



G.A.M.E
GAIN ABILITIES THROUGH
MENTAL EXERCISE

TRAINING FORMAT

2025 June





Co-funded by
the European Union



In a collaborative effort with the consortium, L'ORMA created and led the development of this e-publication.

The coordinator of the project

Egal Access Association

Contributing partners

L'Orma Societa Sportiva Dilettantis Tica a Responsabilita Limitata (L'ORMA), Italy

Compass

PAC Olympiada

Design: Claudia Sasso

This GAME Training Format has been crafted within the framework of the Erasmus+ Sport Project titled Gain Abilities through Mental Exercise

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Project: 101185195 — G.A.M.E."



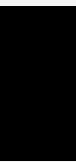
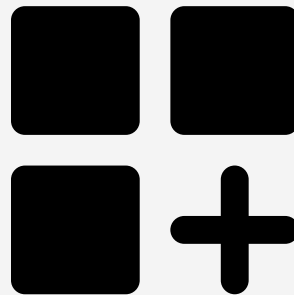


TABLE OF CONTENTS



05

Introduction

06

Ready-to-Use Activities

38

Tips for Trainers

41

Annexes, resources and
rules of the game

INTRODUCTION

This training format was developed as part of the G.A.M.E. – Growth through Active Mental Engagement project, co-funded by the European Union.

Its goal is simple: to help teachers, coaches, and youth workers use mind sports (chess, draughts, and go) as educational tools to support the development of soft skills in young people aged 11 to 19.

Why Mind Sports?

Mind sports are more than just games.

They train patience, focus, strategy, decision-making, and collaboration – all essential life skills for today's youth.

They are also inclusive, fun, and adaptable to many different learning styles and levels.

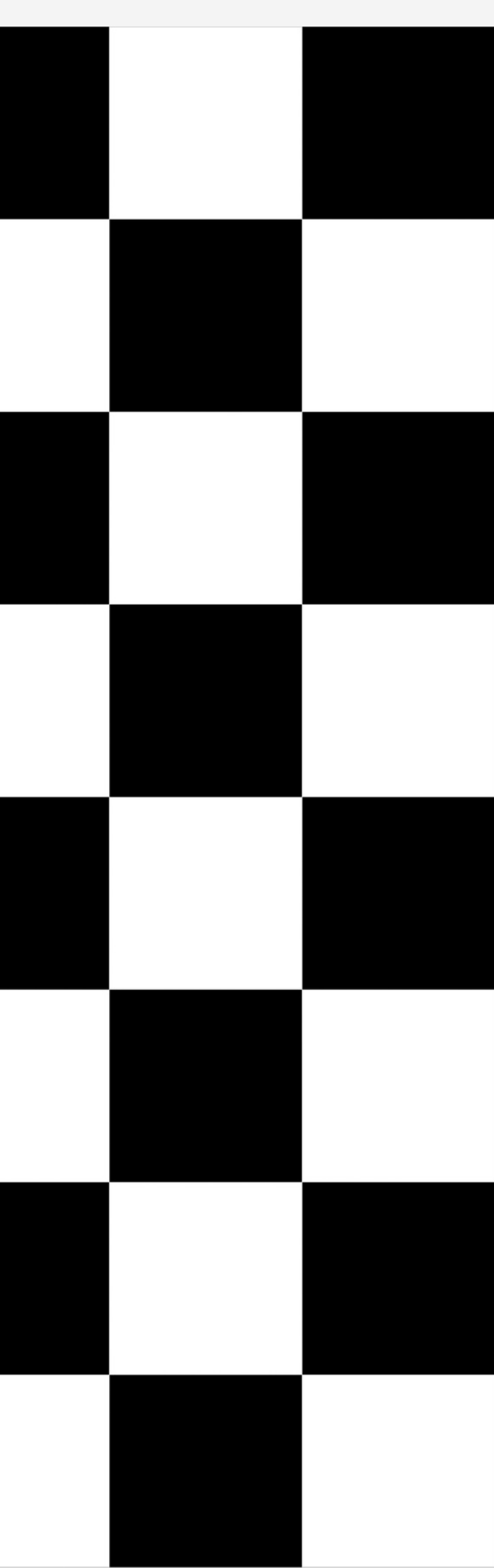
What's in This Format?

This format includes:

- Ready-to-use activities, each focusing on one or more soft skills
- Simple instructions and materials for trainers
- Practical tips for adapting each activity to your group
- A short section with trainer advice
- Templates and printables ready to use

Who is it for?

- This format is for anyone working with young people:
- PE teachers, school staff, youth workers, sport coaches, or volunteers.
- You don't need to be an expert in chess or mind sports – all activities are designed to be accessible, engaging, and easy to apply.



READY TO USE ACTIVITIES

The following four activities have been carefully designed by the project partners to support the development of soft skills in young people through the use of mind sports (chess, draughts, and go).

Each activity focuses on one or more key competences such as patience, collaboration, focus, or emotional regulation.

These activities are meant to be:

- Easy to use, even if you're not a mind sport expert
- Flexible, so they can be adapted to your group size, age range, or setting (classroom, gym, or online)
- Engaging, with clear objectives and practical steps

You can choose to deliver one activity at a time, or combine all four as a complete short programme.

No previous experience with the games is required — all the materials, rules and tips are included either in the activity or in the annex at the end of this format.

CHESS – LIVE THE CHESSBOARD!



