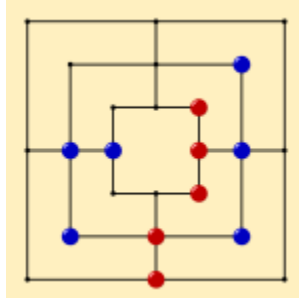


TARGET (MILL OR CHARIOT)



- Target (also known as mill or chariot) is a two-player board game from the category of strategy games.
- The game board has three concentric squares drawn and connected in the middle of the sides, as in the adjacent figure.
- The corners of the rectangles and the midpoints of the sides are marked with dots showing the 24 positions in which the 18 pieces can be placed, nine by each player.

OBJECTIVES: players develop their thinking, orientation in space, logical thinking, have fun

HISTORY OF THE MILL GAME:

- The game has a long tradition both in Europe and abroad. Two drawings of the game board, in the form of graffiti, were found in the Ramesseum temple in Kurna, Egypt, dating from about 1440 BC. and Egypt is believed to be the country of origin of the target.
- Recent excavations in the Church Hole Cave in the Creswell Crags, Nottinghamshire, England, have revealed a stone with a target board design carved into it. The discoveries made in the caves in this gorge show that the area has been inhabited since the last ice age, but the target stone has not yet been dated.
- The game has also been played since ancient times in many other parts of the world, including South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, China, Greece (Acropolis, Athens), Phoenicia, Israel, Germany, the Istrian Peninsula, Ireland and northern Europe. From the 13th century, its traces are preserved in the Iberian peninsula, so that in the 14th century it

spread throughout Europe, there are signs that it was often played at the royal courts of various European countries. In the centuries that followed, target was probably the most popular board game, only being replaced by the game of chess at the beginning of the 19th century.

- In Romania there is a long tradition of this game. Beans and corn are often used as parts.

THE RULES OF THE MILL GAME:

At the start of the game the board is empty. The game takes place in two stages:

- In the first stage, the players place one of their own pieces on the points of the game board. This stage ends when all 18 pieces are placed on the board.
- In the second stage, the players take turns moving one of their pieces.
- The player who starts the game is decided either by consensus, for example by rolling a die, or by playing with the lighter colored pieces.
- The goal of each player is to eliminate the opponent's pieces one by one. The player who either ends up with only two pieces or cannot move any of his pieces loses.
- **THE RULES OF THE GAME, APPLIED IN BOTH STAGES, ARE:**
 - Only one piece can be placed in a point.
 - Moving a piece is done only along one of the lines drawn on the game board and only to an adjacent point. When a player ends up with three pieces, the move can be made anywhere on the board, not just along the lines.
 - When a player makes a row of three of his own pieces along one of the lines of the board — a configuration called a "die" — he must choose one of his opponent's pieces and remove it from the game board. The piece chosen for removal must not be part of a mill; in some variants of the game this rule is ignored when all of the opponent's pieces are included in the dies.

- In the first stage, of placing pieces on the game board, it is possible for a player to close two mills simultaneously. In this case, some variants allow the removal of two pieces of the opponent, and others allow the removal of only one piece.
- Sometimes the game deadlocks in the sense that the same playsets are repeated without removing any pieces. In such cases the result can be declared a draw if during a set number of moves (15, 50 etc.) no piece has been removed or if the same configuration of pieces is repeated for the third time.

GAME STRATEGY:

- In the early stages of the game, experienced players do not build mills or prevent their opponent from building mills, focusing more on occupying strategic positions such as the four intersections on the middle square. Positions in the corners of squares offer too little mobility and are avoided.
- The configuration in which a player can make a mill on each move by moving a single piece back and forth is called a "mill", "walking mill" or "double mill". In the diagram in the first figure the player with the red pieces has such a configuration. Usually, the first player to build a morgue will win the game; in the given example the player with the red pieces wins even if he follows the blue on the move.

CURIOSITIES OF THE MILL GAME:

- The Swiss mathematician Ralph Gasser estimated that, in the main version of the game, the total number of valid configurations of the pieces amounts to 1010, and that the total number of distinct games is about 1050.
- He also proved that a game in which both players play perfectly always ends in a draw; Gasser also made a computer program called Bushy, considered the best target player.