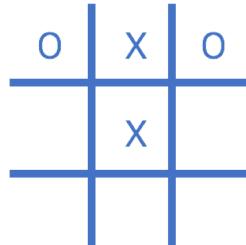


Imagine you decide to put your X in the centre space.

top-left	opponent
top-middle	player
top-right	opponent
middle-left	empty
middle-middle	empty
middle-right	empty
bottom-left	empty
bottom-middle	empty
bottom-right	empty

choice : middle-middle

Imagine the board looks like this and it's O's turn.



Imagine you decide to put your O in the bottom middle space.

top-left	player
top-middle	opponent
top-right	player
middle-left	empty
middle-middle	opponent
middle-right	empty
bottom-left	empty
bottom-middle	empty
bottom-right	empty

choice : bottom-middle

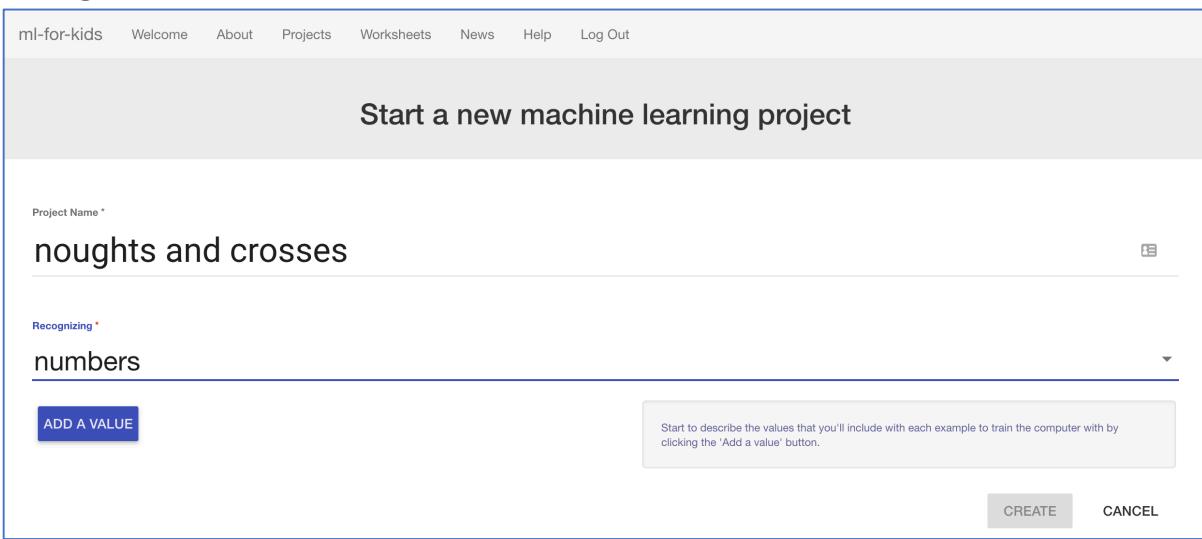
Using “opponent” and “player” instead of “nought” and “cross” means the computer can learn from both nought and cross moves.

You'll only use examples of moves from the player that wins the game.

If you (X) win, use your moves as examples to train the computer.
If the computer (O) wins, use the computer's moves to train with.

These **examples of moves that lead to winning** will teach the computer how to play to win!

- 6.** Close the Scratch window.
- 7.** Go to <https://machinelearningforkids.co.uk/> in a web browser
- 8.** Click on “**Get started**”
- 9.** Click on “**Log In**” and type in your username and password
If you don't have a username, ask your teacher or group leader to create one for you.
If you can't remember your username or password, ask your teacher or group leader to reset it for you.
- 10.** Click on “**Projects**” on the top menu bar
- 11.** Click on the “**+ Add a new project**” button.
- 12.** Name your project “noughts and crosses” and set it to learn how to recognise “**numbers**”



The screenshot shows a web-based form for creating a new machine learning project. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: ml-for-kids, Welcome, About, Projects, Worksheets, News, Help, and Log Out. Below the navigation bar, the main title is "Start a new machine learning project". The first input field is labeled "Project Name *" and contains the text "noughts and crosses". To the right of this input field is a small icon of three squares. The second input field is labeled "Recognizing *" and contains the text "numbers". Below these fields is a blue button labeled "ADD A VALUE". To the right of the "ADD A VALUE" button is a tooltip box containing the text: "Start to describe the values that you'll include with each example to train the computer with by clicking the 'Add a value' button." At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: "CREATE" and "CANCEL".

- 13.** Click “**Add a value**” and name a value “TopLeft” and make it a “number”.

- 14.** Click “Add another value” again and repeat to add values for the other eight positions on the board

Each example is the state of the board before a move that led to a win. TopLeft, TopMiddle, TopRight, MiddleLeft, MiddleMiddle, MiddleRight, BottomLeft, BottomMiddle, BottomRight

The screenshot shows the 'Start a new machine learning project' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: ml-for-kids, Welcome, About, Projects, Worksheets, News, Help, and Log Out. Below this is a title 'Start a new machine learning project'. A 'Project Name *' field contains 'noughts and crosses'. A tooltip next to it says: 'Give your project a name to describe what sort of thing you'll try to teach the computer to recognise.' Below the project name, 'Recognizing *' is set to 'numbers'. The main area consists of a 3x3 grid of input fields for board positions:

Value 1 * TopLeft number	Value 2 * TopMiddle number	Value 3 * TopRight number
Value 4 * MiddleLeft number	Value 5 * MiddleMiddle number	Value 6 * MiddleRight number
Value 7 * BottomLeft number	Value 8 * BottomMiddle number	Value 9 * BottomRight number

Below the grid is a blue button labeled 'ADD ANOTHER VALUE'. At the bottom right are 'CREATE' and 'CANCEL' buttons.

