

HENS & chicks



Open beta version 1.1, February 15 2024

Welcome! This is an open beta version of *Hens and Chicks*, a companion game for *Fist*. *Fist* is the game described in Alysa Wishingrad's upper middle-grade novel, [The Verdigris Pawn](#) (HarperCollins, 2021). *Hens and Chicks* doesn't appear in the novel, but it's meant to be a simpler game from the same universe, using some of the same mechanics.

You can make your own *Hens and Chicks* set using chess pawns and checkers.

Summary: If *Fist* is The Land's analogue of chess, then *Hens and Chicks* would be their version of checkers. Each side begins with the same set of pieces: six hens and ten chicks. The goal is to move any one of your pieces to the opposite side of the board, or to capture all of your opponent's hens.

Board and Pieces: The board is an 8x8 checkerboard. Each player has sixteen pieces: six hens (pawns), and ten chicks (checkers). Opening setup is below:



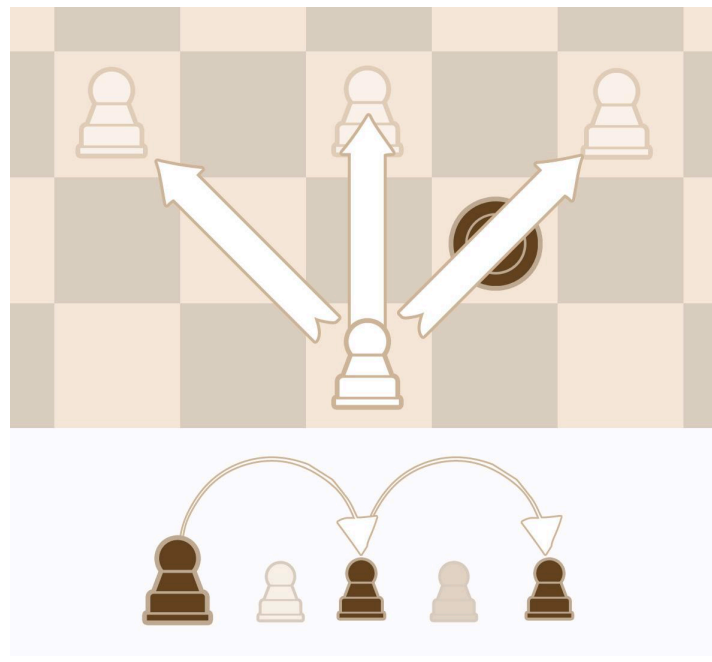
Hens and Chicks, Opening Setup

Note that terms like “forward” and “up” mean “towards your opponent’s side of the board.”

Gameplay: Players take turns moving pieces and sometimes capturing enemy pieces. If this is your first game, choose randomly who goes first. In subsequent games, alternate who goes first.

Objective: Your goal is to move one piece across the board, into your opponent's first row. You can also win by capturing all of your opponent's hens.

Rules: On each turn, you will move one piece. Sometimes, you will capture your opponent's pieces, removing them from play. The rules for movement and capture are as follows:



Hens: These pieces can move one or two spaces forward, either straight ahead or diagonally, always into empty space, OR they may jump over pieces (allies or enemies) in those same directions.

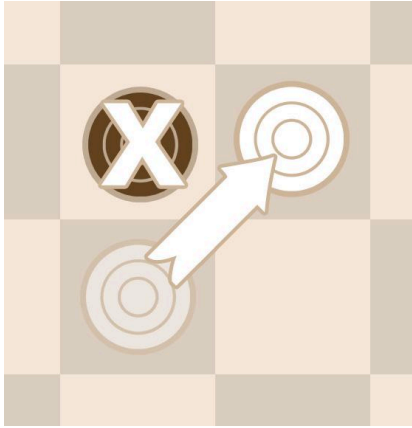
Hens may jump once or twice, and they may change directions with each jump, though always moving forward. However, they cannot move and jump on the same turn, or change directions in a move.

The diagram above shows the directions that a hen can move or jump.

