

Stratego (/strəˈtiːɡoʊ/ *strə-TEE-goh*) is a [strategy board game](#) for two players on a board of 10×10 squares. Each player controls 40 pieces representing individual [officer and soldier ranks](#) in an [army](#). The pieces have [Napoleonic insignia](#). The objective of the game is to either find and capture the opponent's *Flag* or to capture so many enemy pieces that the opponent cannot make any further moves. *Stratego* has simple enough rules for young children to play but a depth of strategy that is also appealing to adults.

The game is a slightly modified copy of an early 20th century [French](#) game named *L'Attaque* ("The Attack"), and has been in production in [Europe](#) since [World War II](#) and the [United States](#) since 1961. There are now two- and four-player versions, versions with 10, 30 or 40 pieces per player, and boards with smaller sizes (number of spaces). There are also variant pieces and different [rulesets](#).

The International Stratego Federation, the game's governing body, sponsors an annual [Stratego World Championship](#).

Name and trademark

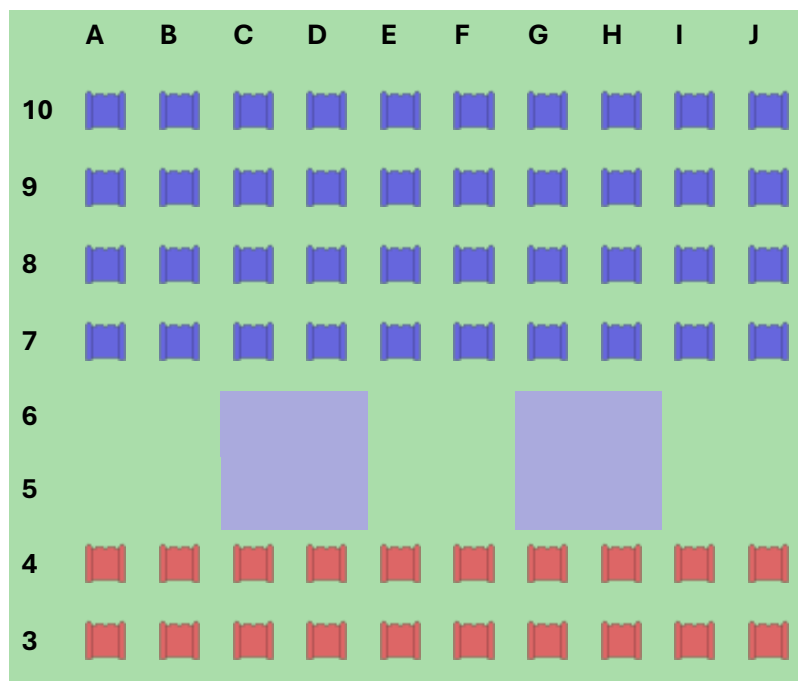
[[edit](#)]

Stratego is from the French or [Greek](#) *strategos* (var. *strategus*) for leader of an ancient (especially Greek) army:^[1] first general.^[2]

The name *Stratego* was first registered in 1942 in the [Netherlands](#). The [United States trademark](#) was filed in 1958 and registered in 1960 to Jacques Johan Mogendorff and is presently owned by [Jumbo Games](#) as successors to Hausemann and Hotte, headquartered in the Netherlands. It has been licensed to manufacturers such as [Milton Bradley](#), [Hasbro](#) and others, as well as retailers such as [Barnes & Noble](#), [Target](#) stores, etc.

The contents of the game

[[edit](#)]





This description is of the original and classic games; many variant shapes and colors of pieces and boards have been produced in the decades since.

The game box contents are a set of 40 gold-embossed red playing pieces, a set of silver-embossed blue playing pieces, and a folding $15\frac{1}{2}$ in \times $18\frac{1}{2}$ in (39 cm \times 47 cm) rectangular cardboard playing board imprinted with a 10×10 grid of spaces. The early sets featured painted wood pieces, later sets colored plastic. The pieces are small and roughly rectangular, 1 in (25 mm) tall and $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19 mm) wide, and unweighted.^[3] More modern versions first introduced in Europe have cylindrical castle-shaped pieces. Some versions have a cardboard privacy screen to assist setup. A few versions have wooden boxes or boards.

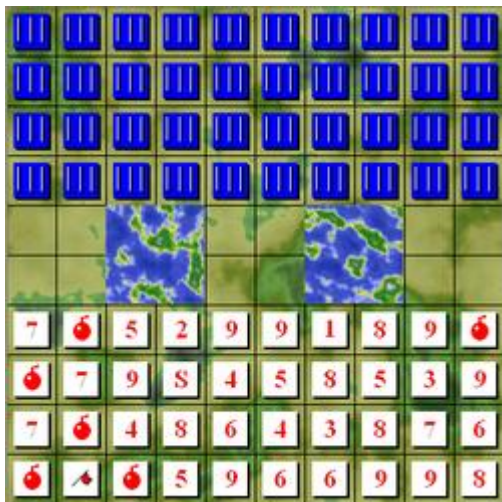
Setup

[\[edit\]](#)

Typically, color is chosen by lot: one player uses red pieces, and the other uses blue pieces. Before the start of the game, players arrange their 40 pieces in a 4×10 configuration at either end of the board. The ranks are printed on one side only and placed so that the players cannot identify the opponent's pieces. Players may not place pieces in the lakes or the 12 squares in the center of the board. Such pre-play distinguishes the fundamental strategy of particular players and influences the outcome of the game.

Gameplay

[\[edit\]](#)



Computer software version of *Stratego*

Players alternate moving; red moves first. The right to move first does not significantly affect game play (unlike chess). Each player moves one piece per turn. A player must move a piece in their turn; there is no "pass."

