

An Introduction to Go

to play, you will need a board and a set of stones

Legend has it, Go originated in China over 4300 years ago. It is now played by millions of people around the world, especially in Korea, Japan, and China. With a board and a set of stones, you can play casually, or start a life-long journey of fascinating discovery and intrigue.

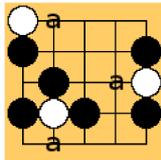
Play - Go is played on intersecting grid lines. Two players--first with black stones, the stronger with white--play alternately one stone at a time each on an empty intersection. Common grid sizes are 9x9 (beginner/short), 13x13 (intermediate/medium), 19x19 (advanced/long).

Stones do not move - Once placed, a stone does not move, but it can be captured and removed.

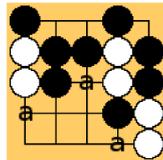
Connect - Stones of the same color that touch each other along a grid line (not diagonal) form a chain.

Capture - As long as a stone or a chain is connected along a grid line to at least one empty intersection (called a liberty), it remains on the board. Thus, if a stone or chain becomes completely surrounded by stones of the other color (i.e. "has no liberties"), it is captured and removed from the board. You can place any stone that itself or as part of a chain has or creates (through capture) at least one liberty.

Example Captures - When black plays at "a", white loses one stone:



two stones:



End - Game ends on white pass after black. Each pass, the passer gives a "pass stone" to opponent for capture.

"Ko Rule" - You cannot play a stone if it would repeat a previous identical situation on the board.

Score - Remove dead stones for capture, place captured stones in same-color territory. Each score the number of their controlled empty intersections.

The above rules are known as "AGA rules – territory scoring"

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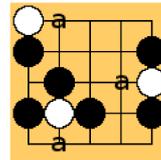
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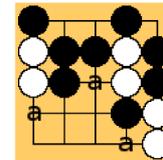
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Basic Go Terms

Go, Baduk (Korean), Weiqi (Chinese), iGo (Japanese) - Most popular names for the ancient game of Go.

Star Points - dots on the playing grid in specific symmetrical locations used for reference and handicap stones.

Handicap - A certain number of stones placed on the board before play to equalize the play for differently-skill players. Handicaps do not significantly change the style of play, they simply give both players a challenge regardless of relative skill level.

Komi (Compensation) - the number of points given to white for playing second, designed to balance the score between players. The value generally used is 7.5 (the .5 prevents a draw). In AGA rules, komi is 0.5 for a handicap game.

Liberties - a stone or group's open spaces along the grid lines

Eye, eyespace - internal liberty, group of surrounded spaces

Atari - a group or stone's position of having only one liberty

Life/Death, Alive/Dead - condition of a group of stones on whether they can survive to the end of the game.

Two eyes - a group having two eyes, one way to guarantee life and avoid capture.

Free Resources

Find your local club at
www.usgo.org/where-play-go

American Go Association - www.usgo.org

Find your local club and learn the basics, find tournaments.

The Interactive Way To Go – playgo.to/index-e.html

Learn by doing. One of the easiest ways to learn the game online.

Wikipedia – wikipedia.org/wiki/Go_game

Learn all about the history, equipment, and basic information.

Large Library of information – senseis.xmp.net

A wealth of information for beginners and experts from around the world.

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