**Project description**

Once upon a time, Los Angeles was a Never Never Land. People were blissfully happy, Conan O'Brien was still on late-night, and no one knew who "the Real Housewives of New Jersey" were. Until the day that two violent, money-thirsty gangs decided to put their dirty hands onto Los Angeles.

One gang was from the north, and the other gang was from the south. Both wanted to take over the entire city. Therefore, war was unavoidable. To win the war, the leader of the south gang knew that he needed not mere foot troops, but admirals. Therefore, he built an institute to train his future admirals. He named his training institute CSCI-561, and asked his recruits to create artificial agents to engage in a combat simulation, which he called a 'game', meant to imitate the upcoming gang war.
(Once the members are finished, the leader will classify their research and pull them from the institute, leaving them fractured and bitter human beings. However, as they do not know this yet, they are full of excitement and zeal for the project.)

The game is a simulation of ground warfare and has the following rules:

1. The game board is an NxN grid representing the territory your forces will trample (N=5 in the figures below). Columns are named A, B, C, … starting from the left, and rows are named 1, 2, 3, … from top.

2. Each player takes turns as in chess or tic-tac-toe. That is, player X takes a move, then player O, then back to player X, and so forth.

3. Each square has a fixed point value between 1 and 99, based upon its computed strategic and resource value.

4. The object of the game for each player is to score the most points, where score is the sum of all point values of all his or her occupied squares minus the sum of all points in the squares occupied by the other player. Thus, one wants to capture the squares worth the most points while preventing the other player to do so.

5. The game ends when all the squares are occupied by the players since no more moves are left.

6. Players cannot pass their move, i.e., they must make a valid move if one exists (game is not over).

7. Movement and adjacency relations are always vertical and horizontal but never diagonal.

8. The values of the squares can be changed for each game, but remain constant within a game.

9. **Game score** is computed as the difference between (a) the sum of the values of all squares occupied by your player and (b) the sum of the values of all squares occupied by the other player. This applies both to terminal (game over, terminal utility function) and non-terminal states (evaluation function). This is required to ensure that your program produces the same results as the grading script.

10. On each turn, a player can make one of two moves:

**Stake** – You can take any open space on the board. This will create a new piece on the board. This move can be made as many times as one wants to during the game, but only once per turn. However, a Stake *cannot* conquer any pieces. It simply allows one to arbitrarily place a piece anywhere unoccupied on the board. Once you have done a Stake, your turn is complete.

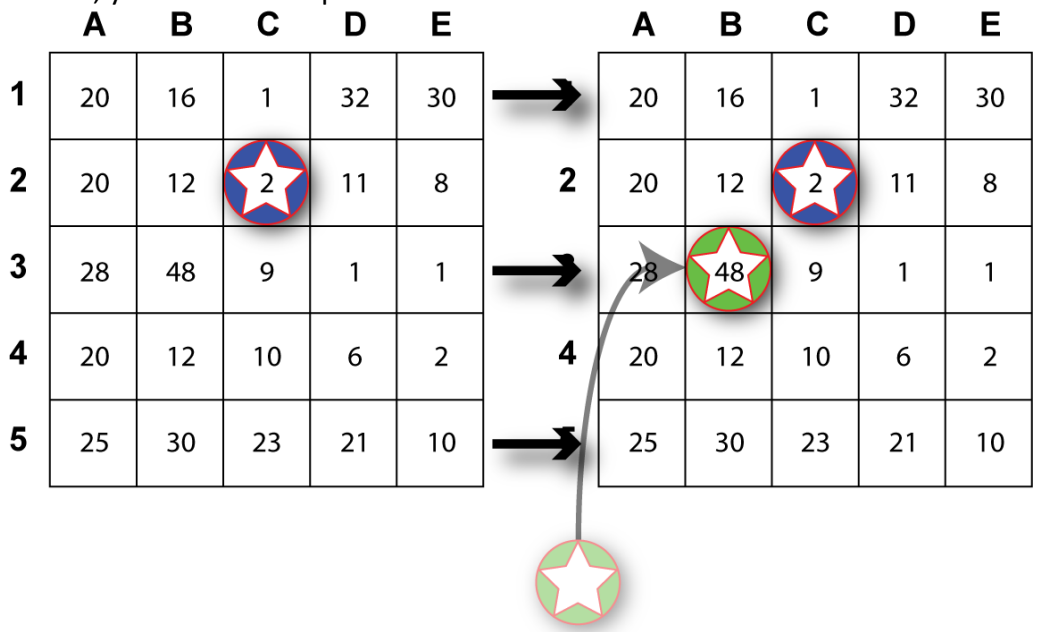


**Figure 1.** This is a Stake. In this example, green drops a new piece on square [B,3]**.** This square is worth 48, which is a higher number, meaning that it contains some juicy oil wells or other important resources. After that, the score is green 48 : blue 2, i.e., GameScore = 46 for green. A Stake could have been carried out on any squares except for [C,2] since blue already occupies it.

**Raid** – From any space you occupy on the board, you can take the one next to it (up, down, left, right, but not diagonally) if it is unoccupied. The space you originally held is still occupied. Thus, you get to create a new piece in the raided square. Any enemy touching the square you have taken is conquered and that square is turned to your side (you turn its piece to your side). A Raid can be done even if it will not conquer another piece. Once you have made this move, your turn is over.