- 15.** Click **Create**. You should see “noughts and crosses” show up in the list of your projects. Click on it.

The screenshot shows the 'Your machine learning projects' page. At the top, there are navigation links: ml-for-kids, Welcome, About, Projects, Worksheets, News, Help, and Log Out. Below this is a title 'Your machine learning projects'. A button in the top right corner says '+ Add a new project'. The page lists two projects:

- newspapers**
Recognising **text** as **Daily_Express, Daily_Mirror or 2 other classes**
- noughts and crosses**
Recognising **numbers**

Each project entry has a trash can icon to its right.

16. Click on Train

The screenshot shows a web page titled "noughts and crosses". There are three main options: "Train", "Learn & Test", and "Scratch". The "Train" option is highlighted with a blue button labeled "Train". Below it, there is descriptive text: "Collect examples of what you want the computer to recognise." A blue "Train" button is located at the bottom of the box.

17. Click "+ Add new label" and create a label called "top-left"

Examples of making a move in the top-left space that leads to a win will go in this bucket.

The screenshot shows a project titled "Recognising numbers as top-left". It features a large rectangular input area with a dark grey border and a thin black outline. The word "top-left" is written in green at the top left corner of this area. In the bottom left corner of the input area, there is a small button with a plus sign and the text "Add example". In the top right corner of the main content area, there is a button with a plus sign and the text "Add new label".

18. Click “+ Add new label” again and create labels for the other eight spaces on the board.

top-middle, top-right, middle-left, middle-middle, middle-right, bottom-left, bottom-middle, bottom-right

The screenshot shows a web application titled "Recognising numbers as top-left, top-middle or 7 other classes". It features a grid of nine rectangular boxes, each containing a label and a "+ Add example" button. The labels are arranged in three rows: top-left, top-middle, top-right in the first row; middle-left, middle-middle, middle-right in the second row; and bottom-left, bottom-middle, bottom-right in the third row. A "Log Out" link is visible at the top right of the page.

19. Click the “< Back to project” link then click **Scratch**

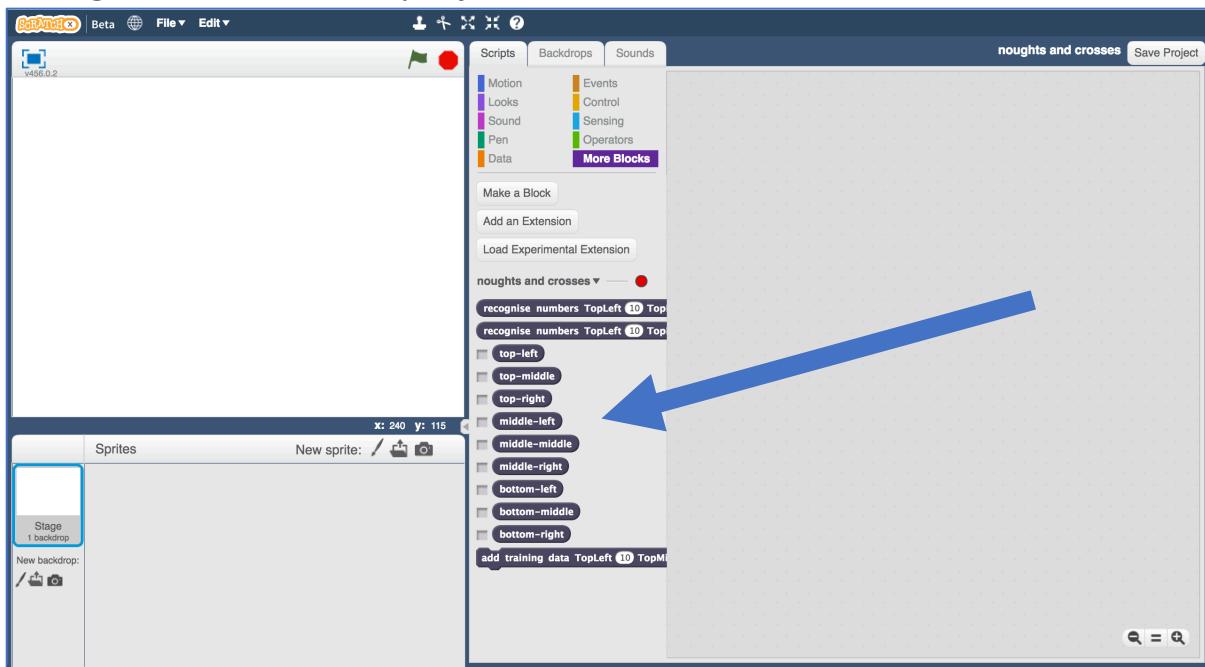
20. Click the **Open in Scratch** button

It will warn you that you haven't trained the computer yet – but that's okay, as you'll use Scratch to collect the training examples.

Click the “go straight into Scratch now” link.

The screenshot shows the "More Blocks" tab of a Scratch project. It displays two blocks of code: one for recognizing numbers and another for confidence. To the right, a Scratch script preview window shows a green cat sprite with a "make me happy" hat and a "recognise text text (0)" block. Below the preview, a legend explains the status indicator colors: green means trained, yellow means not trained, and red means error.

