

Archipelago

- Players:** 2-4 players, ages 6 and up
- Playing time:** 15-30 minutes
- Materials:** A "hexhex" board, i.e. a hexagonal shaped board composed of hexagonal cells (various sizes are possible; 6-8 cells per side is recommended); and playing pieces in four colors. (To play all permutations of player numbers and board sizes would require approximately 75 pieces in one color, 75 pieces in a second color, 50 pieces in a third color, and 40 pieces in a fourth color.)
- Basic idea:** In Archipelago, players try to create more islands (i.e. groups of two or more adjacent pieces) than their opponents create.

RULES

A *group* ("island") is a connected set of two or more same-colored stones. (Thus, *single* stones do not count as a group.) Each player is the owner of one color of stone. A group in a given color will count toward its color-owner's score, regardless of whether the color-owner or an opponent created that group.

Players are allowed two stone placements per turn, with one exception: the first player plays just one stone on his/her very first turn. A player's two stones can be ANY color (i.e. on your turn, you needn't play any of your own color of stones if you don't wish to; you can play any set of colors or any mix of colors in a single turn).

Additionally, a player is permitted to play an extra stone (of any color of his/her choice) for every opponent who is strictly ahead of him/her in the current group score; each player's "group score" = the number of distinct groups currently on the playing board in his/her color.

Extra stone examples: In a two player game, a player who trails in the group score gets one extra stone and thus plays 3 stones to the playing board (the default two stones + the extra stone). In a three player game with each player having a distinct number of groups, the second-place player plays 3 stones and the last-place player plays 4 stones. In a three player game with two players tied for first-place in number of groups, the last-place player plays 4 stones. In a three player game with two players tied for last-place in number of groups, each last-place player plays 3 stones.

When the board is full, or when all players have consecutively passed their turns, the game ends. The player with the most groups wins. In case of a tie for most groups, the bonus scores on the scoring track break the tie. (See below for the scoring track and instructions how to use it.)

Multi-player special rule

With three or four players, the following "Frozen Irrelevance" rule is recommended:

- *Frozen Irrelevance:* When the board arrangement is such that a player's current rank in the game (e.g. 1st place, 2nd place, etc.) is unalterable by any further play from any player, then that player's rank has assumed its final form, and he/she is permanently "frozen" from further play. That is, he/she takes no further part in the game, and the game play continues on with just the non-frozen players.

SCORING TRACK

The scoring track looks as follows:

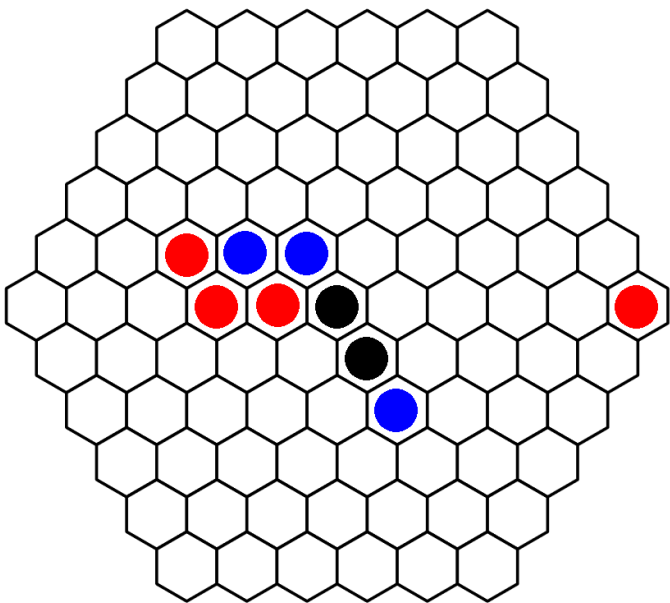
Bonus Points	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Groups												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Instructions: At the start of the game, each player places one playing piece of his/her color in the gray column labeled “Groups”; this piece will be each player’s main scoring marker. (No pieces are placed in the gray column labeled “Bonus Points.”) When your number of groups on the playing board changes, move your main scoring marker either right or left (depending on whether you have gained or lost groups) to the blue column corresponding to your new group number. After you move your main scoring marker to its new blue column, *if you don’t already have a marker in the corresponding yellow bonus column above it*, then take a new playing piece from your off-board supply of pieces and place it on the highest-valued unclaimed cell in that column.

