# The Game of Go in Four Steps (the 'Clarendon' Rules)

I. Go is a game for two players, played on a board marked with a rectangular grid of lines. The board is initially empty. Pieces are placed on the intersections of lines. The aim of the game is to secure more "territory" than one's opponent. The standard grid consists of 19 vertical and 19 horizontal lines (361 intersections), but other grid sizes can be used if desired - 13x13 and 9x9 are the common variants, 9x9 is good for beginners.

II. There is only one type of playing piece - it is called a "stone". One player uses a set of white stones, the other uses a set of black stones. Players have an unlimited supply of stones available.

ESSENTIAL TERMS:

Intersections are "**adjacent**" if they are directly connected by a line of the grid (no intervening intersections). Similarly stones are "adjacent" when they are directly connected.

The black stones are "adjacent". The white are not.
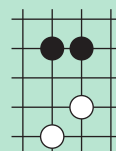
Two vacant intersections are "**connected**" if either:
a. they are adjacent, or;
b. there exists a path between them consisting entirely of pairs of adjacent vacant intersections.

A pair of "connected" vacant intersections.

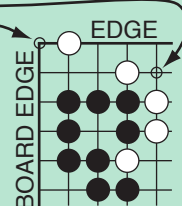All black stones are mutually "connected".

Two stones of the same colour are "**connected**" if either:
a. they are adjacent, or;
b. there exists a path between them consisting entirely of pairs of adjacent stones of the same colour.

Uppermost white stone has 3 "liberties", but the lowest white has just 1.
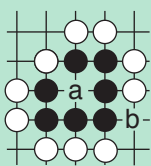
A "**liberty**" of a stone is a vacant intersection adjacent to that stone or to any stone connected to it.

A "**play**" consists of the following steps, in order:
1. Placing a stone on a vacant intersection,
2. Removing any of the opponent's stones that have no liberties after step 1,
3. Removing any of that player's own stones that have no liberties after step 2.

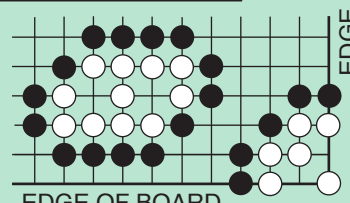The black stones have two liberties. The point 'a' is an "eye". If white played a stone at 'a', it would be removed immediately - a 'suicide'.

Instead white plays first at 'b'. If black then played a stone at 'a', that stone and all the other black stones would be removed immediately - therefore black will play somewhere else. Now white can play at 'a' - all black stones are removed and the white at 'a' survives.
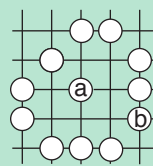
Here black will never be able to remove either of the white structures. They have two "eyes" - so attacking either one is simply 'suicide'.

III. Players take turns to make a move, beginning with the player of the black stones.
A move consists of either:
  Making a play such that the resulting arrangement of stones differs from all previous arrangements, or
  Declining to make a play, by saying "Pass".   (Or admitting defeat by saying "I resign", of course).

IV. The competitive phase of the game finishes when both players pass in succession. The players then determine how much territory they have secured. Territory consists of:
a. one point for each intersection occupied by that player's stones, plus
b. one point for each vacant intersection that is neither a liberty, nor connected to a liberty, of an opponent's stone. The winner is the player with the most points of territory at the end of the game.
(In the figure above-right, white has secured 21 points of territory so far: 17 stones + 4 intersections.)

Additional Rules:
V. For a completely balanced game, it is necessary to counter the advantage of having the first move. A number of points, called "komi", are added to the territory of the player of the white stones. The komi should be agreed by the players before the game, for example by bidding.
VI. Two players of unequal strength may play using a "handicap". The weaker player takes black, and the player of the white stones must pass the first n-1 moves where n is the size of the handicap.

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