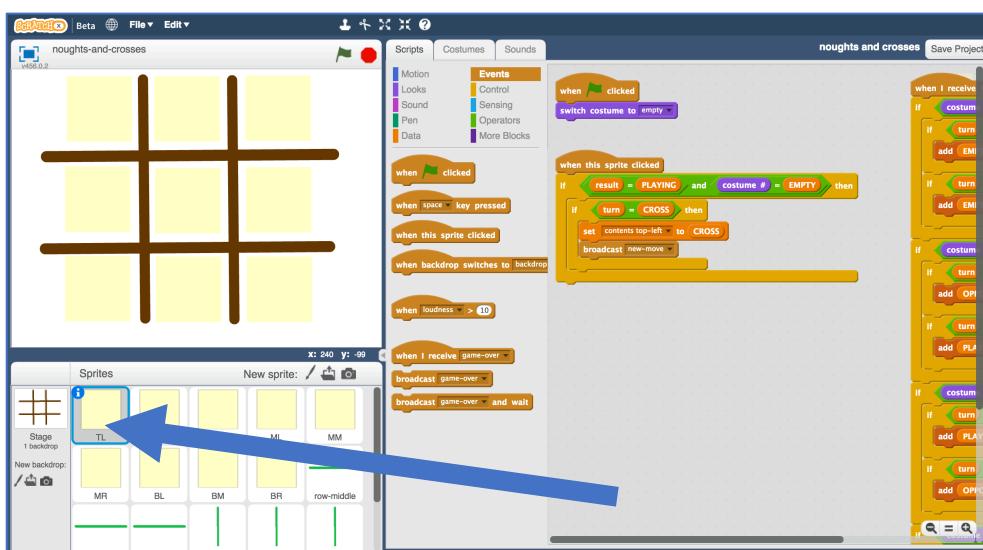
21. You should see new blocks in the “More blocks” section from your “noughts and crosses” project.



22. Open the “noughts-and-crosses.sbx” starter project file again.
*Click **File** -> **Load Project***

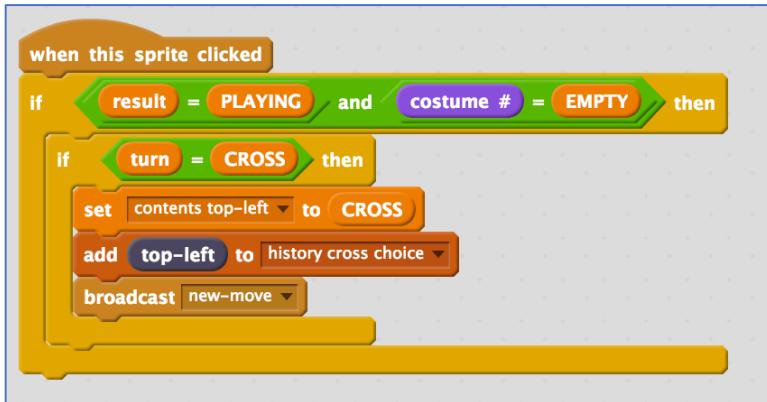
23. Click the **TL** (top-left space) sprite

You'll update the script to store when you click on this space for your move.



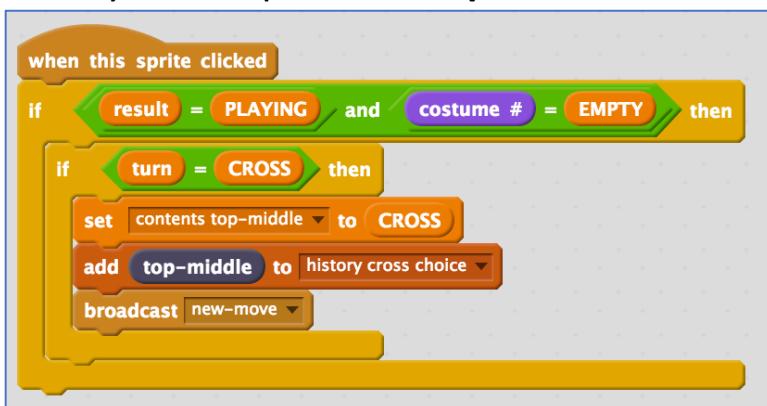
24. Modify the **When this sprite clicked** script to add **top-left** to the history of cross choices.

You only need to add a single block to get the script to look like this:



25. Click the **TM** (top-middle) sprite.

Modify the script to add **top-middle** to the history of cross choices.



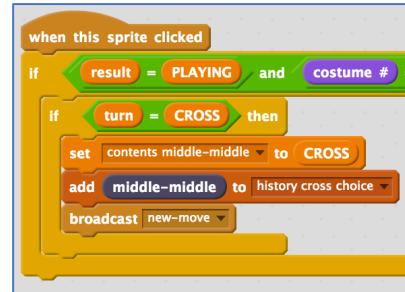
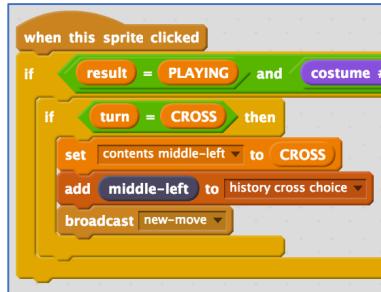
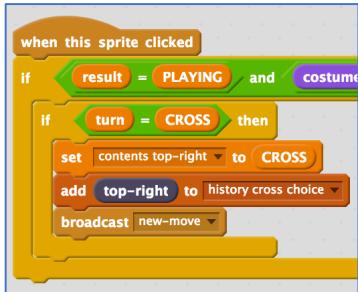
26. Repeat for the other seven board sprites

Add **top-right** to the **TR** sprite. Add **middle-left** to the **ML** sprite.

Add **middle-middle** to the **MM** sprite. Add **middle-right** to the **MR** sprite.

Add **bottom-left** to the **BL** sprite. Add **bottom-middle** to the **BM** sprite.

