

# How To Play Qo

## Introduction

Qo is a creative strategy game played on a game board with an 8x8 grid where players remove the lodestones of their opponent to keep the game in balance.

## Objective

Keep the game in balance by removing blocked lodestones until the game ends.

## How the Game Ends

The game ends when either opponent runs out of lodestones or when either opponent has formed a complete horizontal or vertical line with their lodestones.

## Setup

- Each player selects a color to play and places all lodestones of their color to their side in a container. The total number of lodestones per player is 89.

## The 3 Rules of Qo

After deciding who goes first, players take alternating turns. A player can perform only one of the following 2 actions on their turn:

### Place a Lodestone

- Place a lodestone of their color in any available intersection on the board, being careful not to form any complete horizontal or vertical line of their lodestones from one end of the board to the other.

### Pay to Move Any Lodestone

- Pay opponent 2 lodestones from their container to move any 1 lodestone on the board (of either color) exactly 1 space in any direction, as long as that space is available and there is a clear path of movement. To move more than one available space, multiply the number of spaces moved by 2 lodestones. (e.g., if a lodestone is being moved 3 spaces, pay 6.)

Additionally, players must remove any lodestones that are blocked by opponent lodestones OR the edge of the board. Removing lodestones does not count as an action for a turn. Once lodestones are removed they are placed to the side.

- When **3 black** (adjacent) lodestones are blocked, their opponent removes them
- When **4 white** (adjacent) lodestones are blocked, their opponent removes them
- If there are multiple blocked sets of lodestones found (i.e., intersecting blocked lodestones) they can all be removed at once.

## Determining the Winner

There are 2 conditions in which a player can win the game

- The other player has formed a complete horizontal or vertical line of their lodestones from one end of the board to the other; or
- A player has run out of lodestones, whereby each player adds together their number of unused lodestones with their number of lodestones on the board.
  - The winner is the player with the highest score unless the difference between their score and their opponent is 8 or more. In that case, they did not successfully keep the board in balance and the other player wins.