Topic

This activity introduces young participants to the fundamental rules and logic of chess through interactive, movement-based games. By physically embodying chess pieces on a life-sized board, students experience the game in an engaging, inclusive, and kinesthetic way that supports memory, collaboration, and strategic thinking

Focus: Learning chess rules through movement

This activity transforms the classroom into a giant chessboard where participants physically embody the chess pieces. The main goal is to introduce and internalize the rules of chess in a playful and memorable way. By moving like pawns, rooks, bishops, and more, youngsters gain a kinesthetic understanding of chess logic while developing memory, concentration, and strategic thinking. The final “Live Chess Dodgeball” mini-game adds a fun, dynamic twist. (Best used for: teaching chess basics in an inclusive and energetic way)

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

Duration: 90 minutes

Target group: Youth aged 11-14

Objective: Introduce the game of chess through an experiential and non-formal approach. Learn the basic movements of the pieces through body movement and develop collaboration, memory, and strategic thinking.

Phase 1: Preparing the Space (15 min)

Actions:

1. Clear the desks from the classroom and move them aside.
2. Tape an 8x8 chessboard grid on the floor.
3. Distribute the chess piece cards, attaching them to the bibs or giving them to the players.
4. Divide participants into two teams: "White" and "Black."

Material needed

- ✓ Adhesive tape to create a giant chessboard on the floor (8x8 squares)
- ✓ White and black bibs (or colored scarves)
- ✓ Sheets with images/names of chess pieces (colored in black or white)
- ✓ Soft foam balls (like dodgeballs)
- ✓ Music and speaker (optional, to animate the activity)
- ✓ Markers and masking tape (for quick adjustments or labeling)

Phase 2: Movement Training (15 min)

How it works:

- The facilitator says: "Now you're all PAWNS!" → Everyone moves 1 square forward only.
- Then: "You're BISHOPS!" → Only move diagonally.
- Then: "KNIGHTS!" → Jump in an L-shape.
- Continue with ROOKS, QUEENS, and the KING.

Objective: Learn the piece movements through physical movement in a fun and memorable way.

Phase 3: Strategic Choreography (15 min)

Activity:

Each player is assigned a fixed chess piece role.

On the clap of the facilitator's hands, everyone moves to a new position based on the rules of their piece and a chosen direction.

Variations:

Add "blocked squares" as obstacles.

Goal: Reach a target square or complete a simple mission (e.g. protect the king).

Phase 4: Team Mini-Game – "Live Chess Dodgeball" (30 min)

Play area: the taped chessboard

Materials: foam balls, bibs, piece cards

Rules:

- Each player moves and throws the ball only according to their piece's rules.
- When hit, players are "out" temporarily or re-enter after a task (e.g. naming a different piece and its movement).

Examples:

- PAWN: throws only while standing still, and forward.
- ROOK: moves and throws only in straight lines.
- KNIGHT: must jump in an L-shape before throwing.

QUEEN: free movement and throws in any direction.

Phase 5: Reflection and Debrief (5–10 min)

Closing circle – Guiding questions:

- Which piece was the hardest to play?
- Did you learn something about chess today?
- What did you enjoy most during the activity?

DRAUGHTS – THE STRATEGY RACE – MOVE SMART, NOT JUST FAST!



Topic

Combining movement and mental strategy to introduce the logic and teamwork behind draughts/checkers.

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

This activity merges physical movement and strategic thinking, helping participants experience the balance between speed and strategy – two essential elements in draughts.

Two teams (Black and White) compete on a large floor checkers board. One player from each team runs through an obstacle course to reach the board.

The first to arrive gets to execute their team's pre-decided move.

This dynamic format encourages teamwork, communication, and anticipation, while reinforcing the basic movement logic of draughts (diagonal moves, taking turns, "capturing" moves).

Phase 1: Setup (5 minutes)

- Mark a large checkers board on the ground (8×8 squares, approx. 3–4 meters wide).
- Create two identical obstacle paths (using cones, hoops, jump ropes, benches, etc.) leading from each team's starting area to opposite sides of the board.
- Divide participants into two teams: Black and White.
- Assign one facilitator as referee, who ensures rules and turns are respected.

Material needed

- ✓ Large floor checkers board (can be made with tape, mats, or printed tiles)
- ✓ Two sets of large checkers pieces (discs, paper plates, or coloured markers)
- ✓ Cones or hoops (to create the running path)
- ✓ Obstacle elements (e.g., jump rope, balance beam, mat to crawl under)
- ✓ Stopwatch or whistle (to start the race)
- ✓ Score sheet and pen (optional, to track rounds or captures)

Phase 2: Strategy Time (3–5 minutes)

- Teams gather to observe the board and plan their next move.
- They must decide together:
 - Which piece to move (and to where).
 - Which player will run the obstacle course.
- Encourage quick discussion and consensus — teamwork is key.

Phase 3: The Race (10–15 minutes)

- At the signal, one player from each team completes their obstacle path.
- The first to reach the board executes the planned move (moves a checker diagonally or captures an opponent).
- The other player must return to their team to prepare for the next round.
- After each turn, teams have 1 minute to decide the next move and player.
- The match continues until one team captures a piece or a set time (e.g., 10–15 min) is reached.

Phase 4: Reflection & Debrief (5–10 minutes)

Gather everyone in a circle and discuss:

- What mattered most — speed or strategy?
- How did planning together help your team?
- How is this similar to playing real draughts?

GO – THE GAME OF CAPTURE

Topic

This activity offers a dynamic and non-formal introduction to the logic of the game of Go, one of the oldest and most strategic board games in the world. Through physical movement on a life-sized grid, participants explore key concepts such as intersections, mobility, territory, and capture by surrounding. The activity transforms abstract game mechanics into concrete, body-based experiences, allowing players to understand Go's principles in a fun and engaging way. It promotes teamwork, spatial awareness, and strategic decision-making, while remaining adaptable to different age groups and levels of experience.

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Target group: Children and young people aged 8-14
(adaptable for older or younger participants)

Objective: Introduce the basic concepts of the game of Go through a dynamic, movement-based team activity. The game explores grid-based logic, strategic positioning, and group coordination, using physical play to simulate the idea of surrounding and capturing territory.

