How to Play Tic-Tac-Toe

Tic-tac-toe is a two-player strategy game that can be played in just a few minutes with a pen and paper.

Set up

A game of tic-tac-toe is set up by first drawing a 3x3 grid. Next, each player must choose either the X character or the 0 character.

Tip: If players can't decide who gets to be what character, they can flip a coin.

Gameplay

Player X always goes first and draws their character inside any space that is inside the 3x3 grid. When a grid space contains a player's character, the opposing player cannot draw over it. Players alternate turns until there is a winner or the grid is full—whichever comes first.

Objective

To win a game of tic-tac-toe, a player needs to draw three of their chosen character in a continuous line across the 3x3 grid. This line can appear horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. In the following example, X has won the game because they have a diagonal line.

X	0	
	X	
	0	X

The game is a draw if the grid is full and no player was able to create a continuous line.