

Bell, R. C. *Discovering Old Board Games*, p. 37. Aylesbury: Shire Publications Ltd., 1973.

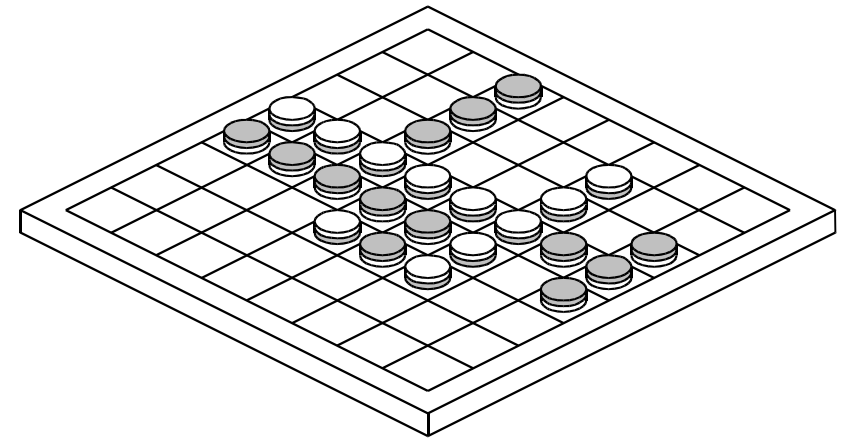
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Pritchard, D. *Brain Games: The World's Best Games for Two*, pp. 145-150. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982.

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# REVERSI

by Damian Walker



## INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The game of *reversi* was patented in 1888, though it strongly resembles an earlier game of 1870, *Annexation*, on which it was probably based. This product of the Victorian board game boom remained popular until World War I, after which it was largely forgotten.

In 1968 the game was reinvented in Japan, as *Othello*. Since then it has gained immense popularity, at first in Japan. More recently it has been a popular subject for programmers of computers and mobile phones, spreading its popularity across the world.

## HOW TO PLAY

The original game of reversi differs slightly from the later Othello. The latter is still commercially available, so it is the rules of reversi that are given here.

### Setting up the Game

1. Reversi is played on a board split into 8 rows of 8 squares. A chess board may be used, but a non-chekered board is preferable, as

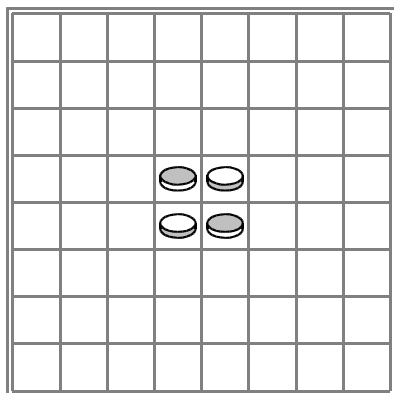


Illustration 1: the two possible starting positions in reversi.

the chequered pattern can be distracting.

2. There are 64 pieces, each of which is coloured white on one side and black on the other, allowing a piece to change colour during play.

3. Two players take part, one being referred to as white and the other as black. The white player takes the first turn.

### Placing Pieces

4. In the initial phase of the game, the four central squares must be filled. White places a piece in one of them, white face upwards. Black places a piece in another of them, black face upwards.

5. White and black then place two further pieces in the remaining central squares in the same manner.

Two possible patterns are possible, shown in Illustration 1. Play then passes to the main phase, white taking the first turn.

6. In his turn a player places a single piece, with his own colour face upwards.

7. A piece must be placed so that it and a comrade enclose a line of one or more pieces of the opponent. A line of enclosed pieces may run horizontally, vertically or diagonally, as shown in Illustration 2.

8. The enclosed pieces are then captured, by turning them over to

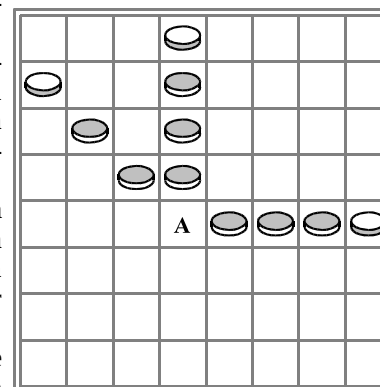


Illustration 2: a white piece placed at A would capture the black pieces and turn them white.

show the player's own colour.

9. It is possible to enclose two or more lines of enemy pieces simultaneously; all of the enclosed pieces are turned over.

10. If a player cannot legally place a piece, he misses his turn.

### Ending the Game

11. The game is over when neither player can place a piece. Typically this happens when:

(i) the board is full; or

(ii) the pieces are all of one colour, so neither player can enclose his opponent.

12. The winner is the player who has the most pieces showing his colour at the end of the game.

Draws are possible, but unlikely.

### Variations

It is possible to play reversi on a 6×6 board with 36 pieces, or a 10×10 board with 100.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Readers wanting to know more about reversi would gain benefit from the following books.