line or colour

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A strategy game for 2 players by
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INTRODUCTION

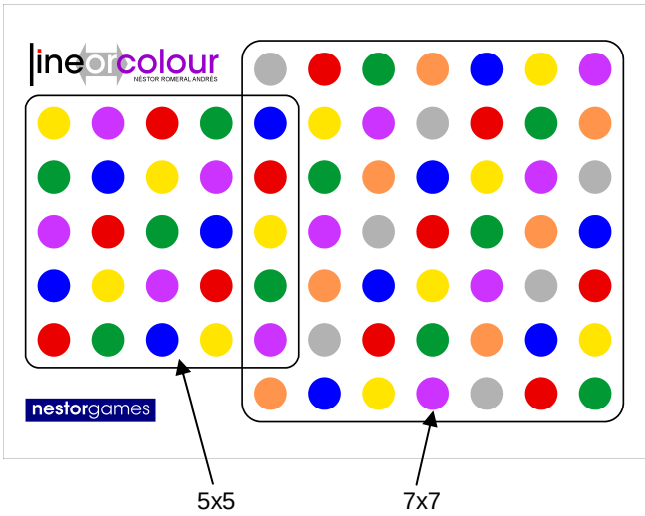
Line or Colour is a combinatorial game for two players. It involves two winning conditions (line and colour) that can tie players' brains in knots. Warning: this is a real brain burner.

EQUIPMENT

- 49 rounded counters in 7 colours (7 each)
- 25 white rings
- 25 black rings
- Board
- Carrying case

HOW TO PLAY

Agree on the board size (5x5 or 7x7). 5x5 is recommended for beginners, but the real game is on the 7x7 one. Notice that both boards overlap, in order to fit them inside the pad.



The coloured counters are not used in the basic rules.

Each player has an allocated colour (black or white) and takes all the rings of that colour.

Starting with White, players alternate turns until one of them reaches at least one of the victory conditions.

On your turn, claim **one** coloured spot by placing **one** of your rings on it. Once placed, rings cannot be moved.

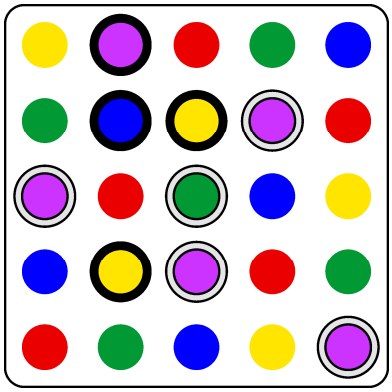
The pie rule[1] may be applied upon agreement, but this doesn't seem to be necessary on the 7x7 board.

[1] Pie rule: After White's first placement, Black can exchange White's just-placed ring for a Black one. Then it's White's turn again.

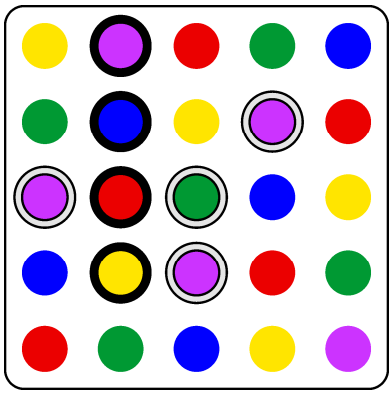
VICTORY CONDITIONS

5x5 board: claim **4** spots of the same colour or **4** spots in a continuous row (vertically, horizontally or diagonally).

7x7 board: claim **5** spots of the same colour or **5** spots in a continuous row (vertically, horizontally or diagonally).



Example: White wins by having claimed 4 purple spots



Example: Black wins by having claimed a row of 4 spots

If the board fills up before any victory condition has been reached then the game ends in a draw. Play again.

VARIANT

You can use the coloured counters to alter the distribution of the spots. You can place all of them randomly on the board, overlapping the printed spots, or place just a few.

Notice that the 5x5 board doesn't use gray or orange.

In any case, there must always be 5 spots of each colour for the 5x5 board and 7 spots of each colour for the 7x7 board.

PUZZLE

Claim as many spots as possible without reaching any victory condition (use white rings only). How many have you managed to claim for each board?

Do the same for random boards, too.

Can you find a legal board distribution for each size where the maximum number of rings that you can place is minimum? And maximum?

Special thanks to Cameron Browne and Stephen Tavener for intensive playtesting.