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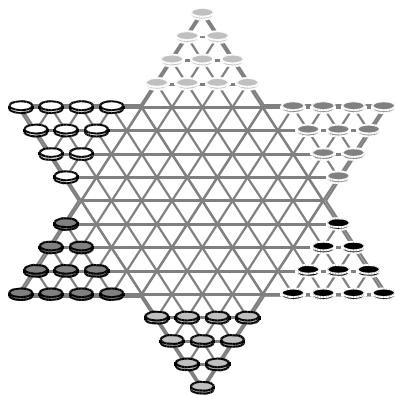
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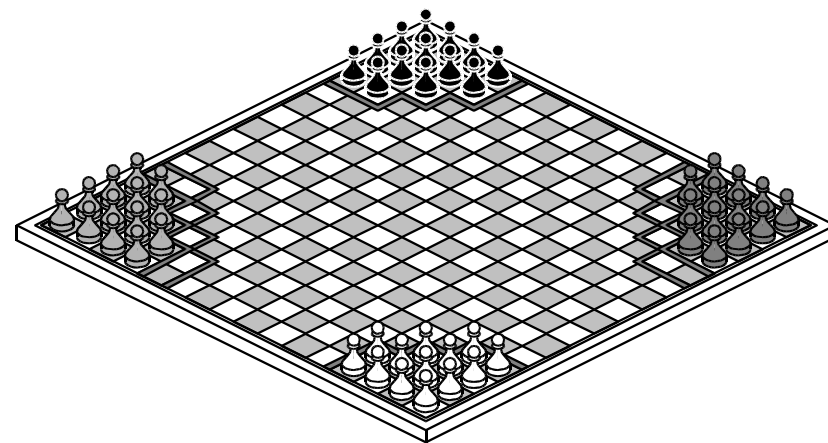
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# HALMA, GRASSHOPPER & CHINESE CHECKERS

by Damian Walker



*Illustration 3: Chinese checkers, set out for six players. When four play, the unused starting points should lie opposite one another. When three play, the players' starting points should be evenly spaced around the board. Two players should start opposite one another.*



## INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The game of *halma*, whose name means "jump" in Greek, is an entertaining product of the Victorian era. An 18th century gaming board marked out like a halma board suggests it may have earlier origins, but it was not until the 1880s that it was published and came to the attention of the wider world. In 1948 a variant called *grasshopper* was published, allowing play with a standard draughts set.

In 1892 another variant was published in Germany, called *Stern-Halma*. This had a star-shaped board, rather than the square board of halma, but the rules were largely unchanged. In the United States this game became *Chinese checkers*. As the game is neither a variant of checkers nor is it Chinese, this is a fine example of the irony of marketing!

## HOW TO PLAY

The interests of clarity are best served by describing the game of halma first, and afterwards discussing the differences between it and the other variants. Thus the following rules apply to Halma until otherwise stated.

### Setting up Halma

1. Halma is played on a square board with sixteen rows of sixteen squares. The corners are marked out to aid placement of the pieces, as shown in Illustration 1.

2. Two play-

ers can take part, with 19 pieces each, starting in the larger marked areas in opposite corners of the board.

3. Alternatively, four players each have 13 pieces in the smaller marked areas in each corner of the board.

### Moving the Pieces

4. Players decide, at random or by agreement, who takes the first turn. Play then moves clockwise around the board.

5. A player

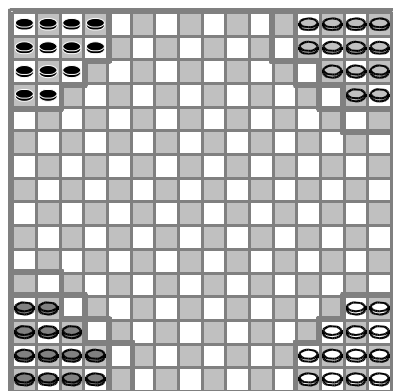


Illustration 1: halma, with pieces set out for four players. The bottom left and top right corners have markings for more pieces for the two-player game.

takes his turn by moving one of his pieces in one of the following ways:

(i). a piece may be moved to an adjacent square, horizontally, vertically or diagonally;

(ii). a piece may jump over a single adjacent piece of any colour, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, into the empty square beyond. Further jumps may optionally be made by this piece in the same turn, to whatever number the player pleases, while the piece is in a position to do so.

6. Jumping over an opponent's piece does not capture it. All pieces stay on the board throughout the game.

### Ending the Game

7. The game is over when a player has moved all of his pieces into his opponent's marked starting positions, at the opposite corner of the board. He is then declared the winner.

## FURTHER

If readers are in-  
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can consult the  
for further in-  
Botermans, J.

## Playing Grasshopper

Grasshopper is played by two players in exactly the same way as halma. The main difference is that grasshopper uses a standard 8x8 draughts board, with ten pieces per player in opposite corners, as shown in Illustration 2. For continental draughts boards of 10x10 squares, 15 pieces per player can be similarly arranged.

## Playing Chinese Checkers

Chinese checkers is largely the same game, but the board is shaped like a 6-pointed star, and the playing spaces are points distributed in a triangular grid pattern, rather than the squares of a grid as in halma. Pieces for two, three, four or six players are set up around the points of the star, as shown in Illustration

3. A consequence of using this type of board is that pieces have only six directions of movement, as opposed to eight in halma.

## INFORMATION

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these games, they  
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et al. *The World*

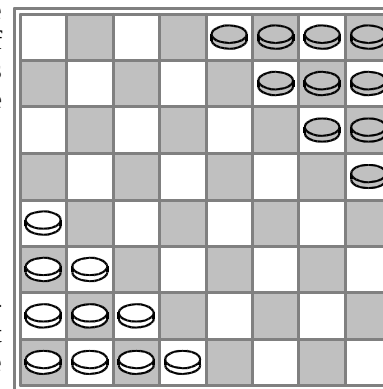


Illustration 2: grasshopper, with pieces set out for play.