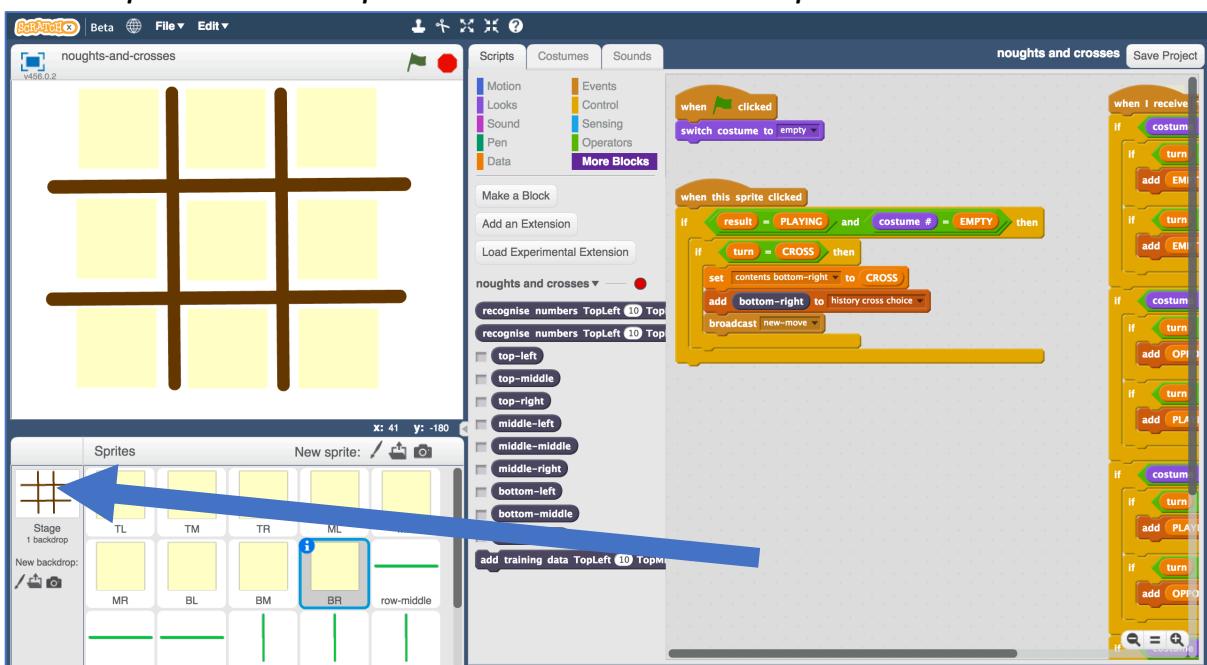
Add **bottom-right** to the **BR** sprite.



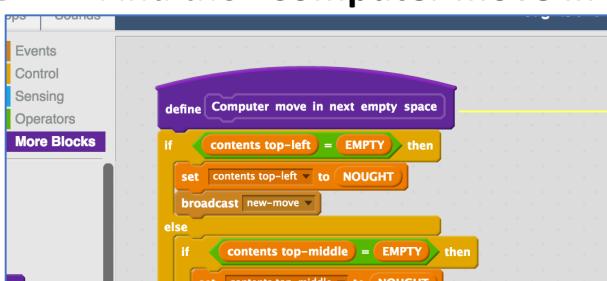


27. Click on the “Stage”

You'll update the script to store when the computer makes its move



28. Find the “Computer move in next empty space” script



29. Modify the script to add each of the computer's moves to the history of nought choices.

*You only need to add the **add CHOICE** to 'history nought choice' blocks*

```

define [Computer move in next empty space]
  if [contents top-left = EMPTY] then
    set [contents top-left v] to [NOUGHT]
    add [top-left] to [history nought choice]
    broadcast [new-move v]
  else
    if [contents top-middle = EMPTY] then
      set [contents top-middle v] to [NOUGHT]
      add [top-middle] to [history nought choice]
      broadcast [new-move v]
    else
      if [contents top-right = EMPTY] then
        set [contents top-right v] to [NOUGHT]
        add [top-right] to [history nought choice]
        broadcast [new-move v]
      else
        if [contents middle-left = EMPTY] then
          set [contents middle-left v] to [NOUGHT]
          add [middle-left] to [history nought choice]
          broadcast [new-move v]
        else
          if [contents middle-middle = EMPTY] then
            set [contents middle-middle v] to [NOUGHT]
            add [middle-middle] to [history nought choice]
            broadcast [new-move v]
          else
            if [contents middle-right = EMPTY] then
              set [contents middle-right v] to [NOUGHT]
              add [middle-right] to [history nought choice]
              broadcast [new-move v]
            end
          end
        end
      end
    end
  end
end
broadcast [new-move v]

```

30. Create the following script (still in the Stage)

This will add all of the history of moves made by the winning player to the training data that you will use to train the computer.



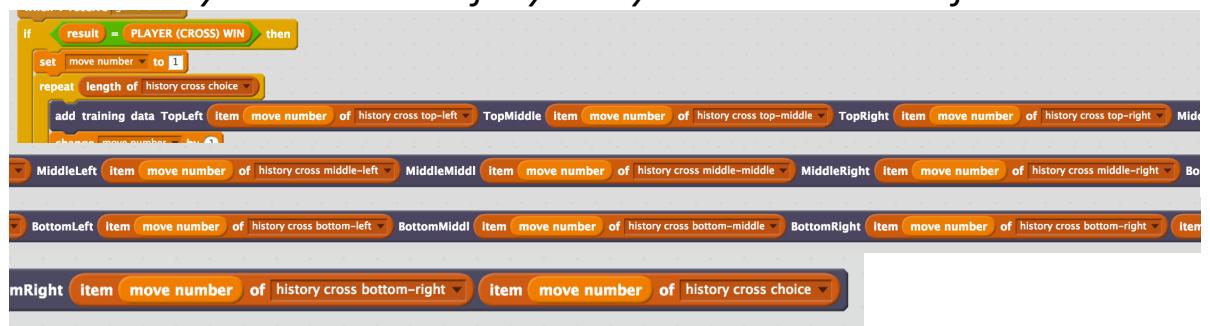
*If the game ends with the player (CROSS) winning, all the moves you want to add to the training data should be from the **cross** histories.*

*If the game ends with the computer (NOUGHT) winning, all the moves you want to add to the training data should be from the **nought** histories.*

The history item you should add should match the board state space (e.g. add top-left to the TopLeft item).

