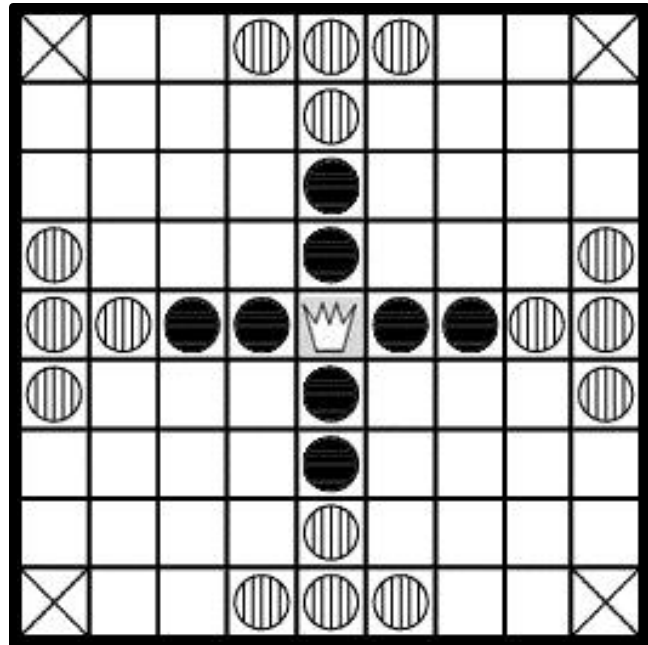


VIKING CHESS: THE GAME OF HNEFATAFL

Hnefatafl (pronounced "Nhev-eh-tah-full") means "King's Board" and is sometimes called "Tafl" for short or "Viking Chess." Hnefatafl is an Old Norse game that has been found in many Viking and Norse archeological sites. It consisted of a board and game pieces made of glass, bone, clay, or wood. It is older than chess, and like chess it is a game of strategy. Hnefatafl was an intellectual pursuit for the Norse, and warriors often boasted of their abilities at the game. The Old Norse played a lot of board and card games in the winter. Can you guess why?

SET-UP: Hnefatafl simulates a Viking raid. The 16 attackers are situated along the four sides of the board, each side representing a ship. The king and the 8 defenders are located in the middle of the board. The board is 9 x 9 spaces.

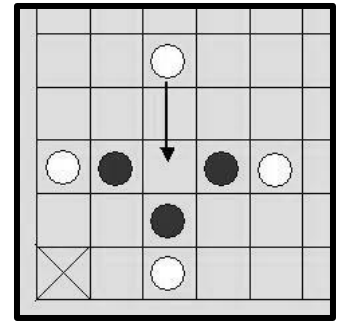
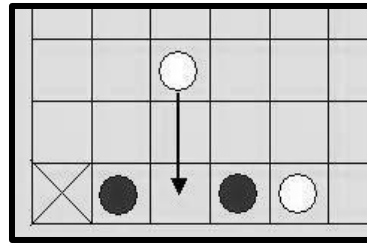
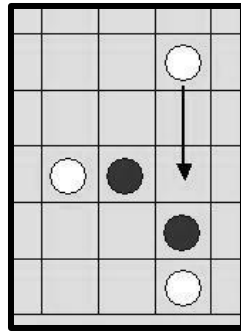
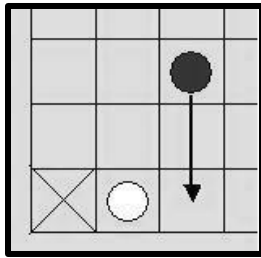
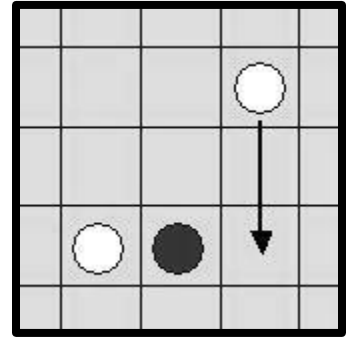
DIAGRAM: On the set-up diagram attacking warriors are represented by the striped circles while the defenders are black circles. The king (in the middle) is represented by the crown piece. There are twice as many attackers as defenders. (The Vikings probably found this very true to life!) There are four corner "X" spaces (called refuges). The fifth "X" spaces (called the throne) is the space that the king currently occupies in the diagram. Only the king can move onto "X" spaces.