Phase 1: Preparing the Space (15 min)

Setup:

1. Create a square grid on the floor with visible intersecting lines.
2. Assign players to one of the two teams: Black or White.
3. Explain that the intersections are where players can stand, and they may move only along the lines of the grid.

Material needed

- ✓ Masking tape or colored tape to draw a large grid on the ground (e.g., 7x7 or 9x9 intersections)
- ✓ OR: Use an existing court (e.g., basketball or volleyball) with intersecting lines
- ✓ Bibs or colored armbands to divide players into two teams (black and white)
- ✓ Optional: cones or markers to define special zones or boundaries

Phase 2: Rules and Movement (5 min)

- Players can move freely and quickly along the lines, from one intersection to another.
- Multiple players may occupy the same area, but without physical contact unless a capture is happening.
- A player is considered "captured" if they are completely surrounded on all sides (on all adjacent intersections) by 3 or 4 players from the opposing team, who form a closed circle by holding hands.

Objective of the Game

- Each successful capture earns 1 point for the capturing team.
- After a capture, the game resets briefly or continues based on a set time limit.
- The team with the most points at the end of the session wins.

Possible Variations (based on age and group level)

- Beginner level: Captured players sit out for one round.
- Intermediate level: A captured area becomes the team's territory (mark it with cones or tape).
- Advanced level: Add a timer and play several rounds. The team that captures more players or controls more territory wins.

Educational Value and Connection to Go

This activity mirrors the principles of the game of Go in a simplified and physical way:

- Territory control → learning to claim space on the board
- Strategic thinking → deciding when and where to move or defend
- Collaboration → players must communicate and coordinate to surround opponents
- Spatial awareness → players visualize patterns and anticipate opponents' movements
- Emotional control → keeping calm while being surrounded or trying to escape

CHECKERS – CREATE AND PLAY YOUR OWN BOARD



Topic

This activity is centred to understand the basic rules and capturing mechanics in checkers.

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

Pair up students and give each pair materials (cardboard, rulers, markers) to create their own checkers board on paper (8x8 squares) and pieces (made from bottle caps or cardboard circles). While they build, the teacher explains the game's goal and basic rules: diagonal movement, mandatory captures, and crowning. Once ready, they play quick 10-minute games on their handmade boards, writing down interesting moves or mistakes they notice. Finally, each pair presents their personalized board and shares a strategic tip they discovered during play.

Duration: 60 minutes

Target Group: Ages 12-16

Objective: Understand the rules while fostering creativity and ownership by building their own game materials.

Phase 1: Board and Piece Creation (20 min)

- Distribute cardboard, markers, rulers, scissors, and glue.
- Guide students to measure and draw an 8x8 grid on their cardboard or large paper.
- Instruct them to alternate colors (e.g., black and white squares) to mimic a standard checkers board.
- Have them create 24 small round pieces (12 per player) by cutting circles from cardboard or using bottle caps, and color them in two distinct colors.
- Encourage personalization: students can decorate their boards with patterns or their names.

Material needed

- ✓ Cardboard or large sheets of thick paper (A3 size ideal)
- ✓ Rulers and pencils for drawing grid lines
- ✓ Colored markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Glue sticks or tape (optional, if reinforcing boards)
- ✓ Small circular objects for tracing or bottle caps for checkers pieces
- ✓ Example of a finished board to show as a model

Phase 2: Rules Explanation (10 min)

- Gather students around one board and explain:
 - How pieces move diagonally on dark squares only.
 - How captures are made by jumping over opponent pieces.
 - That captures are mandatory.
 - How to “king” a piece when it reaches the last row.
- Use volunteers to demonstrate each rule on a sample board.

Phase 3: Short Games (20 min)

- Have pairs play quick games with only 8 pieces each instead of 12 to speed up matches.
- Circulate to clarify doubts, observe gameplay, and encourage fair play.
- Remind students to write down one move they thought was smart or one mistake they noticed.

Phase 4: Presentation and Reflection (10 min)

- Each pair shows their personalized board to the class.
- Students share their recorded move or mistake, discussing what they learned.
- Wrap up by highlighting common strategies discovered, like controlling the center and protecting pieces.



CHESS- TACTICS TREASURE HUNT: DISCOVER FORKS, PINS & SKEWERS

Topic

This activity focus onn the basic chess tactics — forks, pins, and skewers — through a collaborative treasure hunt game.

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

Prepare a set of printed chess puzzles showing positions with opportunities for forks, pins, or skewers (6-8 puzzles total), each on a separate sheet with space for students to write answers.

2. Tape these puzzle sheets around the classroom like “treasure spots.” Each puzzle has a question like: “Can white fork the black king and rook?”
3. Divide students into small teams (3-4 students per team) and give each team a worksheet to record their answers.
4. Set a timer (20 minutes recommended) and have teams rotate around the room, solving as many tactical puzzles as they can.
5. When time is up, gather students and review the solutions together, demonstrating each tactic on a demo board or projected chessboard.
6. Award points for correct answers to encourage friendly competition.

Duration: 50 minutes

Target Group: Ages 12-16

Objective: Recognize and practice key tactical motifs in chess through movement, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Phase 1: Introduction to Tactics (10 min)

- Explain what forks, pins, and skewers are with simple examples on a demo board.
- Share why these tactics are essential for gaining material and controlling the game.

Phase 2: Treasure Hunt Puzzle Walk (20 min)

- Distribute worksheets and assign starting positions to each team.
- Teams move around the room, solving the puzzles posted at each "treasure spot."
- Encourage discussion within teams to promote collaborative learning.

