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Glass Bead Challenge is a unique game of strategy for one or two players. Use your mouse to click on a topic below or use the "book" icon above to flip between pages.

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Welcome!

Glass Bead Challenge is a game for one or two players. The game is played on a square board with beads of two different colors. Each player takes a turn by placing a bead on an available spot to gain territory on the board.

What makes *Glass Bead* unique is the fact that **no pieces are captured**. The game is played to *own* more of the board than your opponent by placing pieces near areas owned by your opponent.

There are only a few terms used in the game you might want to remember:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Bead | A piece owned by a player |
| Spot | Where you put a bead to make a move |
| Owned Spot | A spot that is owned by an adjacent piece |
| Adjacent | Refers to a spot next to another spot |

From the Author

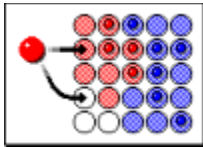
"The inspiration for *Glass Bead* came from the real world. The two opponents represent world powers attempting to influence and control more of the world by making advances on territory without causing a war. In fact, I have already started a sequel to *Glass Bead* played on a world map between one or more players. Stay tuned and enjoy *Glass Bead* until that game materializes. Hope you enjoy this original game as much as I do!"

- David Balmer, Jr. / Author of *Glass Bead Challenge*

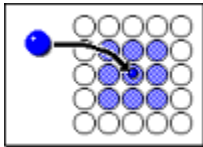


Glass Bead is easy to play and provides endless variations based on a few simple rules:

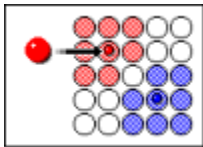
1. Each player takes a turn to place one bead on the board.
2. A player may put a bead only on a spot that is *not* owned by an opponent. Spots already owned by the player or spots that have no owner are legal moves.



3. When a player places a bead, all adjacent un-owned spots (including the spot under the bead) become owned by the player.



4. Spots that are adjacent to beads from both players are owned by the player with the most beads touching. If a spot is adjacent to the same number of red and blue bead the spot becomes un-owned.



(Note that a spot under a bead will never change owners)

5. The game ends when all spots are owned. The player who *owns* the most spots wins the game.



Start a New Game

Easy! Click the **New Game** button on the board *or* select **New** from the **Game** menu.

You can type in the **names** of the two players. The last players will automatically appear for you. You can also pick a name from the list of all the players who have played on your system by clicking the "down-arrow" button next to the name. Either or both players may be controlled by the **computer**. Simply select whether a player is a human or a novice, advanced or expert computer by clicking the corresponding option below the player name.

You can select a **board size** from the list of available board sizes under the player boxes. Choose from 5x5, 7x7, 8x8, 9x9 or 10x10. The larger the board size, the longer and more interesting the game. If you want to give your opponent an advantage or a handicap, choose an option from the "**Handicap**" list. You can give a player up to a 2 free moves at the beginning of the game.

When everything is set up for the new game, click the **OK** button and go!


Preview Moves

This feature is good for a novice player because it shows how the board will look if you were to place a bead on a given spot. Just move your cursor to a spot and click the **right** mouse button and hold it down. As long as you hold the button down the board will show you what will happen if you were to place a bead on that spot. Simply release the button to remove the preview.

Make a Move

Your turn will be indicated by your name and color flashing to the right of the board. Just move your mouse cursor over an available spot and click the left mouse button. **The mouse cursor will change to indicate a legal move:**

 Illegal move

 Legal move - you may place a bead here

Skip your Turn

Click the **Move** menu and select the **Pass** menu item. Your opponent will then be able to move.

Take a Move Back

Click the **Move** menu and select the **Retract** menu item. The last turn will be eliminated and you will be able to make a different move.

Enjoy the Fireworks

When the game is over, the winner is honored with a fireworks display and a victory march!

Resign

Live to play another day by clicking the **Move** menu and selecting the **Resign** item. No parade, no fireworks. Just an empty, hollow victory for your opponent.



Sound & Music

You can turn off the digitized sound and music by clicking on these menu items in the **Options** menu.

Custom Background

You can set a "wallpaper" for the game window by selecting a bitmap file. The bitmap file you select will be stamped over the background to give the game your own distinctive touch. The files can be 16-color bitmaps only in the BMP or RLE format. Included with the game you will find a few samples. Another good place to find more bitmaps is in your WINDOWS directory. To select a file, just click the **Tiled Background** item in the **Options** menu. To switch back to the red-to-blue "fade" background, click the **Blended Background** item in the **Options** menu.

Custom Pieces

You can select a different set of images for the board and pieces by selecting a new piece file. Click the **Custom Piece Set** item in the **Options** menu and select a file. Glass Bead will remember your selection every time you run the program. To switch back to the standard 16-color set, click the **Normal Pieces** item in the **Options** menu.



Glass Bead is so new that we're still looking for master-level players! What we found while playing the game is that new strategies and approaches can be found almost daily! Here are some general tips that will help you stay competitive.

Early Game

If you move first, you have the advantage. Keep it by making big-turf moves in the early game.

If you move second, make every attempt to spoil your opponent's early moves while gaining as much turf as you can.

Middle Game

If you're ahead in points, look to finish the game as quickly as possible by filling in all empty spots.

If you're behind in the game, make moves that diminish your opponent's position by placing beads on your own color where they touch your opponent's turf. Open up as many "holes" in the board as possible until you gain the point advantage. Never ever give up!

End Game

Look for ways to optimize your position by making "holes" in your opponent's position. A good exchange is one that opens up more holes than your opponent can reclaim in a single move.



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- David M. Balmer, Jr. / Author of *Glass Bead Challenge*



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