

Game-Based Learning

Abstract Games Modern



Abacam

Ages: 6+
2 players, 5 mins.

Abacan is a fun new strategy game that uses simple rules to provide a depth of strategy that grows with the experience of the players. Abacan is a variation of the nearly 3000 year old Chinese mathematical game of Nim. To play, players alternate turns sliding 1, 2, or 3 beads on the same bar from one side of the game to the other. The winner is the player who forces their opponent to move the last bead. The rules have been drafted so that there is always a winner, not ties or stalemates.



Abeja Reina

by Jesus Sanchez Paez (2013)
nestorgames

2 players, 20 mins.

Players take turns moving their bee pieces on the hexagonal cells of the game board attempting to eliminate the opponent's queen bee.



adaptoid

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2009)
nestorgames

2 players, 20 mins.

Nestor Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 157 of 4,500

[adaptoid rules](#)



Amazons

by Walter Zamkaskas (1992)
nestorgames

2 players, 30 mins.

Nestor Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 80 of 4,500

On a each turn, a player moves one amazon and then fires an arrow from the arrival position. The landed arrow doesn't move anymore and creates a permanent block on the board. The first player who can not make a legal move loses the game.



[Amazons rules](#)



Arimaa

Ages: 10+

2 players, 30 mins.

BGG 'Board Game' rank: 35 of 4,500

2011 Games Magazine 'Best New Abstract Strategy'

[Arimaa](#) (wikipedia)

Daligault, J. (2012). *Arimaa strategies and tactics*. CreateSpace.

Juhnke, F. (2009). *Beginning Arimaa: Chess reborn beyond computer comprehension*. Flying Camel Publications.

Arimaa is a game where stronger animals like elephants and camels freeze, push, and pull the weaker ones from the opposing team around and into traps, while one of the rabbits tries to sneak across the board and harmlessly reach the other side. The first player to get one of their rabbits to the other side wins. This may sound like a simple kids' game, and while it is easy enough for your kids to learn and enjoy, you will find that it is also a very deep game that can take a lifetime to master. Arimaa is one of the deepest strategy games ever invented in the history of mankind, but designed to look intuitively simple. No two games of Arimaa are ever the same. There is much to learn and discover about this intuitively simple, yet intellectually challenging, game.

Played on an 8x8 grid with four trap squares and 32 animal pieces (16 gold and 16 silver). Each player has an elephant, a camel, 2 horses, 2 dogs, 2 cats, and 8 rabbits. Strength hierarchy: Elephant > Camel > Horse > Dog > Cat > Rabbit.

The game begins with an empty board. Gold places the sixteen gold pieces first in any configuration on the first and second ranks. Silver then places the sixteen silver pieces in any configuration on seventh and eighth ranks. Then gold moves its pieces first. A player can move up to four "steps" each turn. All pieces move orthogonally.

[Arimaa](#) (free online)



Asterion

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2015)

Nestorgames

2-4 players, 20-30 mins.

Nestor Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Players take turns placing a tile on the table, trying to connect their prisoners to the treasures and the outside of the labyrinth (or at least two wings) but not to Asterion. The player that escapes with more prisoners and treasures wins the game.

[Asterion rules](#)



Avalam

Ages: 8+
2 players, 30 mins.
BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 240 of 4,500

1998 Mensa Select Winner

The object is to score the most points by building towers up to a maximum of five pieces high. The color on the top of the tower scores the point.

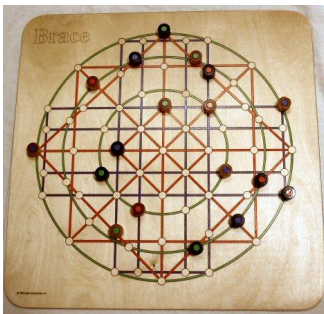


Batik

By Kris Burm
Gigamic

Ages: 6+
2 players, 30 mins.
BGG 'Board Game' rank: 3,606 of 70,000

A combination of Tetris and Bausack in which each player has a set of wooden pieces in various shapes. The playing area is formed from two sheets of parallel Plexiglas. Players take turns dropping pieces into the gap until a piece cannot be wholly inserted. The owner of that piece loses the round, and forfeits the offending piece. A new round begins, with the winner of the previous round playing first. Play continues until one player has no pieces when it is their turn to move; they lose the game.



Brace

By Kadon Enterprises

Ages: 10+
1-2 players

Three path colors determine how pieces move -- any open distance of their own color, one step on non-matching colors. Goal: move pieces to "brace", or bracket, an opponent piece to gain points. A novel scoring cube tracks your lead: get 3 points ahead to win. Rules for four other games and some solitaire games are included. This version features a 24" handcrafted gameboard with laser-engraved and handpainted parts.