And you end with the choice of move that was made.

The 'add training data' block is very long! Duplicate can help save time. Make sure you do this carefully – any mistakes will confuse the training.





31. Save your project

Click File -> Save Project

32. Play a few games

Click on the Green Flag as you did before.

It is better to play in full-screen mode to avoid accidentally moving sprites.

33. Go back to the training page

Leaving the Scratch window open, go back to the training tool window.

Click the “< Back to project” link and then click “Train”

Category	Example Labels
top-left	TopLeft 0, TopMiddle 0, TopRight 0, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 0, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 0
top-middle	TopLeft 1, TopMiddle 0, TopRight 0, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 1, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight -1
top-right	TopLeft -1, TopMiddle 0, TopRight 0, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 0, MiddleRight 1, BottomLeft 1, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 0
middle-left	TopLeft 0, TopMiddle -1, TopRight 0, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 0, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 0
middle-middle	TopLeft 1, TopMiddle -1, TopRight 0, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 0, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 1, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 0
middle-right	TopLeft -1, TopMiddle 0, TopRight 1, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 0, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 1
bottom-left	TopLeft 0, TopMiddle 0, TopRight 1, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 1, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 1, BottomRight 0
bottom-middle	TopLeft 0, TopMiddle 0, TopRight -1, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 0, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 0
bottom-right	TopLeft 1, TopMiddle 0, TopRight -1, MiddleLeft 0, MiddleMiddle 1, MiddleRight 0, BottomLeft 0, BottomMiddle 0, BottomRight 0

34. Look at your training so far

Each item is the state of the board at the time you or the computer made a move (in a game that you or the computer won).

The bucket that the item is in is the move that you made.

If there are any empty buckets – like middle-left in the screenshot before – that means you haven't made a move in that space in a game that you won yet.

35. Click the “< Back to project” link. Click the “Learn & Test” button.

36. If there is a “Train new machine learning model” button you can go to step 40.

By this point, you won't have enough examples to train the computer yet. For the computer to know when it is a good idea to choose any space on the board, you need at least 5 examples of where you chose that space and ended up winning.

This page shows you how many examples you have so far. Look to see which one(s) you need more examples for.

ml-for-kids Welcome About Projects Worksheets News Help Log Out

Machine learning models

< Back to project

What have you done?

You've collected examples of numbers for a computer to use to recognise when numbers are top-left, top-middle or 7 other classes.

You've collected:

- 3 examples of bottom-left,
- 2 examples of bottom-middle,
- 3 examples of bottom-right,
- 5 examples of middle-middle,
- 2 examples of middle-right,
- 3 examples of top-left,
- 3 examples of top-middle,
- 6 examples of top-right

What's next?

Keep going!

Go back to the [Train](#) page and collect more examples for each of the labels.

The more you can get, the better it should learn, but you need at least five examples of each as an absolute minimum.

37. Leave the “**Learn & Test**” window open. Go back to the **Scratch** window.

38. Play more games.

Try starting from a different position each time to get a variety of examples.

Try starting from positions that you know you need more examples of.

39. When you think you've got at least 5 examples of each space, go back to the “**Learn & Test**” window and **refresh** the page.

If there is still no “Train new machine learning model” button, you need to go back to step 37 and try again.

The screenshot shows a web page titled "Machine learning models". At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: ml-for-kids, Welcome, About, Projects, Worksheets, News, Help, and Log Out. Below the title, there is a link "< Back to project". The main content is divided into two sections:

- What have you done?**

You've collected examples of numbers for a computer to use to recognise when numbers are top-left, top-middle or 7 other classes.

You've collected:

 - 7 examples of bottom-left,
 - 5 examples of bottom-middle,
 - 6 examples of bottom-right,
 - 1 example of middle-left,
 - 10 examples of middle-middle,
 - 5 examples of middle-right,
 - 5 examples of top-left,
 - 6 examples of top-middle,
 - 13 examples of top-right
- What's next?**

Ready to start the computer's training?

Click the button below to start training a machine learning model using the examples you've collected so far.

(Or go back to the Train page if you want to collect some more examples first.)

At the bottom left, there is a box labeled "Info from training computer:" containing the text "Train new machine learning model".

- 40.** Click on the “Train new machine learning model” button at the bottom of the page.

What have you done so far?

You’re teaching a computer to play noughts and crosses.

So far, you’ve updated a Scratch noughts and crosses game so that it can collect examples of how you play and add them to a set of examples. And you’ve used those examples to train a machine learning “model”.

The next step is to use that model to let the computer decide what move to make – instead of just going for the next empty space every time.