Material needed

- ✓ Printed puzzles
- ✓ Demo board or projector
- ✓ Answer worksheets
- ✓ Pens/pencils.

Optional twist

Hide "bonus puzzles" with more advanced tactics for faster teams to discover and solve!

Phase 3: Solution Review and Discussion (15 min)

- Go over each puzzle as a class.
- Ask students to explain their reasoning for each solution.
- Demonstrate on the board how the tactic works in the given position.

Phase 4: Reflection and Wrap-up (5 min)

- Invite students to share which tactic they found hardest or most interesting.
- Summarize how recognizing tactics early can change the course of a game.

Phase 3: Short Games (20 min)

- Have pairs play quick games with only 8 pieces each instead of 12 to speed up matches.
- Circulate to clarify doubts, observe gameplay, and encourage fair play.
- Remind students to write down one move they thought was smart or one mistake they noticed.

Phase 4: Presentation and Reflection (10 min)

- Each pair shows their personalized board to the class.
- Students share their recorded move or mistake, discussing what they learned.
- Wrap up by highlighting common strategies discovered, like controlling the center and protecting pieces.



GO-JENGA: STRATEGY AND LIBERTIES IN BALANCE

Topic

Go-Jenga: Strategy and Liberties in Balance

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Each group receives a 9x9 board drawn on cardboard and pieces (white and black stones). Before playing, each group must build a mini “Go Jenga”: they write Go keywords (territory, liberty, capture) on Jenga blocks and pull one before each turn, explaining the concept.

They play fast-paced games, limited to 15 minutes, applying what they learned.

After the game, groups reflect on how each Jenga concept related to their in-game decisions.

Duration: 60 minutes

Target Group: Ages 12-16

Objective: Learn Go fundamentals in a practical, hands-on way by connecting key concepts with tangible gameplay.

Phase 1: Jenga Construction and Concept Review (15 min)

- Provide each group with a mini Jenga set or a DIY version made from wooden blocks or stacked paper cups.
- Instruct students to write key Go terms like: "territory", "liberties", "capture", "eyes", "ladder", "net" — one per block.
- Review each term with the class using simple examples on a sample 9x9 board.

Material needed

- ✓ Pre-drawn 9x9 Go boards on thick paper or cardboard
- ✓ Sets of white and black stones or simple substitutes (buttons, beads, or paper cutouts)
- ✓ Jenga set per group (or DIY with paper cups, cardboard rectangles, or wooden blocks)
- ✓ Markers for writing Go terms on Jenga pieces
- ✓ Printed list of key Go concepts with brief definitions
- ✓ Timer or stopwatch
- ✓ Example of a finished Go Jenga tower to inspire students

Phase 2: Go Matches (30 min)

- Students set up their 9x9 boards and play 1v1 games within their groups.
- Before each turn, a player must pull a Jenga block and explain the term they get; for example, if they pull “liberties,” they must describe what it means and how it affects their next move.
- Teachers circulate to help students connect the terms to their strategies during the match.

Phase 3: Group Reflection (15 min)

- After games, gather groups together to discuss:
 - o Which Go concept was most important during the game?
 - o How did understanding concepts like liberties or territory change their moves?
 - o What strategies did they discover or struggle with?
- Summarize key learning points for the whole class, highlighting mistakes or brilliant plays.

CHESS – HUMAN CHESS MAZE

Topic

Strategic thinking, cooperation, and decision-making in movement-based problem solving

Focus: Teamwork and communication inspired by chess logic

This game uses a chessboard-style grid only as a strategic metaphor. One blindfolded “King” must reach the goal square, guided only by teammates’ instructions (“move like a bishop,” “step forward like a pawn”) while avoiding danger zones. The challenge is not to learn chess, but to practice cooperation, clear communication, trust, and decision-making under limited information.

👉 Best used for: strengthening group coordination and problem-solving skills, regardless of chess knowledge.

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

The game simulates chess logic in a real-world, physical format. A large grid (e.g., 6x6 or 8x8 squares) is created on the floor using cones, tape, rope, or chalk – resembling a simplified chessboard. One participant from each group is blindfolded and designated the “King.” The rest of the group acts as the “Strategy Team,” giving chess-style movement instructions only (e.g., “move like a bishop,” “one square forward like a pawn”) to guide the King safely to the “Checkmate Escape Point.”

- The grid includes “Danger Zones” (e.g., blocked squares marked in red or with small cones) which must be avoided. The group has a limited time (5–7 minutes) to complete the maze. The blindfolded player cannot speak, ask questions, or move unless directed. Roles rotate to ensure every participant has a chance to experience both navigating and instructing.
- Duration: 20–30 minutes
- Target group: Ages 11–19 Younger participants (11–13): simpler grid layout, fewer obstacles. Older participants (14–19): larger grid, more complex navigation patterns and traps
- Objective: To develop teamwork, strategic thinking, and spatial awareness through a physically engaging and mentally stimulating activity inspired by chess movement logic. Participants experience how to break down a complex task into simple steps, coordinate in a group under limited information (blindfold), and apply logic-based navigation.

Phase 1: Setup (5–10 min)

- Create a chessboard-like grid on the ground (indoors or outdoors).
- Mark the start square and target (escape) square.
- Randomly place danger zones using colored cones or paper.

Phase 2: Briefing (5 min)

- Explain chess movements in simple terms.
- Go over safety instructions and rules of verbal-only navigation.
- Split the group into teams (4–6 participants per team).

Phase 3: Gameplay (20 min)

- One team plays at a time while others observe.
- The blindfolded “King” must reach the goal square within 5–7 minutes.
- Teams must only use chess-move commands to direct movement.

Phase 4: Rotation (if time allows)

Rotate roles to ensure each team member is blindfolded once.