Button Men

Cheapass Games

Ages: 10+
2 players, 5 mins.
BGG 'Board Games' rank: 2194 of 70,000

1999 Origins Awards "Best Abstract Board Game"

[Button Men](#) (wikipedia)

Several characters, represented on actual stickpin buttons, each have a unique allowance of polyhedral dice. These dice endow each character with unique combat abilities. Players roll the dice against each other and take their opponents' dice as casualties. The object of the game is take out the most die 'sides' during the combat. It's quite simple, quite inventive, and deeper than it would seem at first. Numerous sets of buttons have been release over the years, some sets adding new game dynamics.

Sets of polyhedral dice (4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 20 sides) are necessary to use all of the different buttons.



Cathedral

Ages: 8+

2 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 101 of 4,500

To win this classic strategy game, you must battle to gain the most space as you build castles on the game board. If you can block and out-maneuver your opponent at every turn, you'll claim the victory. With its beautifully finished hardwood game pieces, the game looks different every time you play. Cathedral is an elegant game that includes an all-wood game board and castle pieces in a variety of shapes and sizes.



Celtic!

by Cameron Browne (2009)

nestorgames

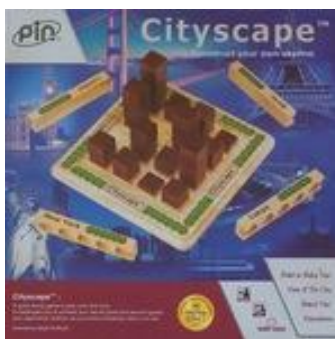
2 players, 15 mins.

Nestor Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 80 of 4,500

A tile placement game in which players strive to complete the best knot.

[Celtic! rules](#)



Cityscape

Ages: 8+

2-4 players, 10 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 233 of 4,500

2003 Mensa Select Winner

The world's cities are founded on the aspirations of many people. Their secret ambitions are seldom in agreement and rarely fully satisfied, but the interplay of their efforts leads to the unique character of each city. So it is in every round of Cityscape.

Before beginning a city, the players set secret goals for their view of the buildings in the completed city. Each line of sight gets a separate goal, such as the number of buildings that will be visible, or how many are equal in height. These are recorded with dice as simple codes.

Then the players take turns adding freely a block at a time to the rising city until all the blocks have been placed. The more buildings you set out to see, the more points you can score - But you only score points for meeting a goal exactly, so don't be obvious - play slyly to hide your plans till the end!



ConHex

by Michali Antonow (2002)
nestorgames

2 players, 30 mins.
Nestor Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)
BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 94 of 4,500

The winner is the first player to connect his or her assigned sides of a square board. Players alternate turns placing pieces of their own color on a vertex. A player can claim a space after placing pieces on at least half the vertices of that space.

[ConHex rules](#)



Counterplays

by Nestor Romeral Andres
nestorgames

2 player, 30 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

This game family in order of difficulty includes: SEVEN, Pent-Up, Counterplays, Stack-22.

[Counterplays rules](#)



The Duke

Ages: 13+
2 players, 30 mins.
BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 9 of 4,500

The Duke is a dynamic, tile-based strategy game with an old-world, feudal theme, high-quality wooden playing pieces, and an innovative game mechanism in its double-sided tiles. Each side represents a different posture – often considered to be defensive or offensive – and demonstrates exactly what the piece can do within the turn. At the end of a move (or after the use of a special ability), the tile is flipped to its other side, displaying a new offensive or defensive posture.

Each posture conveys different options for maneuver and attack. The full circle is a standard Move, the hollow circle the Jump, the arrow provides for the Slide, the star a special Strike ability and so on. Each turn a player may select any tile to maneuver, attempting to defend his own troops while positioning himself to capture his opponent's tiles. If you end your movement in a square occupied by an opponent's tile, you capture that tile. Capture your opponent's Duke to win!

Players start the game by placing their Duke in one of the two middle squares on their side of the game board. Two Footman are then placed next to the Duke. Each turn a player may choose to either move a single tile or randomly draw a new tile from the bag. With twelve different Troop Tiles, all double-sided, and sixteen total pieces for each player, the variety of game play is limitless.

Beyond the endless variety of the basic game, Terrain Tiles introduce a variety of game play options, altering the game board.



Eclipse

Gigamic

Ages: 8+

2 players, 15 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 303 of 4,500

The oblong board contains hexagonal spaced holes for the ball-shaped pieces to rest. Each player has one large Guard and five pairs of smaller Prisoner pieces. Each pair of Prisoners is connected by a metal chain: two short chains and three long. A Prisoner may move as far as the chain will allow (1 or 2 spaces) while its partner stays put. The opponent's Prisoners may be temporarily immobilized by crossing one of your chains theirs. The Guard moves one space at a time in any hex-axial direction. If, on your turn, you are unable to move your Guard, you lose.