- You can never have more than one marker of your own color in a yellow bonus column.
- Unlike your single main scoring marker, bonus point markers do not move. Each time you claim a new bonus point cell, use a *new* playing piece in your color to claim it; your previous bonus markers remain on the scoring track.
- You do *not* forfeit a previously claimed bonus when you lose a group. All previously played bonus stones remain on the scoring board (that is, once placed, no bonus marker stone is ever removed).
- If in a single turn you make two new groups for a single player (whether yourself or an opponent), then that player gets two new bonuses. For instance, if a player begins a turn with two groups in his/her color and makes two new groups in that color, then his/her group score marker is moved from 2 to 4 in the blue columns, and bonuses are claimed in both columns 3 and 4 (if no markers are there already).
- When determining whether a player receives an extra stone (or stones) to play to the playing board on his/her turn, only the current *group score* counts, not the yellow-column bonus points. In essence, for each opponent scoring marker that is in front of (i.e. to the right) of your scoring marker *in the blue columns*, you receive an extra stone on your turn to play to the playing board. (Yellow-column bonus points only affect the final score after play has concluded; they have no effect on play during the game itself.)
- *Order of effects:* In a single turn, you sometimes may place your two stones to the playing board in a way that affects more than one player’s score. When this occurs in a two player game, move *your* scoring marker first and claim your bonus (if possible), then move your opponent’s marker and claim the bonus for him (i.e. place a marker of *your opponent’s* color on the highest-valued unclaimed cell). In a three or four player game, the order of any scoring effects takes place in *clockwise* order (skipping any players whose scores were not affected) – that is, change your score on the board first, then the score of the player to your left, then the player to his/her left, etc. This order is binding regardless of the order in which the actual playing stones were placed on the playing board. (Thus, you may find it best to change the scoreboard only *after* all stones have been played to the playing board.)

At the end of the game, a player’s score is calculated as follows: *multiply that player’s blue column group score by 100, then add to this the sum of that player’s bonus scores.* Highest score wins. In the case of a tie, the tied player with a bonus marker in the column farthest to the right wins. If tied players’ rightmost bonus column is the same, then the player with the highest bonus in that column wins.

Scoring Example: Suppose three players are playing a game of Archipelago with the following playing order: Black, then Blue, then Red. Suppose that after two turns each, the playing board and scoreboard look as follows. (Remember, players needn’t play their own color to the board, so it needn’t be that there are identical numbers of colors on the board.)

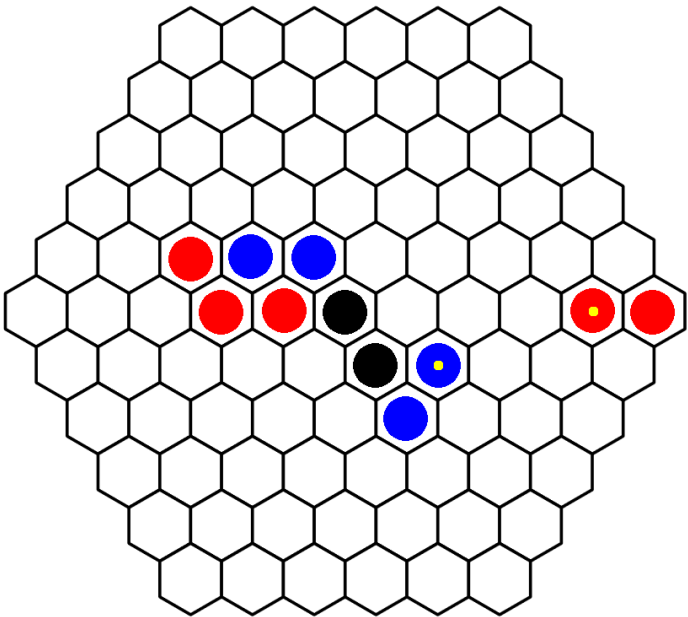


Note that the solitary red and blue pieces on the playing board above are not scoring groups, since scoring groups require two or more pieces. Thus, the blue column group scores are as below. (Note that the order of stones within the blue column does not matter.)

