

Checkers - The Rules

One-page printable rules of standard American checkers (English draughts).

Setup

8x8 board, 32 dark squares in play. Each player gets 12 pieces on the dark squares of the three rows nearest them. Two centre rows start empty. Dark pieces move first.

Moving

Regular pieces move one square diagonally forward onto an empty dark square. No straight, sideways, or backward moves for regular pieces.

Capturing

Jump diagonally over an adjacent opponent's piece into the empty square beyond, then remove it. Captures are MANDATORY - if you can jump, you must. After a jump, if the same piece can jump again, it must continue (a multi-jump). You can never jump your own pieces.

Kings

A piece reaching the opponent's back row is crowned a king (a stacked, double-height piece). A king moves and jumps diagonally BOTH forward and backward, one square at a time, and must also capture when able.

Winning

Capture all your opponent's pieces, or leave them with no legal move. There is no stalemate - a player with no legal move loses. Evenly matched players can draw.

Tip: the forced-capture rule cuts both ways. Before every move - especially a capture - check what your opponent can force in reply. A free-looking piece is often bait for a two-for-one shot.