



# Othello<sup>TM</sup>

a minute to learn...a lifetime to master

## CONTENTS

- Othello game board has 64 squares, plus storage compartments with roll-down covers on both sides for discs.
- 64 discs: white on one side, black on the other.

## PREPARATION

Fill each compartment with 32 discs.

## OBJECT OF THE GAME

To outflank your opponent and flip your opponent's discs to your color, ending up with the majority of discs on the board in your color.

## DEFINITION OF "TO OUTFLANK"

TO OUTFLANK means to place a disc so that you have a disc of your color at each end of an opponent's row of discs of his color. (Rule No. 4 below illustrates this further.)

## GAME RULES

1. Each player chooses one color to use throughout the game.

2. Black places two black discs, and White places two white discs on the board as shown in Figure 1. The game always begins with this set-up.

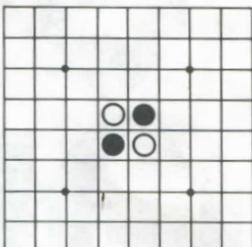


FIGURE 1

3. Players choose who goes first.

4. A move consists of taking a disc from the compartment and placing it so that it *completes the outflanking* of one or more opposite color discs, then flipping the outflanked disc(s) over to your color.

For example, white disc A is already in place on the board.

By the placement of white disc B, the black row of discs has been outflanked.



Thus, all the captured discs are flipped and this row becomes...



5. A PLAYER MUST ALWAYS OUTFLANK HIS OPPONENT AND FLIP AT LEAST ONE OPPOSING DISC IN ORDER TO MOVE. If he cannot make a move, he loses his turn and his opponent moves.

6. A disc may outflank *any number* of opposing discs in one or more rows. (A row may be one disc or many discs in a straight line.)

7. A disc may outflank *in any direction*: horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forward or backward.

8. A disc may outflank *in any number of directions* at the same time. (Theoretically, it is possible to flip in up to 8 directions at once.) DISCS MAY ONLY BE FLIPPED AS A DIRECT RESULT OF A MOVE.

9. The game is over when the board is entirely filled with discs, or when it is not possible for either player to move (i.e., outflank an opponent's row and flip an opponent's disc), or when the board is filled (or partially filled) with all one color. At this point, discs are counted up. The player with the most discs is the winner.

## SAMPLE GAME

- A. Assume that Black goes first (see Figure 2). Black must place a black disc (from the compartment) at either A, B, C or D in order to outflank and flip a white disc.

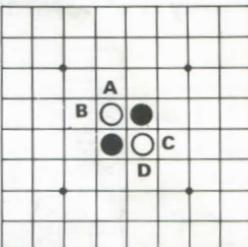


FIGURE 2

- B. If Black places a disc at position A, the outflanked white disc in the center is flipped over to black (see Figure 3).

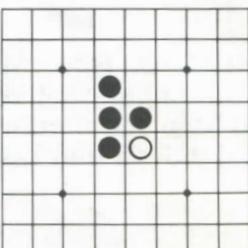


FIGURE 3

- C. It is then White's turn. White must place a white disc at either E, F or G (see Figure 4) in order to outflank and flip a black disc.

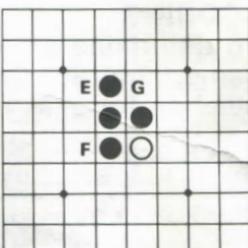


FIGURE 4

- D. If White places a disc at position E, the outflanked black disc in the center is flipped over to white (see Figure 5).

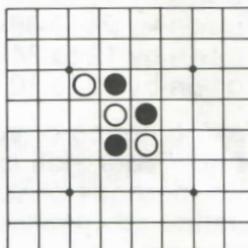


FIGURE 5

E. The game continues in this way with each player flipping over as many opposing discs as it is possible in any one move.

In Figure 6, for instance, a white disc placed at position H, outflanks black discs in five directions at once. All of these black discs, outflanked as a *direct result* of the placing of white disc H, are flipped. The board changes dramatically as shown in Figure 7.

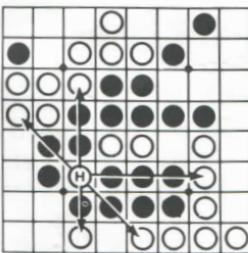


FIGURE 6

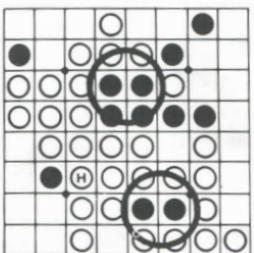


FIGURE 7

**NOTE:** The two groups of circled discs were not flipped because they were not in a *direct* line from disc H.

**HELPFUL HINT:** When placing a disc for a multiple move, keep your finger on it as you flip discs over in the various directions, to help you determine the *direct* diagonal, horizontal and vertical moves that result from that point.

## SCORING

To determine the degree of skill with which a player won the game, subtract the smaller number of discs from the larger number; for example, at the end of the game:

Black has	37	discs on the board
White has	— 27	discs on the board
Black won by	10	discs

To win by 54 to 64 discs = A PERFECT GAME

To win by 40 to 52 discs = A WALKAWAY GAME

To win by 26 to 38 discs = A FIGHT GAME

To win by 12 to 24 discs = A HOT GAME

To win by 2 to 10 discs = A CLOSE GAME

Taking notice of your scores as you play will give you an idea of how your skill is improving. Players may also establish their own methods of scoring; for example, playing a predetermined number of games and trying to win; for example, two out of three games.

Another way to play would be to establish a predetermined number of points to win by, for example, over the course of a series of games, the first player to accumulate 100 (or any other predetermined number) winning points would be the winner.