Phase 5: Debrief & Reflection (5–10 min)

- Discuss what strategies helped.
- Reflect on the difficulty of clear communication and team coordination.
- Ask: “Was it easier to lead or to follow without sight?”

DRAUGHTS – DRAUGHTS LITE – QUICK CAPTURE

Topic

Simplified draughts for fast-paced strategic thinking, rule learning, and pattern recognition

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

This version of draughts removes unnecessary complexity and condenses gameplay into short, clear, action-based rounds. Players compete in pairs using a standard draughts board. Instead of 12 pieces, each player starts with only 6, placed on the first two rows of dark squares. The aim is to capture as many of the opponent's pieces as possible within 10 moves per player.

There is no kinging, and pieces can only move and capture forward. If no legal move is available, a player passes. Once the 10 moves are completed by both players, the round ends, and players switch partners. The winner of each round is the one who captured the most pieces. Ties are possible and encouraged to keep the tone light.

The simplified structure promotes fast turn-taking, attention to movement patterns, and short bursts of strategic thinking, making it ideal for classrooms, workshops, or open-air training.

- Duration: 30–35 minutes
- Target group: Young people aged 11–19. For ages 11–13: slower gameplay pace, supervised movement decision. For ages 14–19: increased autonomy and optional time-based rounds
- Objective: To offer an accessible, engaging introduction to the core principles of draughts (checkers) through simplified gameplay, allowing young participants to focus on movement strategy and anticipation rather than complex rules like kinging and diagonals.

Phase 1: Setup (5–10 min)

- Prepare enough draughts boards and pieces for all players (1 board per pair).
- Distribute pieces: 6 per player, on the first two rows only.
- Clarify that only forward moves and captures are allowed. No kinging.

Phase 2: Gameplay Round 1 (10 min)

- Each player makes 10 moves. Opponent counts moves to keep track.
- Captures are allowed forward only.
- After 10 turns each, count the number of pieces captured.

Phase 3: Gameplay (20 min)

- Shuffle players so they face new opponents. Repeat the same structure.
- Encourage fair play and quick transitions.

Phase 4: Rotation (if time allows)

- Ask participants what strategies they used.
- Discuss any surprising moves or challenges.
- Optional: announce round winners or top scorers for fun.

GO – GO MINI ZONES

Topic

Territory-building, spatial planning, and group strategy using simplified Go mechanics

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

In this simplified adaptation of Go, participants play in teams of 2–3 using a small 9x9 board (real board or printed grid). Each team uses either black or white stones (or markers), and during each turn, they place 2 stones instead of 1, accelerating gameplay and engagement. The goal is not to capture, but to control the largest connected area on the board by the end of a fixed number of turns.

Teams take turns alternately, with a facilitator managing the flow. After all stones have been placed (e.g., 8 rounds per team, totaling 16 moves), each team counts the number of empty spaces surrounded on all sides by their stones. The team with the most controlled territory wins.

This version focuses on visual planning, collaboration, and simplified spatial logic, making Go accessible to beginners while retaining its strategic spirit.

Duration: 30–35 minutes

Target group: Ages 11–19. Ages 11–13: use pre-drawn board templates and simplified scoring. Ages 14–19: more autonomy in stone placement and optional competitive twist

Objective: To introduce participants to the foundational principles of the game of Go—particularly territory control—through a short, modified version that focuses on collaboration, visual pattern recognition, and decision-making without the complexity of capturing.

Phase 1: Setup (5–10 min)

- Distribute 9x9 Go boards (paper or reusable boards) and two sets of tokens or stones (e.g., black/white coins or bottle caps).
- Review the concept of territory: controlling empty spaces by surrounding them with stones.

Phase 2: Instruction & Rules Briefing (5 min)

- Explain chess movements in simple terms.
- Go over safety instructions and rules of verbal-only navigation.
- Split the group into teams (4–6 participants per team).

Phase 3: Gameplay (15–20 min)

- Teams alternate turns and discuss strategy briefly before each placement.
- The facilitator ensures equal turn count and fair play.
- Keep the atmosphere focused but relaxed.

Phase 4: Territory Count & Feedback (5–10 min)

- Teams count how many empty squares are surrounded by their own stones.
- Quick recap on effective tactics, common mistakes, and lessons learned.

Phase 3: Gameplay (20 min)

- One team plays at a time while others observe.
- The blindfolded “King” must reach the goal square within 5-7 minutes.
- Teams must only use chess-move commands to direct movement.

Phase 4: Rotation (if time allows)

Rotate roles to ensure each team member is blindfolded once.

Phase 5: Debrief & Reflection (5–10 min)

- Discuss what strategies helped.
- Reflect on the difficulty of clear communication and team coordination.
- Ask: “Was it easier to lead or to follow without sight?”



CHES— ONCE UPON A SABOTAGE

Topic

Storytelling, Teamwork

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

1. Objective & Setup: Participants will be divided into two teams. Each team must create a character and choose a destination that their character must reach, starting from home. Since there are two teams, the first team to reach their destination wins.

2. Rules: A team's turn consists of choosing between two actions: Advancing their character toward the destination, or Placing obstacles along the path of the opposing team's character

Each round, teams have two options:

- Make a move: Advance their character along the path toward the destination.
- Place an obstacle: Hinder the progress of the opposing team's character by introducing challenges or setbacks.

3. Strategy Time: After each round, teams have 2 minutes to discuss and agree on their next strategy.

1. Special Abilities (One-time use per game):

-Block: Allows the team to negate the decision made by the opposing team for that round. It can be used to protect their character from an obstacle or other disadvantage.

-Double: Either lets the team's character advance two times in one turn, or allows them to apply an obstacle that affects the other team's character for two consecutive turns.

