

# Dots and Boxes

**Topics:** Logic, counting, visualization, thinking ahead, strategy

**Materials:** Dot Paper, pencils or crayons

**Players:** best for two

**Recommended Grades:** 2-8

**Common Core Standards:** MP1, MP3, MP6, MP7

A game of squares and strategy that is easy to learn and hard to master.

## Why We Love Dots and Boxes

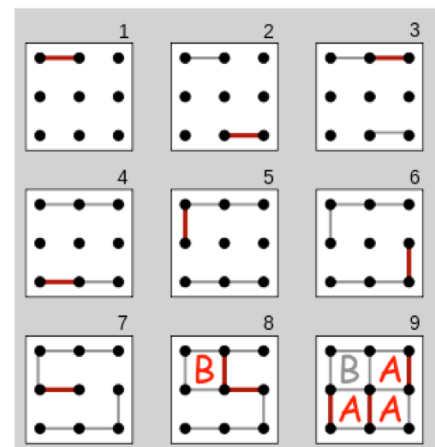
This is a classic game you may remember from childhood. The game is like a more sophisticated tic-tac-toe: fun and challenging for young kids, with simple counting and shape recognition practice built in, and connections to deeper mathematical strategy at play in the background. It's a perfect game for starting our year of Game of the Month.

## How to Play

Dots and Boxes is a game for two players, played on a small grid of dots. On your turn, add a vertical or horizontal edge between neighboring dots. If you complete a square, get one point and go again. Keep track of the score by coloring in your square, or writing your initial inside it. Whoever has the most squares at the end wins.

## Example Game

This graphic is of a small game of Dots and Boxes from Wikipedia. Players A and B play a game in nine turns. Notice that A's last turn consists of several moves, since every box completed gives A an extra move.



## Prompts and Questions

- Is it better to go first or second?
- Why did you win or lose a game?
- Is it possible to end in a draw (tie)?

## Tips for starting

1. Small games are better, especially to start.
2. Use different colored crayons or pencils while playing for a clearer game.
3. Placing square tiles on completed squares may help keep track of the score.

## Variations

1. Play on dot grids of larger sizes.
2. Try playing with 3 players.