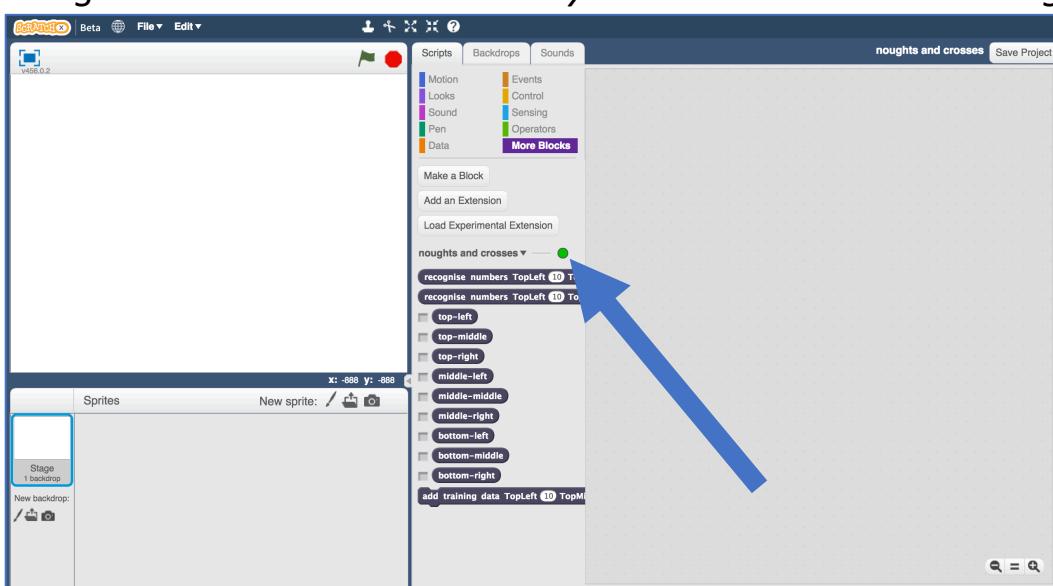
- 41.** Close the Scratch window.

Make sure you’ve saved your project first!

- 42.** Click the “< Back to project” link. Then click the **Scratch** button.

- 43.** Click the **Open in Scratch** button.

The green circle means this time you have a machine learning model.

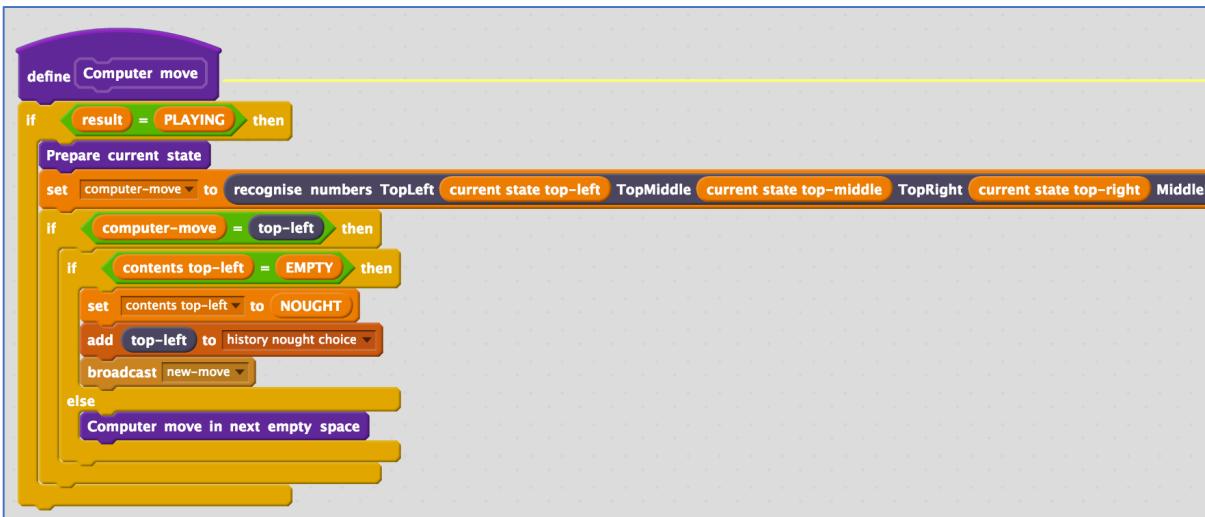


44. Open your saved project

*Click **File** -> **Load Project***

45. Click on the **Stage** and find the **Computer move** script

46. Modify the **Computer move** script so that it looks like this



The **recognise numbers** block is another very long one, but just match the space names with the "current state" data block that matches.



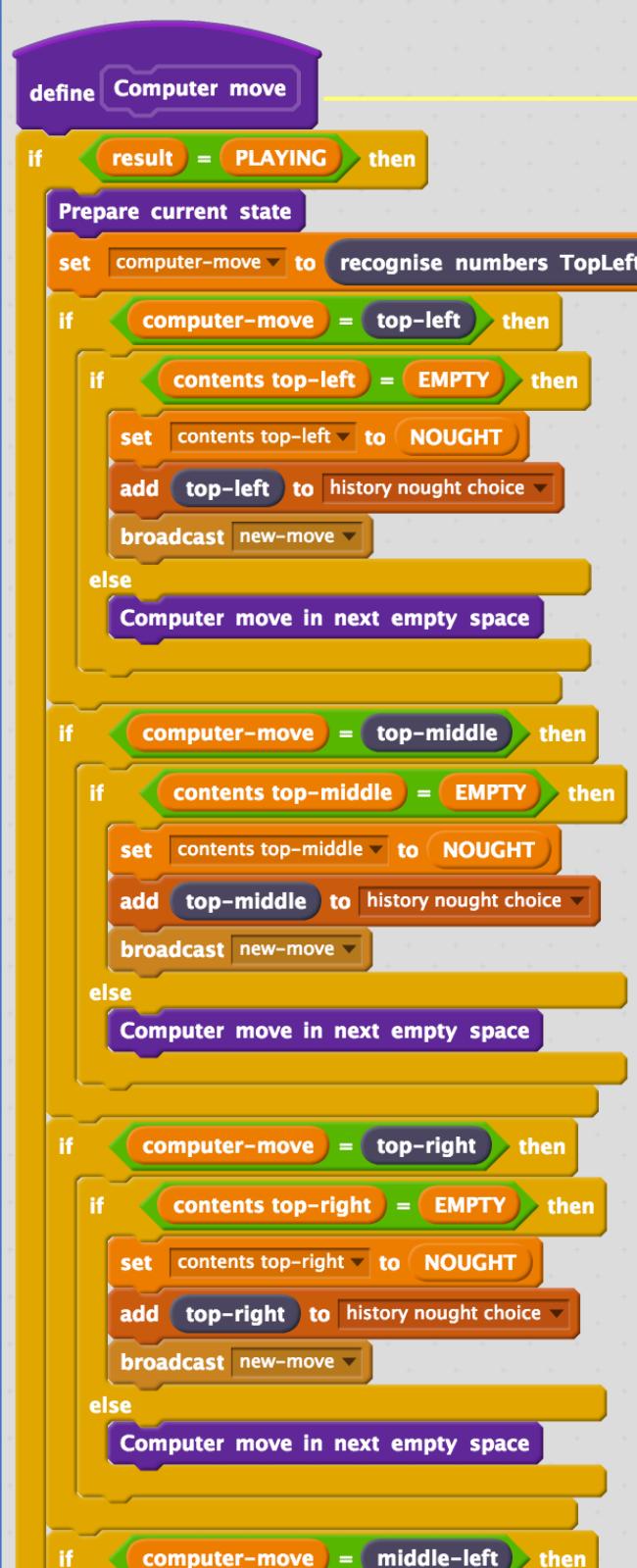
This script will use the machine learning model to let the computer choose where to have a move... (as long as it chooses top-left, for now).