5. Debrief: Discuss teamwork, strategy, quick thinking, and sportsmanship.

Encourage reflection on what strategies worked best for offense and defense

DURATION: 20–30 minutes

Target Group: 13–25 years

OBJECTIVES: to help young people develop strategic thinking and also to learn to view situations from different perspectives. Throughout the game, they will need to identify the right moments to either advance their own character or to hinder the progress of the other team. This encourages both tactical decision-making and empathy by anticipating the opponent's move.

Phase 1:

Create the team

Phase 2:

Discuss the strategy between
teammates

Phase 3:

Start the game (20-30)

Phase 4:

Between the rounds participants will discuss
one with another about their character's fate
and what strategy they will use



DRAUGHTS- FLAG GRAB

Topic

Strategy, Focus, Awareness

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

1. Setup: Each participant has four small flags attached to their clothing (e.g., on their waist or pockets). Divide participants into teams or play individually depending on group size
2. Start: On the signal (e.g., whistle or "Go!"), players begin moving around the play area. The goal is to grab flags from other players without losing your own.
3. Gameplay: Players can try to steal flags from opponents by pulling them off carefully. At the same time, players must protect their own flags by avoiding opponents. Players are out or eliminated when they lose all four flags (optional rule, depends on your game style).
4. End: The game ends when a set time limit is reached or when only one player/team has flags left. The winner is the player or team with the most flags remaining.
5. Debrief: Discuss strategy, quick thinking. Encourage reflection on what strategies worked best for offense and defense

Duration: 1,5 min/round (minim 3 rounds to decide a winner)

Target Group: 13-25 years

Objectives: The purpose of this activity is to encourage quick thinking, agility, and strategic planning among participants. It helps develop teamwork, communication, and reflexes, while also promoting fair play and healthy competition in a fun and energetic environment.

Phase 1:

Create the flags with participants

Phase 2:

-The participants choose the area where to place the flags, then the game starts.

Phase 3:

The game begins

Phase 4:

The participants will compete in pairs until the final is held between the last two remaining in the game



GO- QUICK LINK-UP

Topic

Word Associations

EXPLANATION ACTIVITY (STEP BY STEP)

1. Preparation: Write down two random words on the board or paper. The words should be easy but not necessarily related.
2. Challenge Round: Players have 30 seconds to 1 minute to write down 3-5 words that connect the two given words. The connections can be anything that makes sense or sparks creativity.
3. Scoring: After the round ends, players present their connections. Each valid connection gets 1 point. Points are awarded for logical, creative, and clear connections.
4. Winning: After a set number of rounds (3-5 rounds), the player with the most points wins the game.
5. Debrief: After the game, briefly discuss how participants felt about thinking quickly and making connections under time pressure. Highlight how the game encourages creativity, fast thinking, and teamwork
6. Duration: 30 minutes
7. Target Group: 13-25 years
8. Objectives: To stimulate quick thinking and creativity by finding connections between two seemingly unrelated words in a short amount of time.
9. Phases:

Phase 1:

Prepare Words – Write 2 random words.

Phase 2:

Connect – Find 3–5 connections.

Phase 3:

Score – 1 point per valid connection.

Phase 4:

Repeat – Do 3–5 rounds.

Phase 5:

Win – Most points wins

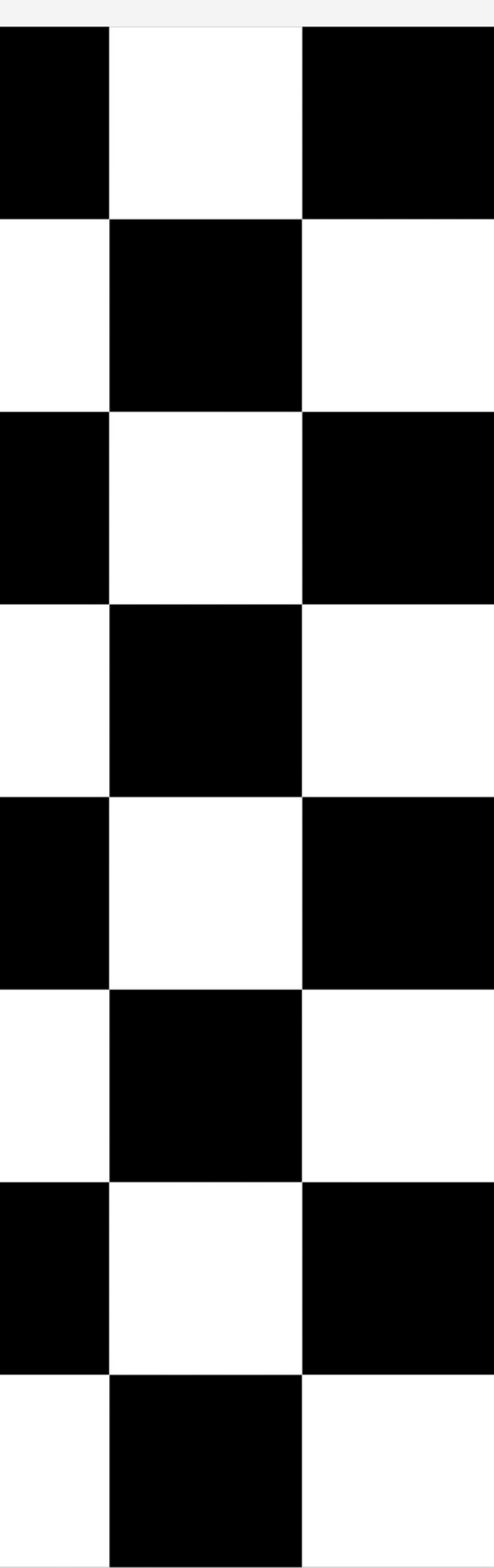


TIPS FOR TRAINERS

This section is for the teachers, coaches and youth workers who will use the four activities in real sessions with young people.