## FINE POINTS

- Discs may only be flipped as a direct result of a move. Discs to be flipped must fall in the direct line (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) of the disc that was placed down. (See Figures A and B.)

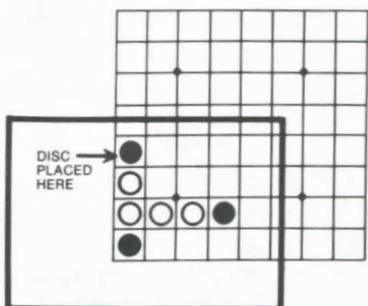


FIGURE A

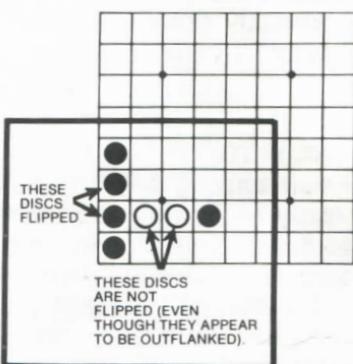


FIGURE B

- Discs to be flipped must be in an adjacent line. (You may not skip over an empty square or a different color disc.) (See Figures C and D.)

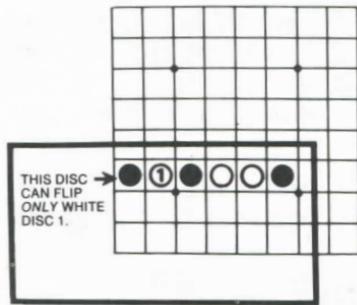


FIGURE C

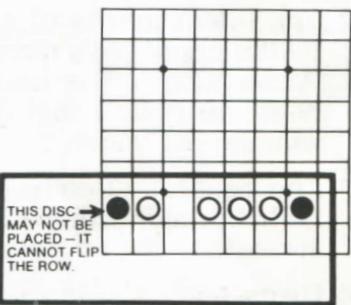


FIGURE D

- It is not necessary to flip a complete row of discs—however, all discs outflanked in any one move must be flipped.
- It is not permitted to place a disc that does not immediately flip an opposing disc.

- Once placed, a disc is never moved to another square on the board. (It may, of course, be flipped over, but it always remains on that square.)
- If it is not possible to place a disc that will flip an opposing disc, the player must pass and forfeit that one turn.
- If a player runs out of discs, but still has a turn and an opportunity to place a disc, the opponent must give that player a disc. (This holds true for as many times as a player needs, and can use, a disc.)
- If a player makes an incorrect move, and the opponent has not gone yet, the discs may be corrected. If the opponent has already gone, it is too late and discs remain as if the move was a correct one.

## TACTICS

Even among experienced players of Othello, there is controversy regarding tactics and strategy. In fact, it may be fun not to read the following hints until you have played a few times, and formed your own ideas. In any case, the following deals primarily with board positions and their advantages; but remember each new opponent means a new strategy, and a whole new challenge!

1. A disc in a corner cannot be flipped since it would be impossible to outflank it. Note, however, it can be a permanent end for three directions. Thus, a corner is very valuable and it is a great advantage to occupy a corner square.
2. The effectiveness of a corner can, however, be diminished by the opponent's maneuvering a solid defense in against it. While a corner is undoubtedly a strong position, it is not necessarily true that gaining one or more corners assures winning the game.
3. The squares directly adjoining the corners are also important. By taking these positions, it is possible to defeat the strength of the corners.
4. Discs placed along the outside edges are also valuable because they can be outflanked in only two directions (left and right of the disc itself) yet can act as the outside end for five directions (see Figure 8). White disc M is unable to outflank the black disc which has been permanently locked into an edge position by previous moves.

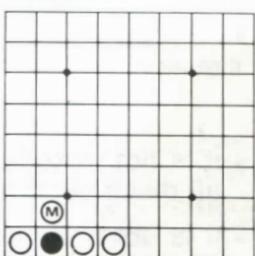


FIGURE 8

5. The next rows in from the four edge rows (see Figure 9), could be considered a "danger zone," since a disc in these rows could be your opponent's bridge to a corner or an outside edge position. The dots on the board indicate this "danger zone."

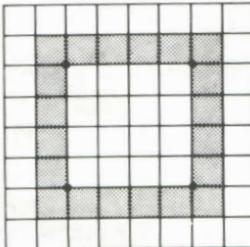


FIGURE 9

6. While the move that flips as many discs as possible may seem the most attractive, sometimes the less dramatic move is the wiser move.
7. A solid block of one color, especially backed up against a corner or side, is often the key to winning the game.
8. On the other hand, aggressively infiltrating into a solid block of one color can often change the tide of the game.
9. There is a slight advantage to going first; therefore, the more experienced player may give this advantage to the less experienced player. And after one game, the winner may wish to let the loser go first. These rules should be established before starting a series of games.
10. When a skillful player is playing against an unskilled player, the skilled player may take on a handicap by setting up the board to give his opponent a four corner advantage as White (the skilled player) is doing, shown in Figure 10. If the difference in skill is not so great, the skilled player may give only 1, 2 or 3 corner advantages.

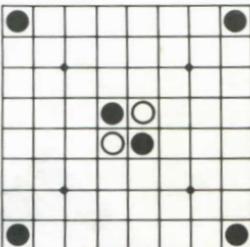


FIGURE 10

You will note as you play, that the board can radically change with each and every move. As it does, so do each player's chances of winning. Therein lies the excitement of Othello—it's "anybody's game" till the last minutes.



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Patent Pending

Printed in Canada

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