

# STACKS

## Rules of Play

**1. Overview:** **STACKS** is a fast-playing, abstract tactical game for two players. The game is played on a 5 x 5 GRID (25 spaces in total). Each player gets 10 playing PIECES either in red or black. Your pieces start on stacks of 2 on your own HOMESPACES, adjacent to the main playing grid. In each turn, a player can move one or more of their pieces across the board. The aim of the game is to get four or more of your pieces into the opponent's home spaces, or to eliminate six or more of the opponent's pieces.

### 2. Game Equipment

Playing Board  
10 x Red Pieces  
10 x Black Pieces

**3. Setting Up the Game:** Players sit on opposite sides of the board. Stack 2 x red pieces in the red home spaces on the red side of the board (10 in total). Stack 2 x black pieces in the black home spaces on the black side of the board (10 in total), as shown below:

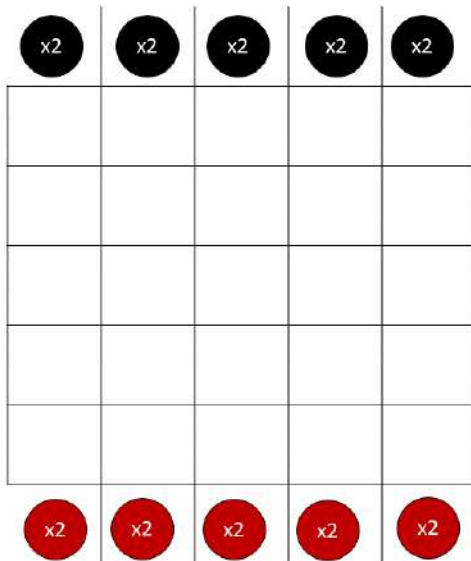


FIGURE 1. GAME SET-UP

**4. Playing a turn:** Black always goes first in a game. After that, players take turns alternately. In a turn, you can:

- move 1 stack of 1, 2, or 3 pieces up to 3, 2 and 1 spaces respectively, **or**
- move two individual pieces up to 2 spaces each.

Pieces/stacks of pieces can move in any direction across the grid, moving from one square to an adjacent one, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, up to their movement allowance. A new stack can be created (ending movement) by moving one or more pieces into a square that is already occupied by a friendly piece/stack. One or more pieces can be moved from an existing stack. During your move, you may also attack the opponent's pieces and eliminate some or all of them by moving your pieces/stacks into squares occupied by the opponent.

**5. Stack Sizes:** Your pieces can be in stacks of 1, 2, 3, or 4, whether on the grid, or in the home spaces.

**6. Moving your Pieces:** Pieces/ stacks move from one grid space to another, without skipping spaces, up to the movement allowance of the stack. Pieces can move horizontally, vertically or diagonally, or in any combination of directions when they move. A piece or stack can join an existing stack during its move, but when it does so, it must stop its movement. Pieces can also leave stacks individually or in smaller stacks, up to their movement allowance; such pieces may join existing stacks elsewhere on the grid later in their move.

**6.1. Movement Allowances:** Pieces can move up to their movement allowance each turn. Movement allowance depends on the size of a stack of pieces:

- Stack of 1 = 3 spaces
- Stack of 2 = 2 spaces
- Stack of 3 = 1 space
- Stack of 4 = cannot move

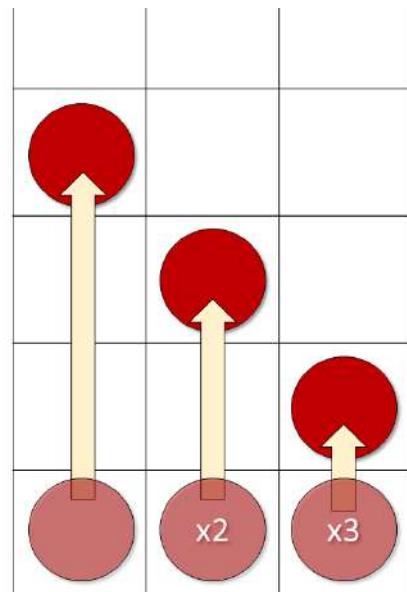


FIGURE 2: STACK MOVEMENT ALLOWANCE

**6.2. Movement Restrictions:**

- Your pieces cannot move into spaces occupied by opponent pieces unless you are attacking them;
- Your pieces cannot move into spaces with friendly pieces unless you want to make a new stack;
- Your pieces cannot move diagonally between two spaces that are both occupied by opponent pieces.