- Moving directly or diagonally forward, 1 or 2 spaces; or
- Jumping along these same directions, but only when there is a piece to jump over, and an empty space to land.

Capturing with a Jump: Enemy pieces are *captured* (removed from play) when a hen jumps over them. Allies are not.

Chicks: These pieces move only *diagonally forward*, but can go any distance. They cannot jump, and they always move through empty space. Chicks capture enemy pieces by “pinning.” which works as follows:



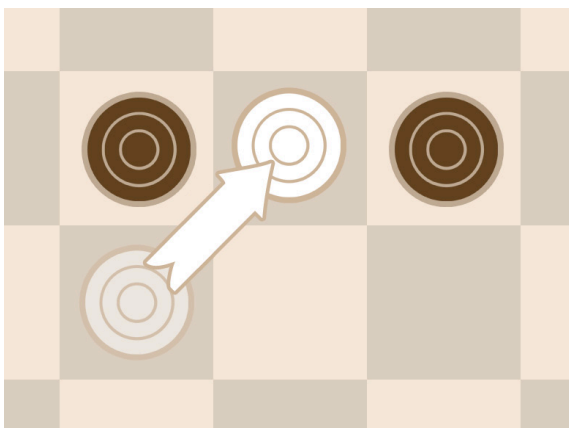
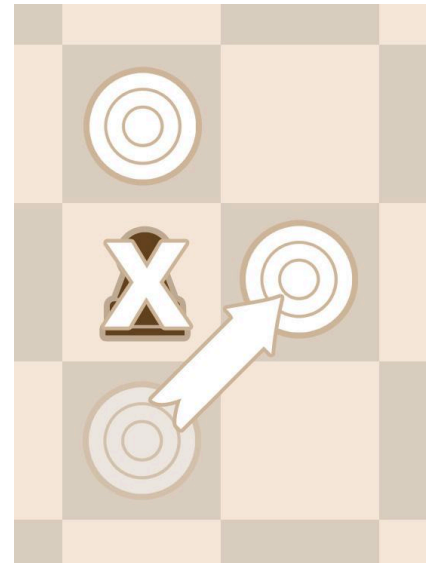
Pinning: To pin an enemy piece, a chick must move at least one space, and then stop next to its target, in the same row. The two pieces are horizontally adjacent, as shown at left.

Example of a Pin: The chick in the diagram at left has moved next to an enemy chick, on the same row, and therefore captures it with a pin. The target of a pin must always be on the same row and touching the attacking piece.

Help from Allies: If the target is another *chick*, as shown above, the attacker succeeds without help. However, if the target is a hen, then the attacker must have another piece *already touching the target*. This includes allies touching it from above and below, as well as from the sides.

Without help from an ally, a chick cannot capture a hen.

In the diagram at right, the attacking chick gets help from the allied chick, which is touching the same target from above. (Note that spaces only “touch” if they share an edge. Spaces do not touch on the diagonal.)



Divided Attention: If a chick stops *between two enemy pieces*, as shown here, its attention is divided, and it cannot capture either of them, no matter the size of each piece, or how many allies are helping.

In this example, a chick has stopped between two enemy chicks. No matter what allies might be helping, because the attacker’s attention is divided, it cannot capture either of them.

Winning: The object is to move one of your pieces across the board (into your opponent's first row). You can also win by capturing all of your opponent's hens.

Strategy: It is common to see a lot of capturing in the first few moves, as pieces rapidly jump and trap each other. Use this time to build a strong position for your endgame.

Look for openings in your opponent's line, and try to get your pieces into position to win. It takes only one piece to win, and it can usually move into position fairly quickly.

Design: *Hens and Chicks* was designed by James Ernest as a companion for *Fist*, the asymmetric chess-like game described in Alysia Wishingrad's *The Verdigris Pawn*.

Playtesters included Aaron Dalton, Nora Miller, Greg Whitehead, Jeff Wilcox, and many others.

This game is still in development, and we'd love to hear your feedback. Look for our playtest feedback form at [Crab Fragment Labs](#).