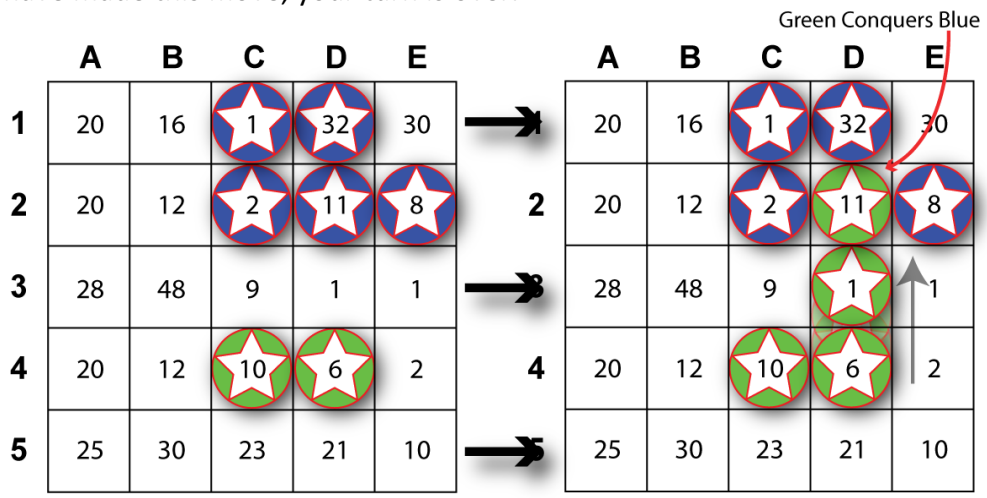


**Figure 2.** This is a Raid. Green raids the piece in [D,4] to [D,3]. This conquers the blue piece in [D,2] since it is touching the new green piece in [D,3]. A raid always creates a new piece adjacent to an existing one, but it does not conquer another piece unless it is touching it. Thus, another valid move might have been for [D,4] to have raided [E,4]. Then the green player would own [D,4] and [E,4] but would have conquered none of blue's pieces. Note, the score before the raid was green 16 : blue 54, i.e., GameScore = -38 for green, and afterwards is green 28 : blue 43, i.e., GameScore = -15 for green.

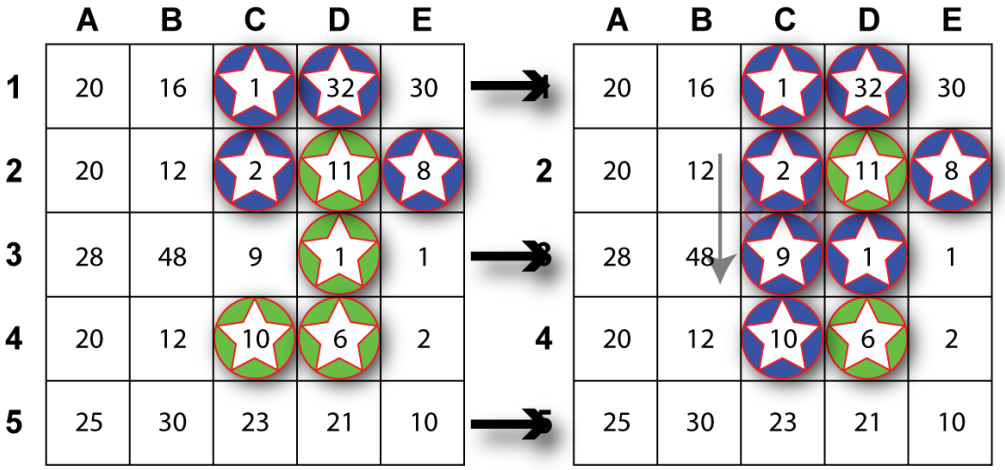


**Figure 3.** Here blue raids [C,3] from [C,2]. In the process green's pieces at [D,3] and [C,4] are conquered since they touch [C,3]. Notice that in its next move, green will not be able to conquer any of blue's pieces and only the piece at [D,4] would be able to execute a Raid since [D,2] has no neighboring unoccupied squares.

**Format for input.txt:**

```
<N>
<MODE>
<YOUPLAY>
<DEPTH>
<… CELL VALUES …>
<… BOARD STATE …>
```

where

<N> is the board width and height, e.g., N=5 for the 5x5 board shown in the figures above. N is an integer strictly greater than 0 and smaller than or equal to 26.

<MODE> is “MINIMAX” or “ALPHABETA” or “COMPETITION”.

<YOUPLAY> is either “X” or “O” and is the player which you will play on this turn.

<DEPTH> is the depth of your search. By convention, the root of the search tree is at depth 0. DEPTH will always be larger than or equal to 1.

<… CELL VALUES …> contains N lines with, in each line, N positive integer numbers each separated by a single space. These numbers represent the value of each location.

<… BOARD STATE …> contains N lines, each with N characters “X” or ”O” or “.” to represent the state of each cell as occupied by X, occupied by O, or free.

**Format for output.txt:**

```
<MOVE> <MOVETYPE>
<… NEXT BOARD STATE …>
```

where

<MOVE> is your move. As in the figures above, we use capital letters for column and numbers for rows. An example move is “F22” (remember that N is from 1 to 26, see above).

<MOVETYPE> is “Stake” or “Raid” and is the type of move that your <MOVE> is.

<… NEXT BOARD STATE …> a description of the new board state after you have played your move. Same format as <… BOARD STATE …> in input.txt above.