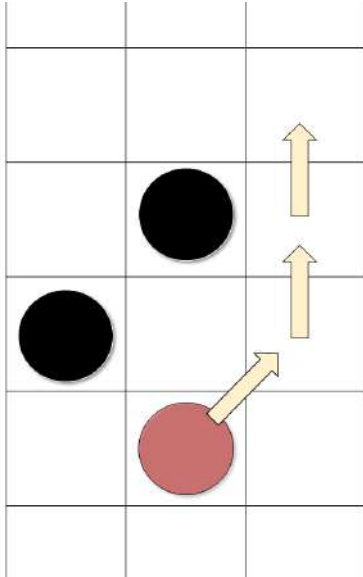


FIGURE 3: LEGAL MOVE

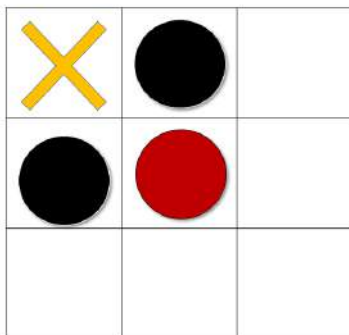


FIGURE 4: ILLEGAL MOVE. Red cannot move diagonally into the space marked with a cross.

**6.3. Stacks of Four Pieces:** If you have one or more stacks of four pieces on the board at the beginning of your turn,

- you **must** unstack 1 or more pieces from that stack in your turn.
- Pieces that are moved from a stack of four may **not** attack other pieces.
- If you cannot move any pieces from your stack of four (e.g., because the opponent has surrounded it), all pieces belonging to that stack are immediately eliminated.

**7. Attacking Opponent's Pieces:** A piece or stack attacks an opponent piece when it moves into a space occupied by that opponent piece. You can only attack an opponent with a stack that has at least **one more piece than the opponent's stack**. (For example, a stack of 2 can attack an individual opponent piece, but it cannot attack an opponent stack of 2 pieces). Pieces/ stacks can attack on their own, or in combination with friendly pieces or stacks that are adjacent to each other **and** adjacent to the same opponent piece(s) at the moment that the attack takes place.

#### 7.1. Moving and Attacking:

- Attacking is a part of movement. Your piece can only attack if it has some moves left in its movement allowance.
- Once it has attacked the opponent, your piece/ stack cannot move again.

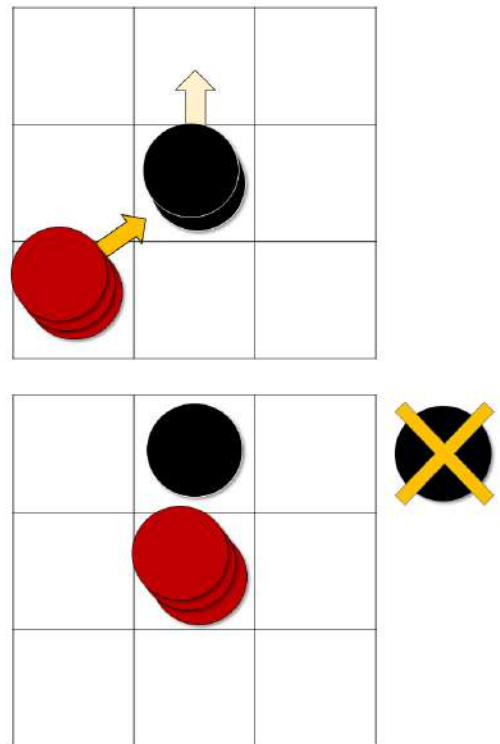


FIGURE 5: ATTACK EXAMPLE. Red stack of 3 attacks black stack of 2. 1 x black piece is eliminated; 1 x black piece retreats 1 space.

**7.2. Combining / Creating Stacks in an Attack:** When two or more of your stacks are adjacent to the same opponent piece, and adjacent to each other, they can combine their strength to attack the opponent. When this is done, the attacking pieces all move into the space vacated by the opponent pieces, forming a new stack. (since the biggest possible stack is four pieces,

you cannot attack an opponent with more than four pieces at a time).