While the computer is still learning, it may get things wrong. So there is also a check in the script to make sure that the computer has chosen an EMPTY space! If it's chosen a space that already has a nought or cross in, it'll just resort to picking the next empty space.

It will also add the choice it's made to the history, so it can be used in training data if it ends up winning.

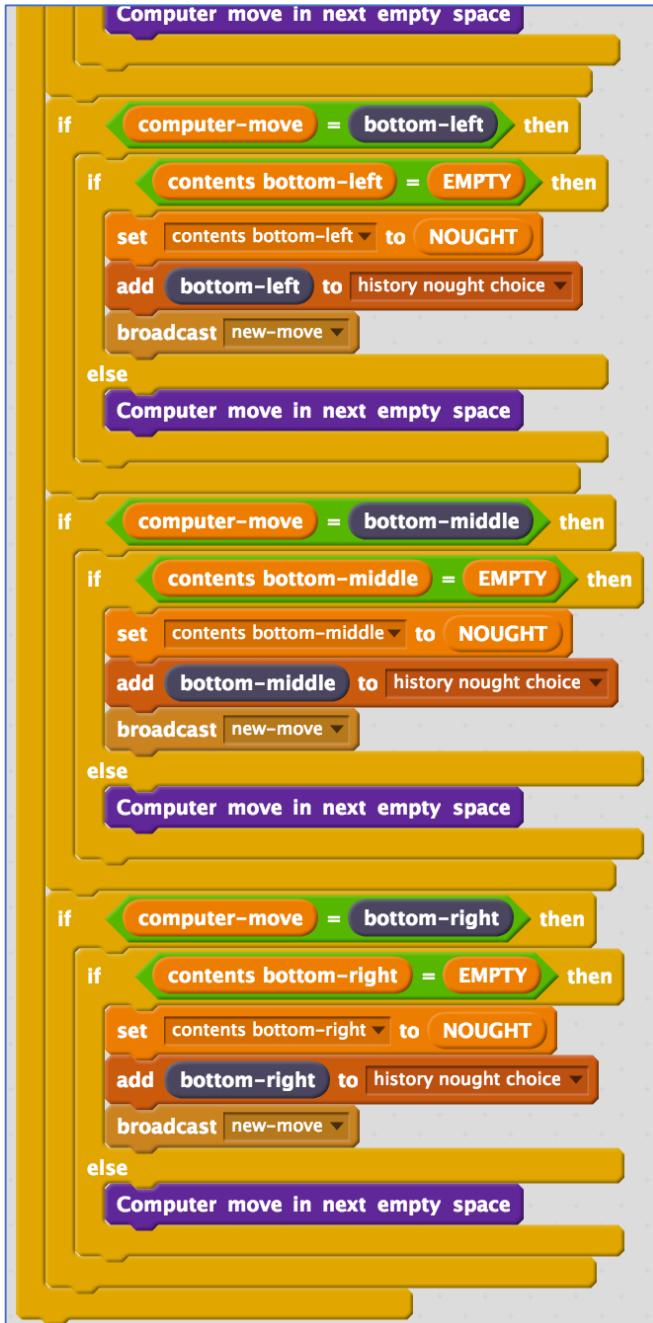
47. Update the **Computer move** script to handle all the other choices it could make. This is all one long script.

Use Duplicate on the right-click menu to save yourself some time.



