

The Marble Game (Mancala)

Age 5 and up: I don't like putting ages on games. A child at age 3 could enjoy this game with adult supervision. A 7 year old may begin to understand how to use strategy while playing.

Object: 2 players compete against each other to collect as many marbles in their large hole (closest to them) as they can before one of the players clears his side of all its marbles. This is a game of strategy and the more they play they will come to understand this.

Setting up the game: Place the marble board in a horizontal line between the 2 players. Place 3 marbles in each of the hole. The 6 holes to the right of them is their side. Choose a player to go first.

Playing the game: The first player picks up all the marbles from one of his holes. The player then starts with the first hole to the right and starts dropping one marble in each hole. If he reaches the end of his side, he is to drop one marble in his large hole, then continue around to the other side of the board. He does not drop a marble in his opponent's large hole.

If the player places his LAST marble in his own large hole, he gets to take another turn. Example: If you start the game, a good play may be to choose the hole that is located 3rd from the right. You would pick up 3 marbles, dropping one in each hole and ending in your large hole. This gives you an extra turn.

If the player drops his last marble on his side of the board in an empty hole, he captures all the marbles in his opponent's hole directly across from that hole. All the captured marbles, plus the capturing marble itself, get put in the capturing player's large hole. Players are not allowed to touch marbles in order to count them. If you touch your marbles, you are to play that hole.

Winning the game: The game ends when one player runs out of marbles on his side of the board. When the game ends, the other player gets to take all his marbles from his side of the board and place them in his own large hole. Strategy sets in by determining whether it is wiser to go out, or play longer, depending on how many marbles are in the opposing player's large hole.