Epaminondas

by Robert Abbott (1975)

nestorgames

2 players, 30 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank:131 of 4,500

The objective is to move your pieces across the board onto your opponent's back rank, the row closest to him, by moving your phalanxes and capturing enemy pieces.

[Epaminondas rules](#)



Eternas

Ages: 8+

2 players, 5 mins.

Eternas is a fun new 3-dimensional strategy game of four in a row. The rules and concepts are simple enough to appeal to kids from 6 to 96 years of age. But, don't let the simplicity fool you. While Eternas is quick and easy to learn, there is a depth of strategy that will keep you thinking. Eternas is a four in a row style game in which the first player to place four bead of their color in a row, either vertically, horizontally or diagonally, wins the game. Conceived around the shape of the circle (the symbol for eternity) Eternas was designed for borderless play. The rules have been drafted so that there is always a winner, no ties, stalemates, or cat's games. Hand crafted from high quality

hardwoods, Eternas is pretty enough to be left out on the coffee table or bookshelf to be played again and again.



EXIT

by Vincent Everaert (2011)
nestorgames

2 players, 30 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 4 (of 4)
BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 146 of 4,500

[Exit rules](#)



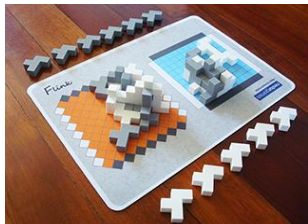
Feed the Duck

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2011)
nestorgames

2 players, 20 mins.
w/ expansion to 3-4 player game
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Each player has a chosen duck color and must gather his ducks into a group using a bread crumb as an enticement.

[Feed The Ducks rules](#)



Flink (2nd Ed)

by Nestor Romeral Andres
nestorgames

2 player, 30 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

[Flink \(2nd Ed\) rules](#)



Four

by Stephen Tavener (2012)
nestorgames

2 players, 15 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

A game inspired by the Four Colour Theorem in which four shapes in four colours are placed in a virtual grid according to four constraints. The last player able to place a piece wins.

[Four rules](#)



Gardens of IO

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2016)
nestorgames

Ages: 7+

2-5 players, 30 mins

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

Our beloved Martians have travelled to Jupiter's moon Io. They've also improved their gardening techniques to avoid stepping on the flowers as they move around the garden. Now they toss rapid-growth seeds from the outside of the garden instead. Help your little Martian gardener plant flowers to create the grandest, most beautiful garden on Io.

[Gardens Of IO rules](#)



Gardens of Mars

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2011)
nestorgames

Ages: 7+

2-5 players, 30 mins

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

Players in turn move their Martian Gardeners across the garden and plant Martian flowers on it. They score points by creating large groups of flowers of the same color. This is a trilogy of games which includes: Gardens of Mars, Gardens of IO, and Gardens of Enceladus.

[Gardens Of Mars rules](#)



Gobblet

2 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank:102 of 4,500

Your goal in *Gobblet* is to place four of your pieces in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal row. Your pieces start nested off the board. On a turn, you either play one exposed piece from your three off-the-board piles or move one piece on the board to any other spot on the board where it fits. A larger piece can cover any smaller piece. A piece being played from off the board may not cover an opponent's piece unless it's in a row where your opponent has three of his color.

Your memory is tested as you try to remember which color one of your larger pieces is covering before you move it. As soon as a player has four like-colored pieces in a row, he wins — except in one case: If you lift your piece and reveal an opponent's piece that finishes a four-in-a-row, you don't immediately lose; you can't return the piece to its starting location, but if you can place it over one of the opponent's three other pieces in that row, the game continues.



Gyges

Gigamic

Ages: 8+
2 players, 15 mins.
BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 114 of 4,500

The object of *Gygès* is to move a piece to your opponent's last row. The catch is that no one owns the pieces. You can only move a piece in the row nearest you. Pieces are made up of 1, 2, or 3 rings; this number is also the number of spaces it **must** move. If it lands on another piece, it can move the number of spaces equal to that piece's number of rings. It can also displace that piece to another space.



Hello Dolly

by Pak Cormier (2010)
nestorgames

2 players, 20 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Each turn, a player moves one of his sheep in a straight line until it hits the edge of the board or another sheep. Albert the shepherd then moves clockwise on the inner circular path as many spaces as the sheep moved that turn. If the space Albert lands on is surrounded by sheep (one on each of the space's vertices), those sheep are moved to the path leading to the barn. The first player (black or white) with 5 of their sheep on the path wins.

[Hello Dolly rules](#)



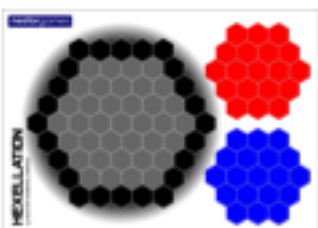
heptalion

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2012)
nestorgames

2-4 players, 15 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 1 (of 4)

A tiling game played on a diamond-shaped board of 56 squares depicting seven different symbols on them. Two players randomly draw tiles, but position them face up. The players struggle to place their 2-square tiles on the board so that both symbols of the tile match with the symbols of the two adjacent spaces on which the tile is placed. The last player placing a tile wins.