OBJECT OF THE GAME: The defenders' goal is to help the king escape to safety. That means moving the king piece to one of the four corner "X" squares without him being captured. The attackers' goal is to capture the king piece by trapping the king so he can't move.

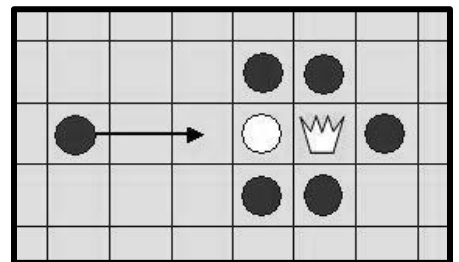
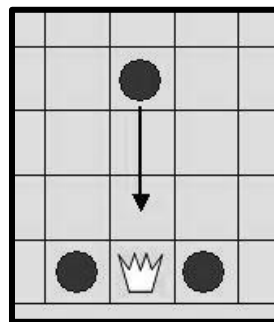
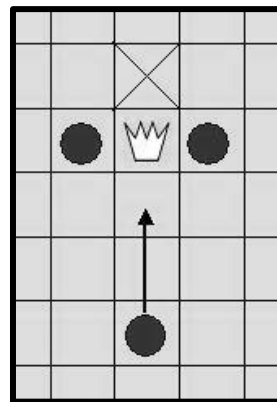
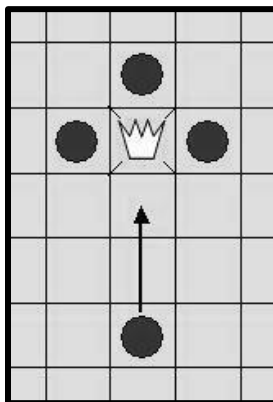
MOVEMENT: All pieces move only along a row (left-right) or a column (up-down) like the rook in chess, meaning an indefinite number of free squares can be crossed in one direction. It is not permitted to move in diagonal direction or to jump across one's own or any opposing pieces. Pieces may pass through the king's throne (central "X" space), but only the king can rest on it. Each move has to end on a free square. The first move is always carried out by the attackers. You are forced to carry out a move in each round.

CAPTURING PIECES: To capture an opponent's piece, you must surround it on two sides with your own pieces, either horizontally or vertically (not diagonally). (See diagram to the right.) Then the captured piece can be removed from the board. (The king *can* be used to capture opponent's pieces.) The "X" spaces count toward a capture for either side. Illustrations below show: 1.) a capture against an "X" space 2.) a double capture (horizontally and vertically) 3.) a double capture against an "X" space 4.) a triple capture. **Note:** If a piece voluntarily moves between two opposing pieces, this does not mean a capture. The opposing pieces must actively surround the piece to capture it.

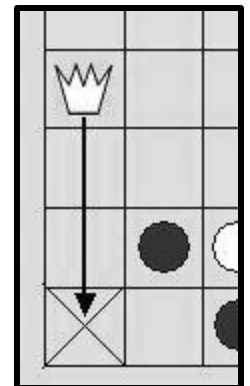


WINNING THE GAME

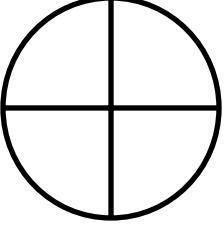
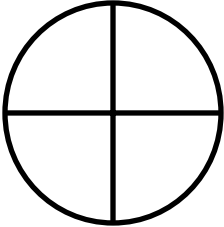
CAPTURING THE KING—ATTACKERS WIN: The king piece must be trapped on all sides by attacking pieces. There are some variations of this as you can see in the diagrams below. The king can be trapped on one side by an "X" space or against the edge of the playing board. The king can also be captured with another piece, as there is no other way for the king to move.