The image shows a Scratch script titled "Computer move". It begins with a "define" block for "Computer move". Inside, there is a large "if" block where "result" is set to "PLAYING". The script then branches into six cases based on the value of "computer-move": "top-left", "top-middle", "top-right", "middle-left", "middle-right", and "bottom-left". Each case follows a similar pattern: it checks if the "contents" of a specific cell are "EMPTY", sets the cell to "NOUGHT", adds the cell to a "history nought choice" list, and broadcasts "new-move". If the cell is not empty, it instead says "Computer move in next empty space".

```
define Computer move
  if result = PLAYING then
    Prepare current state
    set computer-move to recognise numbers TopLeft
    if computer-move = top-left then
      if contents top-left = EMPTY then
        set contents top-left to NOUGHT
        add top-left to history nought choice
        broadcast new-move
      else
        Computer move in next empty space
    end
    if computer-move = top-middle then
      if contents top-middle = EMPTY then
        set contents top-middle to NOUGHT
        add top-middle to history nought choice
        broadcast new-move
      else
        Computer move in next empty space
    end
    if computer-move = top-right then
      if contents top-right = EMPTY then
        set contents top-right to NOUGHT
        add top-right to history nought choice
        broadcast new-move
      else
        Computer move in next empty space
    end
    if computer-move = middle-left then
      if contents middle-left = EMPTY then
        set contents middle-left to NOUGHT
        add middle-left to history nought choice
        broadcast new-move
      else
        Computer move in next empty space
    end
    if computer-move = middle-right then
      if contents middle-right = EMPTY then
        set contents middle-right to NOUGHT
        add middle-right to history nought choice
        broadcast new-move
      else
        Computer move in next empty space
    end
    if computer-move = bottom-left then
      if contents bottom-left = EMPTY then
        set contents bottom-left to NOUGHT
        add bottom-left to history nought choice
        broadcast new-move
      else
        Computer move in next empty space
    end
  end
end
```



48. Save your project

*Click **File** -> **Save Project***

49. Play against the computer by clicking on the **Green Flag**

Use full-screen to avoid moving sprites accidentally.

Try to avoid playing the same game over and over again.

Choose different spaces each time to give the computer a variety of examples of how to play.

50. When it starts to feel like you're playing the same games over and over again, go back to the Learn & Test screen, and use the new examples you've collected

*Click **train a new machine learning model** again*

The screenshot shows the 'Machine learning models' section of the website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: ml-for-kids, Welcome, About, Projects, Worksheets, News, Help, and Log Out. Below the navigation, the title 'Machine learning models' is centered. Underneath the title, there's a link '< Back to project'. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'What have you done?' on the left and 'What's next?' on the right. The 'What have you done?' section contains text about training a model to recognize numbers in various positions, a creation date of Friday, August 25, 2017 at 12:15 AM, and a list of collected examples. The 'What's next?' section contains instructions for testing the model and a button to train a new model.

You've trained a machine learning model to recognise when numbers are top-left, top-middle or 7 other classes.

You created the model on Friday, August 25, 2017 12:15 AM.

You've collected:

- 14 examples of bottom-left,
- 28 examples of bottom-middle,
- 17 examples of bottom-right,
- 12 examples of middle-left,
- 28 examples of middle-middle,
- 15 examples of middle-right,
- 21 examples of top-left,
- 15 examples of top-middle,
- 27 examples of top-right

Machine learning models

< Back to project

What have you done?

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You created the model on Friday, August 25, 2017 12:15 AM.

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- 14 examples of bottom-left,
- 28 examples of bottom-middle,
- 17 examples of bottom-right,
- 12 examples of middle-left,
- 28 examples of middle-middle,
- 15 examples of middle-right,
- 21 examples of top-left,
- 15 examples of top-middle,
- 27 examples of top-right

What's next?

Try testing the machine learning model below. Enter an example of numbers below, that you didn't include in the examples you used to train it. It will tell you what it recognises it as, and how confident it is in that.

If the computer seems to have learned to recognise things correctly, then you can go to [Scratch](#) and use what the computer has learned to make a game!

If the computer is getting too many things wrong, you might want to go back to the [Train](#) page and collect some more examples. Once you've done that, click on the button below to train a new machine learning model and see what different the extra examples will make!

51. Every time you train a new machine learning model, you will need to re-open the Scratch project so that it starts using the new model.

*Click **File -> Load Project***

Open your saved project, even though you already have it open!

*Click **OK** when it asks if you want to replace the current project.*

That will make sure you're using the latest model.

52. Go back to step 49 – and repeat

Play against the computer, and try to vary your playing as much as possible.

Once you're struggling to keep coming up with new games, click the Train new machine learning model button again, and re-load your saved project in Scratch.

Try to repeat this process a few times until your machine learning model starts getting good!

Tips

Don't be kind!

You might be tempted to go easy on the computer when you're playing against it, particularly when it's just starting to learn and is playing very badly.

For example, you might have two crosses-in-a-row next to a blank space and could win. But instead, you might feel sorry for it doing badly and put a cross somewhere else instead to give it a chance.

Don't.

It is learning from the way that you play. If you don't complete a three-in-a-row when you can, you will be teaching it that it should do that.

If you want it to get better quickly, **play as well as you can**.

Mix things up with your examples

Try to come up with lots of different types of examples.

For example, start from a different position on the board on every turn.

What have you done?

You've trained a computer to play noughts and crosses.

You didn't have to describe the rules to the computer.

You didn't tell it that it should try to get three noughts in a row.

You didn't describe the difference between rows, columns or diagonals.

(The rules are in the Scratch game, but that doesn't count – that wasn't used in the machine learning model).

Instead, you showed it how you play, by collecting examples of decisions that you made when you win.

When it makes decisions that leads to it winning, this is added to its training data, so it can be even more confident in that approach in future.

This is called “reinforcement learning” because when it does something good you are “reinforcing” this by rewarding it.

Did you know?

People have been learning about machine learning by training a computer to play noughts and crosses for decades!

One famous example was **Donald Michie** – a British artificial intelligence researcher. During World War II, Michie worked at Bletchley Park as a code breaker.

In 1960, he developed “**MENACE**” – the Machine Educable Noughts And Crosses Engine. This was one of the first programs able to learn how to play noughts and crosses perfectly.

As he didn’t have a computer he could use, Michie built MENACE using 304 matchboxes and coloured glass beads.

Each matchbox represented a possible state of the board – like the examples that you’ve been collecting in your training data.

He put beads in the matchboxes to show how often a choice led to a win – the number of beads in the matchbox was like the number of times an example shows up in one of the buckets you created for your training data.