[heptalion rules](#)



Hexellation

by Nestor Romeral Andres (1995)
nestorgames

2 players, 20 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Create a previously fixed start constellation named 'MODEL' without creating a different one named 'AVOID'. 2 players, 20 mins.

[Hexellation rules](#)



Hippos & Crocodiles (with Buffalos expansion)

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2009, 2010)
nestorgames

Ages: 9+

2 players, 10 mins.

3 players, 15 mins. w/Buffalos expansion

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 1 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 5 of 4,500

2006 Mensa Select Winner

The object is to fill up the river with hippos and crocodiles. If a player can't place a piece on the board, he loses. The "Buffaloes" expansion allows for third player and comes with a new 16x20 board and additional buffalo pieces.

[Hippos & Crocodiles rules](#)



Hive (Carbon Edition) w/ The Pillbug Expansion

2 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 328 of 4,500

The object is to fill up the river with hippos and crocodiles. If a player can't place a piece on the board, he loses. The "Buffaloes" expansion allows for third player and comes with a new 16x20 board and additional buffalo pieces.

[Hive \(game\)](#) (wikipedia)

Hive is a highly addictive strategic game for two players that is not restricted by a board and can be played anywhere on any flat surface. Hive is made up of twenty two pieces, eleven black and eleven white, resembling a variety of creatures each with a unique way of moving.

With no setting up to do, the game begins when the first piece is placed down. As the subsequent pieces are placed this forms a pattern that becomes the playing surface (the pieces themselves become the board). Unlike other such games, the pieces are never eliminated and not all have to be played. The object of the game is to totally surround your opponent's queen, while at the same time trying to block your opponent from doing likewise to your queen. The player to totally surround his opponent's queen wins the game.

Included in this "Hive Carbon" edition are the 'The Ladybug' and the 'The Mosquito' expansions (optional pieces). Also a separate expansion 'The Pillbug' is included.

Ingersoll, R. (2014). *Play Hive like a champion: Strategy, tactics and commentary (2nd Ed.)*. Port Orange, FL.



Hop It!

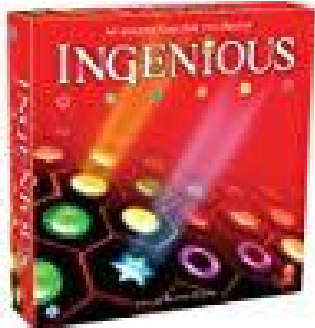
by Cameron Browne (2009)
nestorgames

2 players, 20 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Tadpoles swim from one space to an adjacent space; frogs move by hopping over adjacent pieces. Any tadpole hopped over immediately matures to become a frog. Any frog hopped over is scared to death and removed.

[Hop It! rules](#)



Ingenious

Ages: 10+

1-4 players, 45 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 8 of 4,500

2005 Mensa Select Winner

In *Ingenious*, a.k.a. *Einfach Genial*, players take turns placing colored domino-style tiles on a game board, scoring for each color group that they enlarge. The trick, however, is that a player's score is equal to her *worst-scoring* color, not her best, so she needs to score for all colors instead of specializing in only one or two.

In more detail, the game includes 120 domino-style tiles, each consisting of two conjoined hexes; each hex has one of six colors in it, with most tiles having different-colored hexes. Each player has a rack with six tiles on it, and on a turn a player places one tile from her rack onto two hexes of the game board. For each hex on this tile, she scores one point in that color for each hex of the same color that lies adjacent to it and each hex in a straight line from it. If a player brings the score of a color to 18, she immediately takes another turn. At the end of her turn, she refills her rack to six tiles. (Before refilling her rack, if she has no tiles on it that contain hexes in her lowest-scoring color, she can discard *all* of her tiles, then draw six new tiles from the bag.)

When no more tiles can be placed on the game board or when one player scores 18 in each color, the game ends. Players then compare their lowest scores, and whoever has the highest low score wins.



Kamisado

Gigamic

Ages: 8+

2 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 26 of 4,500

The aim in each round is to be the first to get an octagonal "dragon tower" to the opposite side of the board; towers move in straight lines, either forwards or diagonally forwards. The twist is that you must move the tower of the color matching the space on which the opponent moved on her previous turn. As the game progresses, you'll find that the routes you want to use are blocked by enemy towers — and sometimes your own! If you can't move, your opponent moves again immediately, moving the tower matching the color of the space

occupied by the stymied tower.