Two zones in the middle of the board, each 2×2 , cannot be entered by either player's pieces at any time. They are shown as lakes on the battlefield and serve as [choke points](#) to make frontal assaults less direct.

The game can be won by capturing the opponent's *Flag* or all of their moveable pieces. It is possible to have ranked pieces that are not moveable because they are trapped behind *bombs*. In unusual cases, it is possible to draw, for example, when both players' flags are protected by bombs and each player has one remaining piece which is not a miner.

The average game has 381 moves. The number of legal positions is 10^{115} . The number of possible games is 10^{535} .^[4] *Stratego* has many more moves and possible board states than other familiar games such as [chess](#) and [backgammon](#); however, unlike those games where a single bad move at any point may result in loss of the game, most moves in *Stratego* are inconsequential as players think in "games not moves" (Boer, 2007^[5]).

Rules of movement

[\[edit\]](#)

All movable pieces, with the exception of the *Scout*, may move only one step to any adjacent space vertically or horizontally (but not diagonally).^{[6]:Movement:2} A piece may not move onto a space occupied by a like-color piece.^{[6]:Movement:4,5} *Bomb* and *Flag* pieces are not moveable.^{[6]:Movement:7} The *Scout* may move any number of spaces in a straight line (such as the [rook](#) in chess).^{[6]:Movement:8} In the older versions of *Stratego* the *Scout* could not move and strike in the same turn;^{[6]:Movement:8}^[7] in newer versions this was allowed.^[8] Even before that, sanctioned play usually amended the original *Scout* movement to allow moving and striking in the same turn because it facilitates gameplay.

No piece can move back and forth between the same two spaces for three consecutive turns (two square rule).^{[6]:Movement:10} Nor can a piece endlessly chase an opposing piece it has no hope of attacking (more square rule).

When a player wants to attack, they "strike" by touching an opposing piece with their piece or by moving it onto the square the opposing piece occupies. Both players then reveal their piece's rank; the weaker piece (see exceptions below) is removed from the board.^{[6]:Attack:5} If the engaging pieces are of equal rank, both are removed.^{[6]:Attack:7} A piece may not move onto a square already occupied unless it attacks. The original rules also contained a provision that following a strike, the winning piece immediately occupies the space vacated by the losing piece.^{[a][6]:Attack:6}

Two pieces have special attack powers. One special piece is the *Bomb* which only *Miners* can defuse. It immediately eliminates any other piece striking it without being destroyed itself.^{[6]:Attack:10} Each player also has one *Spy*, which succeeds only if it attacks the *Marshal* or the *Flag*. If the *Spy* attacks any other piece, or is attacked by any piece (including the *Marshal*), the *Spy* is defeated.^{[6]:Attack:9}

Recording the game

[\[edit\]](#)

Competitive play does not include recording the game, unlike chess. The game is fast-paced, no standard notation exists, and players keep their initial setups secret, so recording [over-the-board](#) games is impractical.

However, digital interfaces such as web-based gaming interfaces may have a facility for recording, replaying and downloading the game. Those interfaces use an algebraic-style notation that numbers the rows ('ranks') 1 to 10 from bottom to top and the columns ('files') A to J from left to right. Alternately, a few interfaces designate the files as A to K, omitting 'I'. Moves

are recorded as source square followed by destination square separated by a "-" (move) or "x" (strike). Revealed pieces on strikes precede the square designation, and may be by either rank name or rank number for brevity, for example "major B2xcaptain B3". The bottom half of the board is by default considered to be the 'red' side, and the top half the 'blue' side. ^{[citation needed](#)}

Strategy

[\[edit\]](#)

Unlike [chess](#), *Stratego* is a game of [imperfect information](#). In addition to calculated sequences of moves, this gives rise to aspects of [battle psychology](#) such as concealment, bluffing, lying in wait and guessing.

There are also strategic and tactical elements in the initial setup of the pieces. Stylistic preferences ("aggressive" vs "defensive") also enter into setup.

Pieces

[\[edit\]](#)

Classic pieces

[\[edit\]](#)

There are seven immobile pieces – six *Bombs* and one *Flag* – and 33 mobile pieces per player. They can move to the adjacent square in horizontal or vertical direction, with exception of the *Scout*, which moves any distance. From highest rank to lowest the pieces are:

US / EU Rank	"Classic" US Rank	Piece	Count per player	Special properties
B	B	Bomb	6	Immovable; any piece attacking a Bomb is removed from the game, unless the attacking piece was a Miner
10	1	Marshal	1	Most powerful piece, but vulnerable to capture by an attacking Spy
9	2	General	1	
8	3	Colonel	2	
7	4	Major	3	
6	5	Captain	4	
5	6	Lieutenant	4	
4	7	Sergeant	4	
3	8	Miner	5	Can defuse (i. e. capture) Bombs

2	9	Scout	8	Can move any distance in a horizontal or vertical straight line without leaping over pieces or lakes; originally unable to move and attack in the same turn, ^[7] later changed to allow movement and attack. ^[8]
1	S	Spy	1	Weakest piece, captured by any other attacking piece, but an attacking Spy can capture the Marshal
F	F	Flag	1	Immovable; capturing the opponent's Flag wins the game

The higher ranked piece always captures the lower, except when stated otherwise. When a piece attacks another piece with equal rank, both are removed.^{[7][8]}

In the original versions published in the United States, the ranks were numbered with the most powerful *Marshal* piece ranked at **1**, then numbers ascending as power fell until *Scout* was 9, and the *Spy* was not numbered but designated **S**.^[7] In 2000, this was inverted, with the *Marshal* ranked as **10**, descending to 2 for the *Scout*, and the *Spy* ranked with number **1**.^[8] "Classic" versions have been released since then with the lower number strongest, as in prior versions of the game.^[7]