

# How to play MANCALA



Mancala is the name for a family of games involving rows of holes in which counters (usually pebbles or shells) are moved around a grid of holes. This grid can be a carved board or small holes dug in the ground. There are many versions of the game with different names, slightly different rules, size of board and number of pebbles. This is a simple one to start with, you may know others. The more you play the better you will get at counting the pebbles and the holes so that you can work out the best place to start your move.

## Equipment:

Wooden board with 12 holes or houses (some of the boards have an extra dish at each end to keep the captured counters in),

48 pebbles, shells or other counters.

## Instructions:

To start each player chooses one half of the board – so you have a row of 6 holes in front of you. Some boards also have 2 carved dishes on each side of the board these are to put your captured counters only (see below)

Distribute the 48 counters so that each hole has 4 counters in it.

The first player picks up all the stones from one of the cups any cup (on their half of the board) and sows them one by one in the adjacent cups in a counter clockwise direction (moving to the right)

When all the counters have been sown there are two options. If you put your last counter into a hole where there are already counters you scoop out all those counters (including your last one) and continue around the board. You keep going for as many rounds as it takes until you reach an empty hole. If you put your last counter into a cup which is empty then your go is over and the other player takes a turn.

Every time you come to hole and your counter makes a total of 4 you take all 4 counters and put them in the carved dish at the end (if your board has them) or just keep them to one side (these are your captured counters, and are now out of the game the player with the most at the end wins). Continue your turn if you still have counters to sow. If your last counter sown makes a total of 4, take all 4 counters and put with your captured counters. Your go is now over and the next person takes a turn – remember, to start your go you can choose to start from any hole on your side of the board.

Eventually there will not be enough counters left to continue the game. The winner is the person who has captured the most counters at this point.

**Make it yourself tip: use an egg box and some dried beans or loose change to make a simple version of Mancala.**