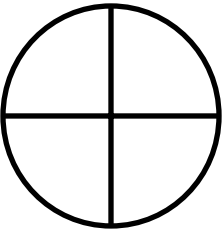
KING'S FLIGHT—DEFENDERS WIN: If the king piece makes it safely to one of the four corner "X" refuges, the defenders win the game. When a player's king has a clear path to a refuge, he or she must announce, "Flight" (similar to "check" in chess). If two paths are available, "Double Flight" (checkmate).



Top Left

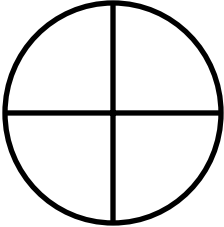
				
				

Bottom Left

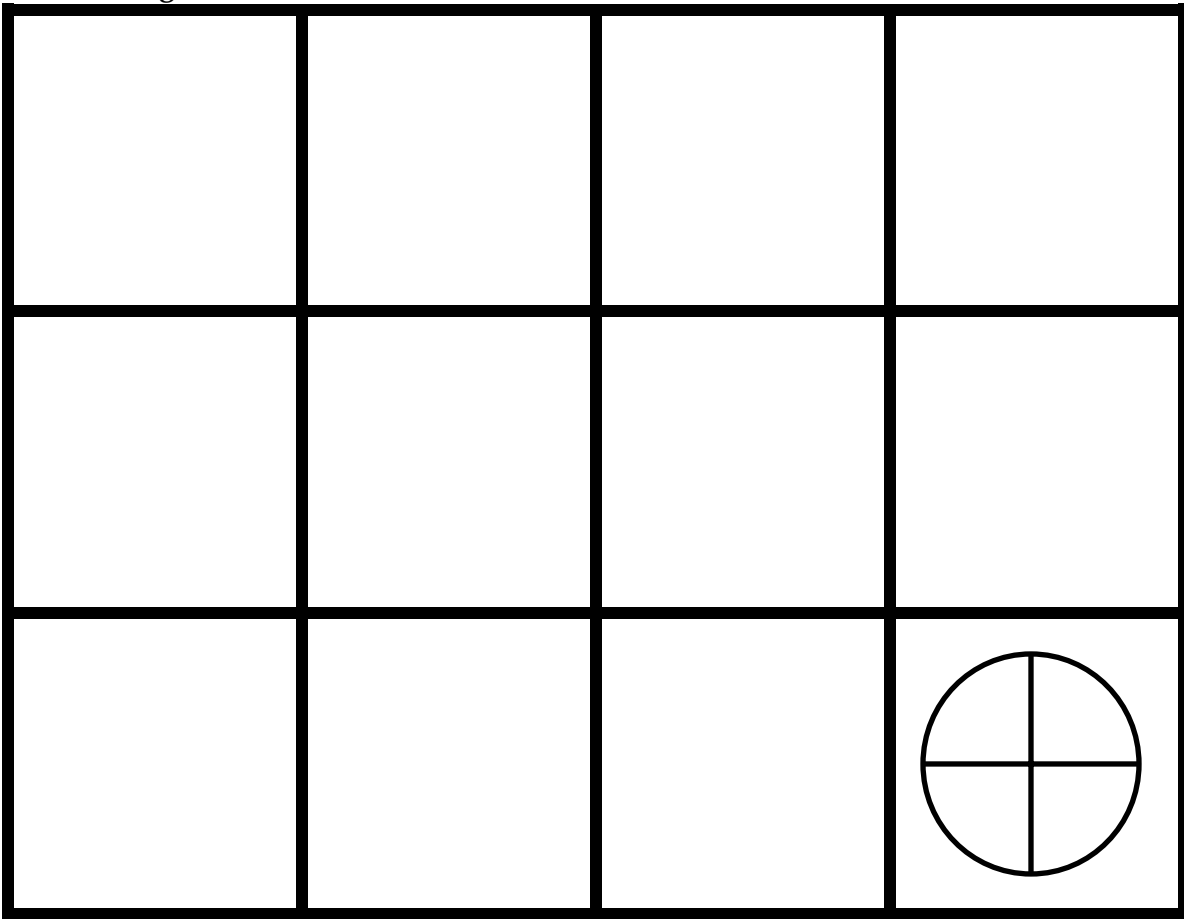
				

HNEFATAFL

Top Right

Bottom Right



VIKING CHESS