It contains practical, field-tested advice to help make each activity successful – whether in a classroom, a gym, or a youth centre.

The tips are based on real experiences and can help even if this is your first time using mind sports.



READY TO USE ACTIVITIES

The following four activities have been carefully designed by the project partners to support the development of soft skills in young people through the use of mind sports (chess, draughts, and go).

Each activity focuses on one or more key competences such as patience, collaboration, focus, or emotional regulation.

These activities are meant to be:

- Easy to use, even if you're not a mind sport expert
- Flexible, so they can be adapted to your group size, age range, or setting (classroom, gym, or online)
- Engaging, with clear objectives and practical steps

You can choose to deliver one activity at a time, or combine all four as a complete short programme.

No previous experience with the games is required — all the materials, rules and tips are included either in the activity or in the annex at the end of this format.

1. Adapt the activity to your group

No group is the same. Each has different energy, age, attention span, or skill levels.

Here's how you can easily adapt any activity:

- Shorten or extend the game time
- Assign group roles: timekeeper, referee, observer
- Use draughts instead of chess for beginners
- Explain rules with visuals or demonstrations

2. Observe soft skills during play

You're not just watching the game — you're also observing behaviour.

Here are some things to notice:

- Taking turns = self-control
- Helping teammates = empathy & collaboration
- Focused attention = concentration

Use the observation grid (in the annex) to take simple notes.

Keep it informal — smiley faces or short comments are enough.

3. End with reflection

At the end of each session, take 5–10 minutes to reflect together.

It helps youth become aware of what they've learned.

Suggestions:

- Ask 1 simple question to the group
- Let them answer in a circle, on sticky notes, or with thumbs up/down
- Encourage peer-to-peer feedback

Example questions:

- What did you enjoy today?
- What was difficult?
- What did you learn about yourself?

4. Keep it meaningful

Sometimes the activity won't go as planned — and that's okay.

Focus on the experience, not the result.

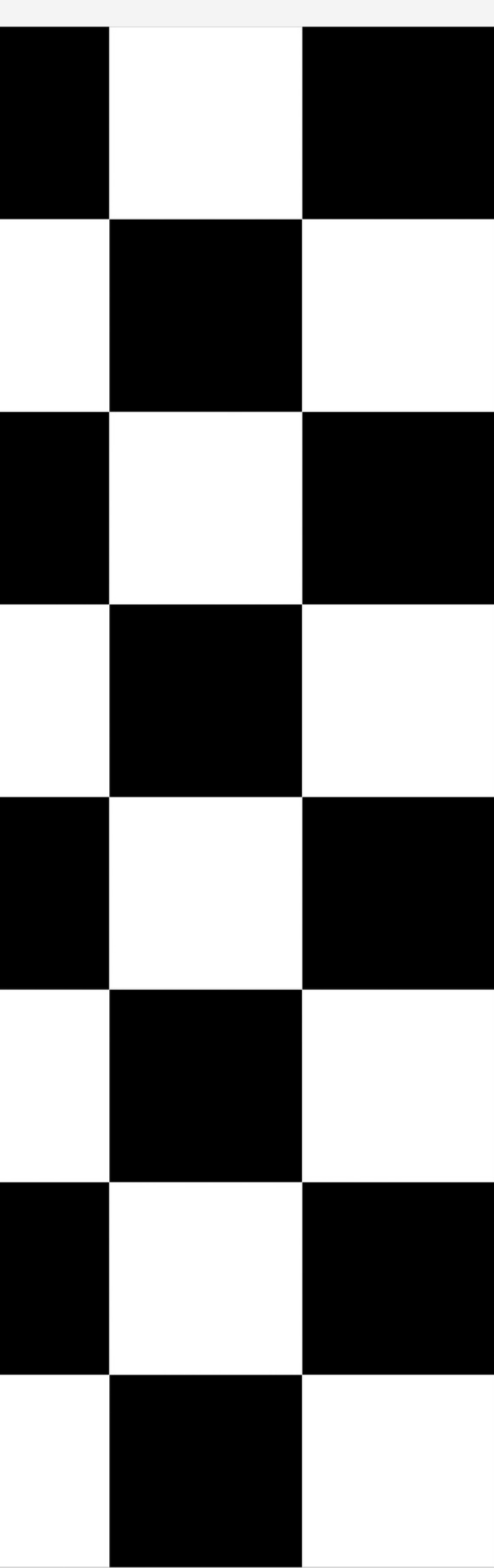
Every game is a chance to build trust, confidence, and curiosity.

A simple move in chess can become a big learning moment in life.



You're not just teaching strategy. You're helping young people grow.





ANNEXES, RESOURCES AND RULES OF THE GAMES

This annex gathers everything you need to start playing or teaching the games: simple rule summaries for chess, draughts, and go, plus ready-to-use templates and video links. Whether you're new to these games or want a quick refresher, you'll find tools to understand them fast and teach them confidently.