Bonus Points		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Groups												
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

The scoreboard above reflects that fact that each player currently has just one scoring group. The bonus points tell us that Blue’s group was created first (and thus, Blue got the highest bonus), followed by Black, then Red. The current scores are thus Blue 103, Black 102, and Red 101.

Suppose that on Black’s next turn, he/she plays the pieces marked with the yellow dots below. (Note that Black does *not* get an extra stone, i.e. a third stone, to play on his/her turn even though Blue is ahead of Black in total points, since Blue is *not* ahead of Black in the blue column group scores.)

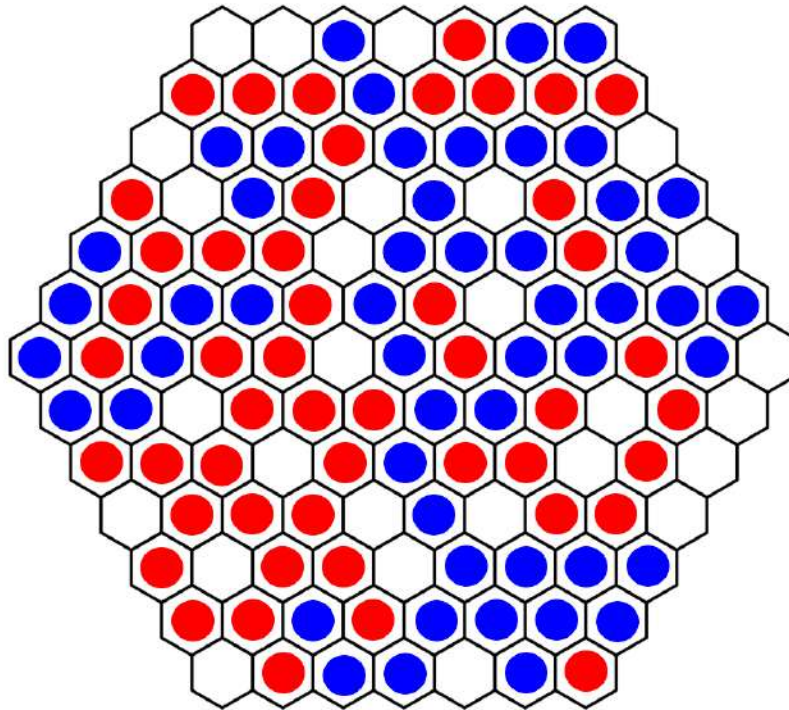


Black has chosen to create new scoring groups for Blue and Red. (One reason this can be a strategic move: it can grant Black extra stones to play on his/her next turn.) Thus, on the scoreboard, Black moves the group score markers for Blue and Red to the “2” blue column. Black must also award bonus points to each player, starting with the next player in turn order (i.e., Blue). As a result, the scoreboard at the end of Black’s turn looks as follows:

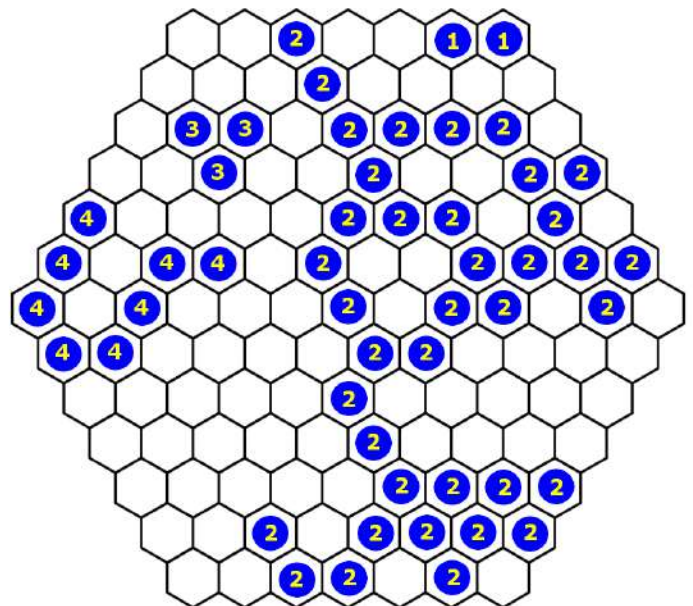
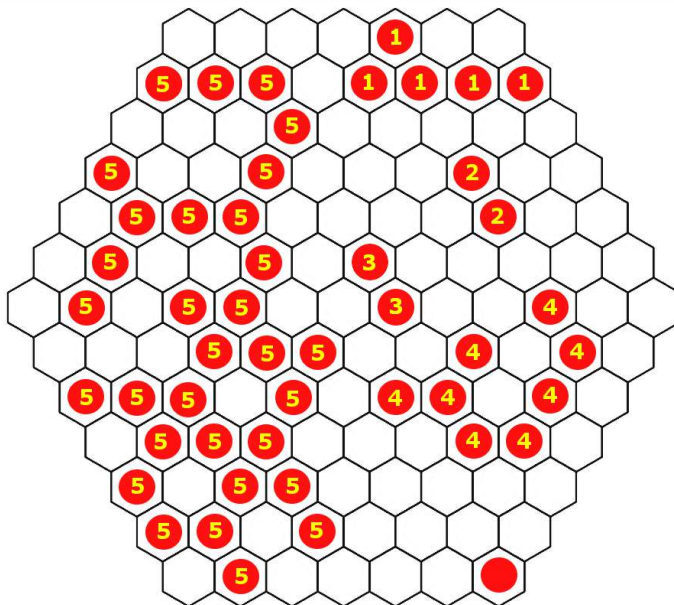
Bonus Points													
	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
	●	●	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	●	●	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Groups													
	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
	●	●	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note that unless Blue and/or Red make a new scoring group for Black on their next turns, it follows that when Black’s turn comes around, Black will be granted two extra playing stones (since there are two group score marker stones to the right of Black’s group score marker stone in the blue columns). In such a case, on his/her next turn Black will play *four* stones to the board rather than the usual two.

Endgame Example: Below is a game board after both Red and Blue have passed and play has concluded. (Neither player can create new groups or merge opponent groups, so there is no reason for either player to continue placing stones.)



Red has 5 groups and Blue has 4 groups. Thus, Red wins. (Yellow column bonus scores are never enough to overcome a lead in blue column group scores. The bonus scores exist merely to break ties in final group scores.) The different groups are shown below. Note that the solitary red stone in the lower right corner counts for nothing.



VARIATIONS

- *Extra stones:* Consider awarding no extra playing stones at all to a player behind in the group score. Alternatively (in a 3 or 4 player game), consider awarding just a 0.5 stone bonus for each opponent whom you strictly trail (rounding up).
- *Default number of stones:* Try playing with three stones per turn instead of 2.
- *Alternating scoring:* At the end of a game, the player whose group score marker is farthest to the right wins. If that is tied, the tied player with the bonus marker farthest to the right wins. (In other words, only one bonus marker – the rightmost marker – matters for determining the winner.) If still tied, the owner of the highest valued of the tied bonus markers wins.
- *“Wunchunk” variant:* In Archipelago, you will notice that for strategic reasons *you* will play your opponent’s color much more than your own color. “Wunchunk” reverses the goal of Archipelago and thereby gives players incentive to play primarily their own color (though as in Archipelago, they are always free to play any color or mix of colors on their turns). In Wunchunk, your aim is to keep your stones as together as possible. A single stone is merely a “crumb” and does not count against you. However, a group of two or more stones is a “chunk.” During the game, at the start of your turn you get a bonus stone for each player who currently has fewer total chunks than you. The scoring track works as normal, except it is the *lowest* score that wins. (Accordingly, when choosing new bonus points, a player will choose to place a bonus marker on the *lowest* unclaimed cell.) In case of ties in score, the tied player with the rightmost bonus marker *loses*. If tied players’ rightmost bonus markers are in the same column, the owner of the higher bonus marker loses.

GAME CREDITS

Archipelago was designed by Craig Duncan, Bill Taylor, and João Neto. (Elements of the game have similarities to elements of Minimize by Brian Wittmann and Catchup by Nick Bentley. The Wunchunk variation bears some resemblance to Yodd by Luis Bolaños Mures.)