As the game unfolds, your towers will be promoted to "Sumos" and have the ability to push your opponent's pieces backwards, earning you extra turns. The situations continue to become more complex and challenging, until one player accumulates the required winning total and can be declared a "Kamisado Grand Master" — until the next game!



Khet 2.0: The Laser Game w/Eye of Horus Beam Splitter Expansion

Ages: 9+

2 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 89 of 4,500

2006 Mensa Select Winner

The completely redesigned Khet 2.0 Laser Game uses Egyptian mirrors and modern, eye-safe lasers to illuminate opponents and win the game. Combines simplicity of checkers and the strategy of chess. The Khet Eye of Horus Beam Splitter ups the ante by splitting a single beam of your Khet board game into three. When the beam splitter is hit, it splits one laser beam into two by reflecting half of the beam and transmitting the other half right through, doubling the strategy and excitement! With both pieces in play, the laser beam can be split twice, shooting three lasers around the game board with one push of the button!



Kulami

Ages: 10+

2 players, 30 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 79 of 4,500

2013 Mensa Select Winner

2014 Games Magazing "Best Abstract Strategy Game"

Kulami, a two-player abstract strategy game, is played on several wooden tiles of different sizes, which are put together in a random fashion to form the board. Players place their pieces on the squares on the tiles. The placement of the previous piece dictates the rows in which the next piece may be placed. The goal is to claim as many tiles as possible by occupying the majority of squares on a tile. Bonus points can be gained by completing rows or areas.



Let's Catch the Lion!

by Madoka Kitao (2008)

nestorgames

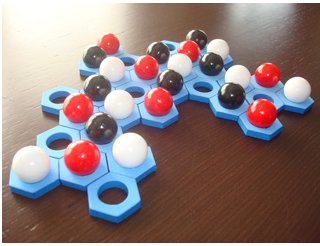
2 players, 15 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 104 of 4,500

A simple version of Shogi (Japanese Chess). Both players have only four pieces -- chicken (double sided), giraffe, elephant and lion -- and they're trying to either catch the opponent's lion or move their own lion to the other side.

[Let's Catch The Lion! rules](#)



Limit (2nd Edition)

by Cameron Brown (2009)
nestorgames

2-3 players, 30 mins.
Nestor Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)
BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 350 of 4,500

LIMIT is a tile-placement game of movement and capture on a constantly shrinking board.

[Limit rules](#)



Margo (Ninja)

by Cameron Browne (2006)
nestorgames

2 players, 15 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

A game similar to Go but played with balls that stack. Pinned balls survive capture to remain active in the game. This is the basic size board (6x6). Other boards are available 5x5, 7x7, 8x8, 9x9.

[Margo rules](#)



Myriath

by Martijn Althuizen (2008)
nestorgames

2 players, 15 mins.
3 or 4 player variant w/ Green + Yellow expansion
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

Your goal is to connect as many tail ends of your own pieces as possible to other pieces. When placing a piece, at least one of its tail ends (or half of it) must connect to an opponent's piece. The player with the most connected tail ends wins!

[Myriath rules](#)



Ni-Ju

by Nestor Romeral Andres
nestorgames

2 player, 20 mins.
Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

[Ni-Ju rules](#)



Octi

Ages: 8+

2-4 players, 10-30 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 96 of 4,500

Octi is an abstract strategy game that is similar to checkers and chess. The object of the game is move your pieces into your opponent's starting points. The difference between checkers and *Octi* is that this game allows for multiple jumping, capturing, and special movement of pieces. On each move players decide whether to bring in new pieces, upgrade their existing pieces, or move a piece. The choices in this game are staggering and each move presents an entire new way of thinking about the game. There is a 4 player teams variant that is included in the rules.



Onitama

Ages: 8+

2 players, 15-20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 9 of 4,500

Onitama is a two-player, perfect information abstract game with a random starting set-up. On a 5x5 board, both players start with five pawns on their side, with the main pawn in the middle.

Each player has two open cards that each display a possible move for any of his pieces. There is a fifth card that cannot be used by either player. On a player's turn, he chooses one of his cards, moves one of his pieces according to the chosen card, then replaces the card he used with the fifth card. The other player then chooses one of his cards, moves accordingly, and exchanges that card with this fifth card — which is, of course, the card the first player just used.

Moving onto one of the opponent's pawns removes that pawn from the game. Taking the opponent's main pawn, or moving your main pawn into your opponent's main pawn's starting space, wins you the game.



Patchwork

Ages: 6+

2 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 3 of 4,500

In Patchwork, two players compete to build the most aesthetic (and high-scoring) patchwork quilt on a personal 9x9 game board. To start play, lay out all of the patches at random in a circle and place a marker directly counter-clockwise of the 2-1 patch. Each player takes five buttons — the currency/points in the game — and someone is chosen as the start player.

