

Nine Men's Morris

Topics: strategy and thinking ahead

Materials: the gameboard and 9 game pieces each, of 2 colors (buttons, Lego pieces, color counters, beans, checkers, glass beads, etc.)

Players: two

Recommended Grades: 2-8

Common Core Standards: MP1, MP3, MP6, MP7

History

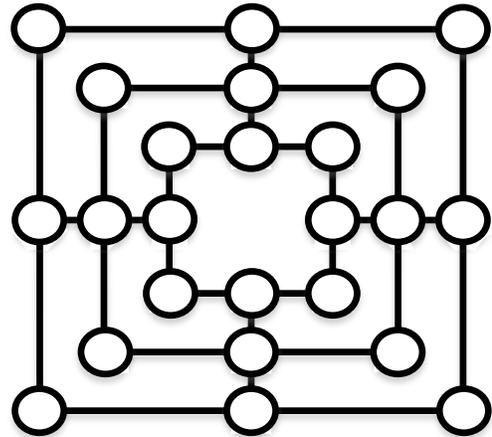
Nine Men's Morris is one of the oldest known board games. It appears on the roofing slabs in Kurna, Egypt and was found inscribed on a flat stone dating back to the Stone and Bronze Ages in a burial site in Wicklow, Ireland. The game board was also found in Scandinavia in the Gokstad ship of the Viking Age.

Why We Love Nine Men's Morris

Nine Men's Morris is a game of pure strategy. It is easy to learn, and a great game for developing strategies.

The Set-up Phase

Choose a player to go first. The two players then take turns placing a game piece of their own color on any open cell. As pieces are placed, if a player successfully places three markers in a row, filling all three points of a line, it is called a *mill* and the player may remove one of the opponent's pieces from the board. A piece that is in a mill cannot be removed unless there are no other free pieces. The Set-up phase ends when all nine game pieces have been placed by each player.



The Play

The second phase of the game is called The Play. In this phase players continue taking turns, but now are moving pieces to adjacent vacant cells along lines. Players continue to remove an opponent's piece each time they form a mill. Blocked pieces cannot be moved. If all of the pieces of one player are blocked on a turn, that player misses a turn. When a player has only three markers remaining, he or she gains an advantage and may jump (fly) to any open cell on the game board for the rest of the game.

Winning

A player wins by getting his opponent down to 2 pieces.

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