**7.3. Special Case: When 2 single pieces are moved 1-2spaces each and attack:** It is permitted to move two individual pieces and to use both those pieces in an attack. Note that both individual pieces that are moved must have one of their movement points left over, after moving, to be allowed to make an attack.

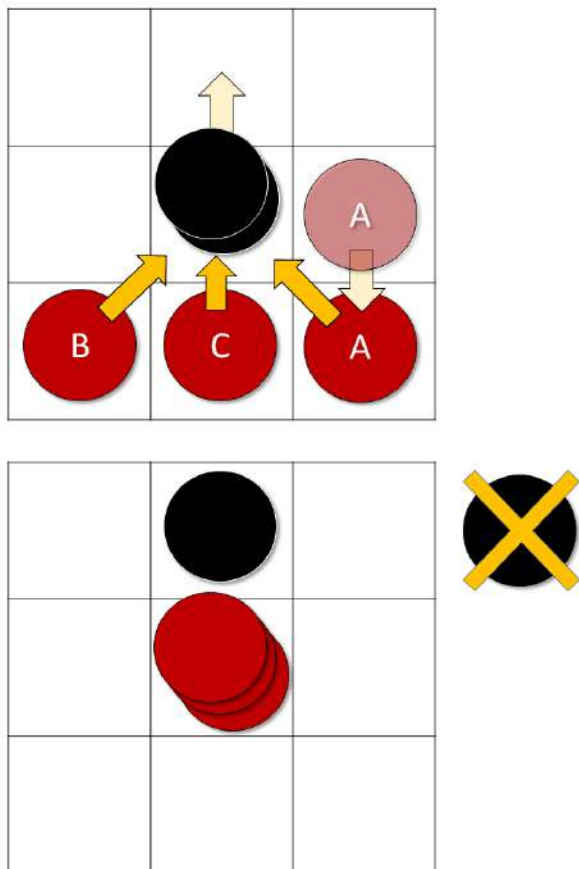


FIGURE 6: COMBINED ATTACK EXAMPLE: Red piece A moves adjacent to Red piece C. All three Red pieces (A, B, C) are now adjacent to the Black stack, and adjacent to each other. They can now combine to attack the adjacent Black stack of 2. Black loses 1 x piece, and 1 x piece retreats 1 space. The three red pieces form a new stack of 3 in the vacated space.

**7.4. Attacking from a Home Space:** Pieces may launch attacks from one or more home spaces. Pieces that attack from home spaces may combine their strength with other pieces, as described in [7.2].

#### 7.5. Results of an Attack:

- When attacked, a number of opponent pieces equal to the difference between the strength of the attacking

and defending stacks are eliminated (For example, if you attack with four pieces, and the opponent has two pieces, the opponent loses two pieces; if you attack with three pieces and the opponent has two, the opponent loses one piece).

- Any opponent pieces that are not eliminated by an attack have to retreat 1 space towards the owning player's board edge (the direction of this retreat is decided by the **attacking** player). Pieces that are attacked and defeated (but not eliminated) while occupying one of their own home spaces must retreat to another home space.
- The attacking pieces move into the space vacated by the opponent pieces.

**8. Eliminated Pieces:** Eliminated pieces are placed to the side of the board. They are never returned to the game.

#### 9. Home Spaces:

**9.1.** A friendly piece or stack that occupies one of your home spaces can move, attack, and defend from attack as normal. You may move your pieces

- from one friendly homespace to another (as long as it is not occupied by an opponent piece or stack);
- from a friendly homespace to the grid, and *vice versa*.

**9.2.** When one or more of your pieces reach an opponent's home space, they remain there for the rest of the game. They may not move again during the game. Pieces that have reached an opponent's home space cannot be attacked. If an opponent's homespace has already been occupied by one or more of your pieces, your other pieces can move into that homespace later in the game.

**9.3.** No more than 4 pieces are allowed to occupy a homespace. All the rules of movement and stacking set out in rules [5] and [6] apply to homespaces.

#### 10. Winning:

- You win the game when:
- you have eliminated 6 of the opponent's pieces
  - You have got four of your pieces into one or more of the opponent's home spaces.