On a turn, a player either purchases one of the three patches standing clockwise of the spool or passes. To purchase a patch, you pay the cost in buttons shown on the patch, advance your time token on the time track a

number of spaces equal to the time shown on the patch, move the spool to that patch's location in the circle, then add the patch to your game board. You're free to place the patch anywhere on your board that doesn't overlap other patches, but you probably want to fit things together as tightly as possible. If your time token is behind or on top of the other player's time token, then you take another turn; otherwise the opponent now goes. Instead of purchasing a patch, you can choose to pass; to do this, you move your time token to the space immediately in front of the opponent's time token, then take one button from the bank for each space you moved.

In addition to a button cost and time cost, each patch also features 0-3 buttons, and when you move your time token past a button on the time track, you sum the number of buttons on your game board, then take this many buttons from the bank.

What's more, the time track depicts five 1x1 patches on it, and during set-up you place five actual 1x1 patches on these spaces. Whoever first passes a patch on the time track claims this patch and immediately places it on his game board.

When a player takes an action that moves his time token to the central square of the time track, he places the purchased patch (assuming he had purchased one and wasn't passing), then takes one final button scoring from the bank. Once both players are in the center, each player loses two buttons for each blank square on his game board. Whoever has the most buttons wins.



Pentago

Ages: 8+

2 players, 5 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 130 of 4,500

2006 Mensa Select Winner

An abstract strategy game for 2 players with four 3x3 grids arranged into a larger 6x6 grid. This game re-implements the well known "connect 4" with a twist: after placing a marble of his colour, the player has to twist one of the grids by 90°, so changing the board after every turn. The first player to get 5 in a row wins.



Pent-Up

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2014)

nestorgames

2 players, 15 mins.

3 or 4 player variant w/ Red+ Blue expansion

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Players alternate turns placing one of their pentominoes according to some simple rules, trying to get the most of their pieces on the topmost layers when the game ends. This game family in order of difficulty includes: SEVEN, Pent-Up, Counterplays, Stack-22.

[Pent-Up rules](#)



Polarity

Ages: 8+,
2-4 players, 20 mins.

[Polarity \(game\)](#) (wikipedia)

Polarity is a 2-player game abstract/dexterity game that uses lots of magnets. The plastic coated pieces look like [Reversi/Othello](#) discs, with black and white faces. Each piece contains a magnet, with the black side being North and the white side being South. Each player gets a stack, one plays black one plays white. A neutral red piece goes in the center of the game cloth and players start by place five each of their stack around the cloth. These flat pieces are the foundations.

On your turn, you take one piece from your stack into your hand, then bring it to bear against one of your foundations. You keep your color face up, so the opposing polarity bears against your foundation piece. This way, you can very carefully balance your new piece in the air against the foundation stone! This is just fantastic to see. The board fills up with lots of discs teetering at 45 degrees, ready to fly about if the balances are upset.

Get it right and your stack is one piece smaller. Make a mistake and your turn ends. Either a piece falls flat somewhere (becoming a new foundation) or pieces jump together making towers or into your hand. Your opponent takes the tower you accidentally made and places it their side up where they like. Towers get you points at the game end.



Quantum

Kadon Enterprises

Ages: 10+
2-4 players, 20 mins.

This abstract strategy game includes a number of unusual ideas. First of all, the set-up is random. The mahogany frame is shaken until the weighted pieces all fall into place. The goals of the two included games are straightforward enough -- connect opposite sides of the board, or control the four center squares. However, the pieces are something of a mystery. Most will be "blank side" up at first, and it is only as they are overturned that you discover whether each moves one square at a time or an unlimited number (like a queen in Chess.) In addition, there are certain special moves that can dramatically alter gameplay.



Pylos

Gigamic

Ages: 8+
 2 players, 10 mins.
 BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 121 of 4,500

1994 Mensa Select Winner
 1994 Games Magazine "Best Strategy Game"

This award-winning game is ideal for competitive strategy players as they compete to place their last ball at the very top of the pyramid. Skillful moves and 4 levels of play test a player's ability at vertical thinking.



Quads Magnetic

Gigamic

Ages: 6+
 2 players, 10 mins.
 BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 282 of 4,500

1994 Mensa Select Winner
 1994 Games Magazine "Best Strategy Game"

A tile placement game for two players. The tiles have different combinations of colors (either black or silver) or lines (parallel or perpendicular to the tile edge) at each of their four edges. Players take turns placing a tile so that the colors or lines on each edge match that of adjacent tiles. The player who stops his or her opponent from being able to place a tile wins.



Quarto

Gigamic

Ages: 6+
 2 players, 20 mins.
 BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 60 of 4,500

1993 Mensa Select Winner

Quarto is a quick play strategy game. The playing pieces have eight features which must be observed and managed while playing. These include: Tall, Short, Light, Dark, Round, Square, Hollow Top, Solid Top. Any given piece has exactly four features. Each piece is unique. Play by selecting an unused piece and give it to your opponent. Players never gets to choose which piece they want to play. They can only play the piece given to them. Be very cautious that you do not provide your opponent a piece that allows them to win.