RULES

RULES

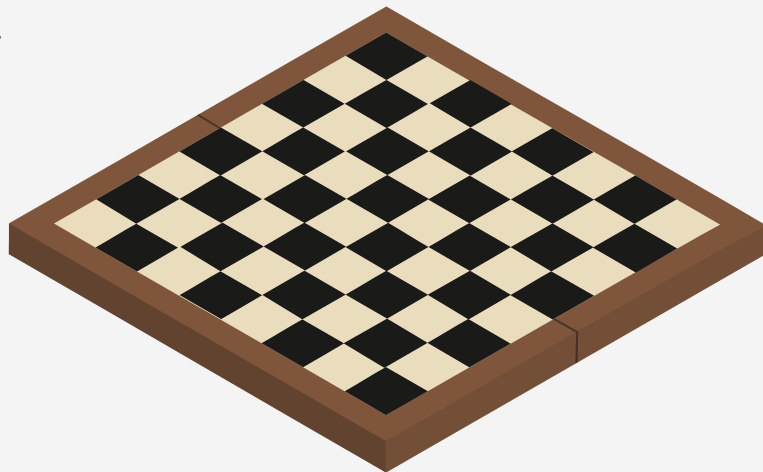
CHESS

The board

Chess is played on an 8×8 board with alternating light and dark squares. Each player starts with 16 pieces:

- 1 King
- 1 Queen
- 2 Rooks (castle-shaped)
- 2 Bishops
- 2 Knights (horse-shaped)
- 8 Pawns

The goal of the game is to checkmate the opponent's king — meaning their king is under attack and cannot escape.



Scan the Qr Code to watch the video!



How the pieces move:

How the pieces move:

- Pawns: move forward 1 square (or 2 from the starting position), capture diagonally
- Rooks: move any number of squares horizontally or vertically
- Bishops: move diagonally any number of squares
- Knights: move in an "L" shape (2 squares in one direction, then 1 perpendicular); can jump over other pieces
- Queen: combines rook and bishop — moves any direction any number of squares
- King: moves one square in any direction; must not move into check (a threat)



Special rules:

- Castling: swap the king and rook if neither has moved, and no threat is in between
- En passant: a special pawn capture after a two-step pawn move
- Promotion: if a pawn reaches the other side, it can become a queen or another piece

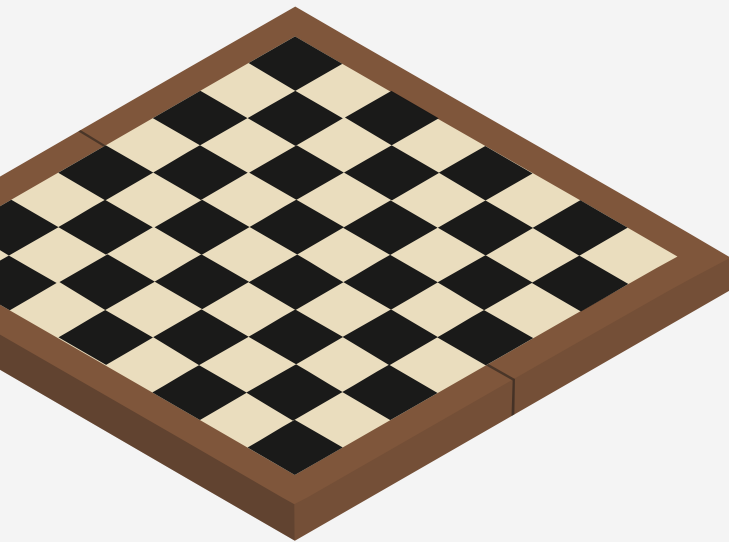


Winning the game:

- You win by checkmating your opponent's king
- The game is a draw if there's a stalemate (no legal moves but not in check), or repeated position

DRAUGHTS – CHECKERS

Scan the Qr Code to watch the video!



The board

Played on an 8×8 board using only the dark squares. Each player starts with 12 pieces placed on the three rows closest to them.

Basic rules

- Pieces move diagonally forward one square
- If there's an opponent's piece in front of you, and the square behind it is empty, you must jump and capture it
- If another capture is possible after your move, you must keep jumping (multiple captures in one turn are allowed)

You *win* by capturing all of the opponent's pieces or leaving them with no legal moves

Becoming a king

- If a piece reaches the last row on the opponent's side, it becomes a King
- Kings are marked (stacked or flipped) and can move and capture both forward and backward

Common strategies:

- Control the center of the board
- Avoid exposing too many pieces
- Force your opponent into jump traps



GO - (Simplified for beginners)

Scan the Qr Code to watch the video!



The board

Go is played on a grid, typically 19x19, but beginners can use 9x9 or 13x13.

Players take turns placing stones on the intersections of the lines.

- Black plays first
- Once a stone is placed, it does not move

Capturing Stones

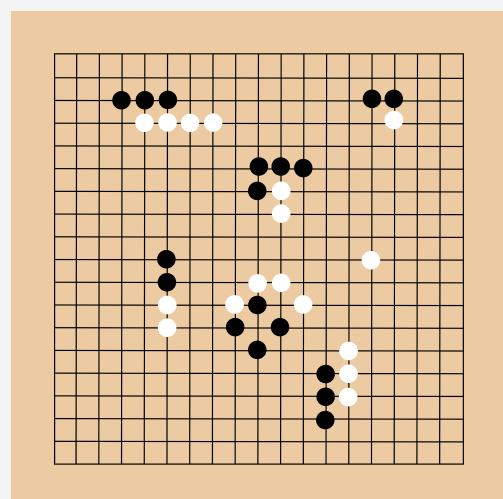
- A stone or group of stones is captured when all its adjacent points ("liberties") are occupied by the opponent
- Captured stones are removed from the board

Goals of the game:

- The aim is to control more territory (empty space surrounded by your stones) than your opponent
- The game ends when both players pass their turn consecutively
- Points = number of controlled empty spaces + captured enemy stones

Important concepts:

- Eyes: internal empty points inside a group; essential for keeping groups alive
- Ko: a rule to prevent repeating the same move endlessly
- Life and death: groups must have at least two "eyes" to survive



Go requires strategic planning, patience, and the ability to accept loss and adapt – it's often used for character education.



G.A.M.E
GAIN ABILITIES THROUGH
MENTAL EXERCISE

This GAME Training Format has been crafted within the framework of the Erasmus+ Sport Project titled Gain Abilities through Mental Exercise

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Project: 101185195 — G.A.M.E."



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

