

Mærstánas

by John Beers

Version 0.1.2

Overview

Mærstánas is a free libre open source abstract strategy game where players alternate placing stones within the squares of a 7x7 grid with the goal of creating connection points (“hinges”) between their own pieces or the edges of the board.

Objective

Players try to achieve the highest score by making the most number of connections.

Components

- Game board
- Approximately 40 stones or tokens, split evenly between two colors

Setup & starting the game

The board begins empty (similar to Go). Players may decide who goes first in whatever manner seems appropriate. Players then alternate taking turns.

Playing the game

- On a player’s turn, the player places one stone (*stán*) on a square on the game board.
- Stones (*stánas*) must be placed within the square, not on the intersections as in Go.
- Stones may be placed on any empty square, either standing alone or adjacent to another stone of either color (creating a *heorr* or “hinge”). ## Placement limitations:
- Stones may only have no more than **three** *heorras*; the fourth side *must always remain free*.
- Stones may not be place such that four *heorras* are created immediately.
- The edge of the board counts as **one** *heorr*; corners count as **two** because they boarder two edges.
- Play continues until no more viable moves remain.

Scoring

- Players receive one point for each stone or edge adjacent to one of their own stones (*freóndlíc heorr* or “friendly hinge”).
- The player with the highest score wins.

Credits

Mærstánas was created by John Beers.

It was conceived in 2022 while working on **Oferhlýp**. As a fan of Hnefatafl, I wanted to name my games using Anglo-Saxon words to lend a quasi-historical feel to them. Both **Mærstánas** and **Oferhlýp** utilize the same 7x7 grid because, if they *were* historical, it might make sense for people to reuse an existing board, much like chess and checkers.

The word *mærstánas* is the plural form of *mærstán*, an Anglo-Saxon (Old English) word that means “a boundary-stone”. (<https://bosworthtoller.com/22190>)

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Find out more

More information on **Mærstánas** and “living rules” can be found at: <http://github.com/jaerrib/maerstanas>

Alternative play option

If you don't have access to stones, feel free to use the included page of gameboards. **Mærstánas** is similar to Tic-Tac-Toe in that players can just alternate writing an *X* or an *O* in place of the stones. You can also just draw a 7x7 grid if you find yourself without a printer and need to pass the time! Just remember that **Mærstánas** is *not* Tic-Tac-Toe, and the rules and win conditions are different.