Win Quarto by placing the last piece in a row of four pieces where there is ONE common feature among all four pieces. So always watch when there is a row of three pieces already on the playing board.



Questor

by Ben Stanley (2013)
nestorgames

1-4 players, 15 mins.

Nestor Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

Four different adventurers (warrior, rogue, mage, healer) each with a unique power and quest (victory condition) explore a dungeon. Solo, cooperative, and competitive modes of play are included.

[Questor rules](#)



Quixo

Gigamic

Ages: 6+

2-4 players, 20 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 269 of 4,500

1995 Mensa Select Winner

Twenty-five wooden cubes are shifted up and down and side-to-side as players try to line up five--diagonally, vertically, or horizontally--with their own symbol, X or O. Think carefully--every move brings the possibility of inadvertently helping your opponent win. In turn, each player removes a cube from the periphery of the handsome, dark wood board (10 inches in diameter) and replaces it at the end of one of the rows made incomplete by its removal, sliding the remaining four to fill up the empty space. Now the entire row has changed and each player may be one step closer to--or further from--winning. Keen strategic and visualization skills are a must.



Quoridor

Gigamic

Ages: 6+

2-4 players, 15 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 61 of 4,500

1997 Mensa Select Winner

1998 Games Magazine "Game of the Year"

Classic is a fast-moving strategy game that is similar to chess insofar as players move pawn-shaped pieces across the board. The difference is that there are wooden fences one erects to block the progress of and force a different route upon an opponent. The physical blocks are quite effective for discouraging daring moves, and encouraging more competitive players. Players utilize analytical and logistical thinking, as well as math-minded strategy.



Red

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2011)
nestorgames

2-3 players, 20 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 262 of 4,500

Each tile has a background color and a different-colored circle in the middle -- black, red, or white. The tiles come in 2 sizes 1x1 and 2x2. Players place tiles on the table trying to connect groups of their border and circle color, scoring more for larger tiles.

[Red rules](#)



SET

Ages: 6+

1-20 players, 30 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 123 of 4,500

1991 Mensa Select Winner

1992 Games Magazine 'Games 100' Award

In SET, each card contains 1-3 objects, with all of the objects on a card having the same color, shape and shading, e.g., two purple shaded ovals. Colors, shapes, and shadings come in three different types: green, purple and red; oval, diamond and squiggle; and solid, shaded and outlined.

All players compete simultaneously and try to claim sets of cards in a single pass through the deck. A 'set' consists of three cards that are either all alike or all different in each attribute. For example, if all three cards have the same number of objects, but three different shapes, shadings, and colors, then those cards are a set; if two of the cards have a common attribute that is not shared by the third, they are not a set.

To play, one person takes the deck and lays out twelve cards face up. The first person to spot a set collects those three cards; if the player was mistaken, then this player cannot claim a set until after another player has done so. After someone has claimed a set, the cardholder lays out three more cards. Whoever claims the most sets wins!



Seven

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2013)
nestorgames

2 players, 10 mins.

3 or 4 player variant w/ Red+ Blue expansion

Players alternate turns placing one of their 7 tiles (tetrahexes) according to some simple rules to get the most of their pieces on the topmost layers. This game family in order of difficulty includes: SEVEN, Pent-Up, Counterplays, Stack-22.

[Seven rules](#)



Spangles

by David L. Smith (2014)
nestorgames

2 players, 15 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 432 of 4,500

Players alternate playing one of their 25 assigned color tiles, placing it adjacent to some existing tile. The winner is the first player to form a 4-tile triangle with his color on the tips and either color in the center.



Top Speed

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2011)
nestorgames

2-8 players, 60 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

A new 'compact edition' of a push-your-luck racing theme game.

[Top Speed rules](#)



Tsuru

Ages: 8+

2-8 players, 15 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 116 of 4,500

A beautiful, simple game of laying a tile before your own token to continue its path on each turn. The goal is to keep your token on the board longer than anyone else's, but as the board fills up this becomes harder because there are fewer empty spaces left... and another player's tile may also extend your own path in a direction you'd rather not go.

Tsuru has an Asian spiritual theme - the lines representing the "many roads that lead to divine wisdom", and the game as a whole representing "the classic quest for enlightenment". This theme is very light and the game essentially plays as an abstract.



Tsuru of the Seas

2-8 players, 30 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 257 of 4,500

The basic game play of *Tsuru of the Seas* resembles that of Tom McMurchie's *Tsuru*: Players each have a ship that they want to sail — that is, keep on the game board — as long as possible. Whoever stays on the board the longest wins the game.

Each turn players add "wake" tiles to the 7×7 game board; each tile has two "wake connections" on each edge, and as the tiles are placed on the board,

they create a connected network of paths. If a wake is placed in front of a ship, that ship then sails to the end of the wake. If the ship goes off the board, that player is out of the game.

What's new in *Tsuro of the Seas* are daikaiju tiles, representing sea monsters and other creatures of the deep. Notably, daikaiju can move: each tile has five arrows, four for moving in each of the cardinal directions and another one for rotation. On the active player's turn, he rolls two six-sided dice; on a sum of 6, 7, or 8, the daikaiju will move, while on any other sum they'll stay in place. To determine which direction the daikaiju tiles move, the player then makes a second roll, this time with a single die. On 1-5 in the second roll, each daikaiju moves according to its matching arrow. On a 6 in the second roll, a new daikaiju tile is added to the board.

If a daikaiju tile hits a wake tile, a ship, or another daikaiju tile, the object hit is removed from the game. Another way to be ousted! The more daikaiju tiles on the game board, the faster players will find themselves trying to breathe water...



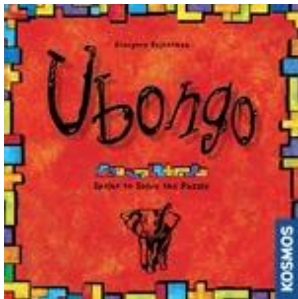
Twigs

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2015)
nestorgames

2 players, 30 mins.

Players alternate turns placing one of their 12 different 5-segment polytwigs, seeking to enclose as many areas as possible.

[Twigs rules](#)



Ubongo

Ages: 8+

2-4 players, 20-30 mins.

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 40 of 4,500

In *Ubongo*, players compete to solve individual puzzles as quickly as they can to get first crack at the gems on hand for the taking. The game board consists of six rows, with twelve gems (of various colors) placed in these rows. At the start of play, each player places his pawn in front of one of those rows. Each player also takes twelve polyominoes — that is, pieces consisting of 2-5 squares in some configuration; players use these pieces each round to try to recreate shapes.

At the start of a round, each player receives a puzzle card that depicts a shape created by some number of shares; one side of this card depicts six rows of pieces, and when everyone is ready, someone rolls a die to determine which row of pieces each player can use to recreate the shape on their individual card. The race is timed by a sand timer, and the outcome of this race determines the action on the main playing board.

Whoever first solves their puzzle in time gets to move their pawn up to three rows left or right, with the second player to finish moving two rows and the third player only one row. Players then collect two gems from the front of the row where their pawn is located, which means that the more rows you can move, the more control you have over which color gems you can collect. After collecting gems, each player receives a new puzzle card, and a new round begins.

After nine rounds, the game ends and whoever has collected the most gems in a single color wins! If players tie, then those players compare who has the most gems in a second color, and so on.



UNITY

by Nestor Romeral Andres (2012)
nestorgames

2-3 players, 20 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 40 of 4,500

Each player strives to unite his pieces... at any cost. By sacrificing the right pieces at crucial moments, you can shatter your opponents' groups as they coalesce, or eliminate a pesky splinter group of your own pieces — anything to create unity.

[Unity rules](#)



Volo

by Dieter Stein (2010)
nestorgames

2 players, 30 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 3 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 206 of 4,500

Players place playing pieces ("birds") on the board and attempt to connection them all in one contiguous ("flock").

[Volo rules](#)



Yavalath

by Cameron Browne's LUDI (2007)
nestorgames

2-3 players, 15 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 1 (of 4)

BGG 'Abstract Games' rank: 119 of 4,500

Players strive to make a straight line of 4 pieces of their color, but lose if they make a line of 3 before doing so. The game was invented by a game-generating computer program called LUDI. Fourteen additional games are described in the book Yavalath & Co. which can be played using the same

board & pieces.

[Yavalath rules](#)



Yikerz!

Ages: 14+

1-4 players, 15 mins.

BGG 'Board Games' rank: 3,860 of 70,000

2010 Mensa Select Winner

Place your Yikerz! pieces down on the board and try to avoid attracting the other pieces already played. The object is to get rid of all your pieces. If Yikerz! collapse together, those pieces are yours to add to your stack. Stand the Yikerz! upright for increased magnetism and danger for your opponent's next turn! But beware, that play could backfire on your next turn. Yikerz! is unique 4 interchangeable game board design allows for many different configurations that create a variety of challenges and suits different skill levels.

[Yikerz! - Video Review](#)



ZAIC

by Eric Dresner (2010)

nestorgames

2 players, 15 mins.

Nestorgames Complexity Rating: 2 (of 4)

Each player is given 19 tiles in three sizes. Each player vies for the largest area of his tiles by connecting his own and covering his opponent's. As the game progresses it gets more difficult to play the larger tiles. The game ends when one player cannot make a move.

[ZAIC rules](#)