

City Blocks

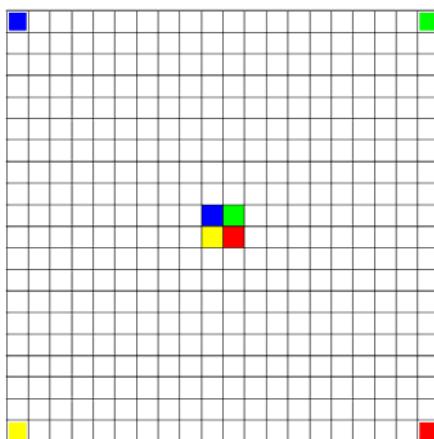
A game for 2 or 4 people by Jeremy Ritchie.

Aim of the Game

City Blocks is an abstract game of placing “pentomino” pieces onto a 20 by 20 square board for 2 or 4 players. Each player takes turns either placing a single piece onto the board or passing. When all players pass in the same round the game ends, scores are calculated and the winner announced. Points are scored for the largest single area that each player has covered and for each edge bordering an empty square on the board.

Creating the Game

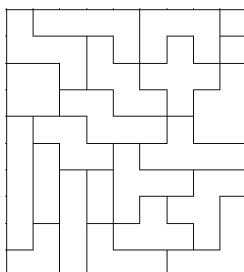
To create the game you need a board made up of a grid of 20 by 20 squares of a size suitable to your table/fingers/printer/craft knife. The squares should be at least 1cm on a side, but can be as big as you like.



City Blocks Game Board

There is a graphic file (*City Blocks Board.gif*) that contains a sample board, which can be printed onto suitable paper/card. Simply ensure that the board squares are marginally larger than the squares used to create the pieces so that the pieces fit comfortably on the board. (The background colour should be white, or off-white, to allow for the primary coloured squares to stand out.)

In addition to the game board you will need four sets of pieces in blue, green, yellow and red. The best way to create these is to print out the “*City Blocks Pieces Template.gif*” onto 4 different coloured cardstock sheets – primary coloured if possible. Then cut out the pieces following the black lines. As each piece can be played either side up, it is important to ensure that both sides of each piece are the same colour – hence the use of coloured cardstock. When the pieces have been cut out, the two “single square” pieces will not be needed if using a printed board. This will leave you with 20 playing pieces in each colour, made up of 2 or more adjacent squares.



Alternatively, if you have a copy of the game Blokus, the board and pieces are exactly what you need to play the game City Blocks.

In addition, poker chips, coins or blank counters are useful when scoring at the end of the game to keep track of the number of “edge” points that each player scores.

Setting Up the Game for 4 Players

Place the board in the middle of the table and give each player a set of 20 playing pieces, all the same colour. Ensure that there is a single square of each colour in the centre of the board. If using a Blokus set, give each player a set of Blokus pieces and have them place each single square Blokus piece in the middle of the board so that they form a small 2 by 2 square in the centre of the board. (See the standard board graphic to see how this should look.)

Playing the Game With 4 Players

Choose a start player at random – or choose the youngest player.

On their turn each player may either play a piece onto the board or pass. After playing or passing, it is then the turn of the next player clockwise.

The game ends once all players have passed.

Playing a Piece

On a player’s turn they may place any one of their pieces onto the board in any orientation that they choose, subject to the following:

No two pieces may overlap each other in any way

Each piece must fully lie inside the 20 by 20 grid – no projections outside the grid

The edges of each piece must align with the grid – no placing pieces at odd angles.

Pieces need not touch other pieces and a player need not play their piece adjacent to or touching any of their existing pieces.

If this is the first piece played by a player, it must be placed so that it covers the corner square in their colour – see the board. It may not be placed so that it surrounds the square but leaves it uncovered. After that, pieces can be played anywhere on the board.

Passing

Instead of playing a piece, a player may instead pass. When they pass, play moves to the next player. However, when play returns to the player who passed, they may now play a piece if they wish to.

If a player is unable to play a piece onto the board, then they must Pass.

Scoring and Winning

Eventually all players will Pass – either because they are unable or unwilling to play a piece or because there are no more pieces left to play onto the board. At that point the game ends.

Points are scored as follows:

Each player identifies the largest continuous area of board that their pieces cover and counts the number of squares covered – earning 1 point for each square of the board covered. For a

square to count, it must be covered by a coloured playing piece, it must also touch another square that is covered by a piece of the same colour along a side – not diagonally. For the purposes of scoring, the single square in the middle of the board may count towards a player's area.

Once the largest areas are scored, each player then scores 1 point for every edge of every piece that is not touching any other piece or the outside edge of the board – the single squares in the centre of the board may count if they have a “free” edge. (This is a simple, if sometimes long, counting exercise and the use of poker chips, coins or plastic counters makes the process easier.)

The winner is the player with the greatest number of points.

In the case of equal points, it is a draw.

Playing the Game With 2 Players

Playing City Blocks with 2 Players is the same as playing with 4, except that each player plays 2 colours; one player is blue & red, the other is green & yellow. (If you are using the Blokus parts, you can choose your colours, as long as Player 1 starts in the bottom left and top right corners.)

Players alternate between their colours, placing a piece or passing as they see fit. So a possible play sequence is blue, green, red, yellow, blue, green, red, yellow, ...

Players may not choose the same colour for two consecutive turns.

Play ends when both players pass twice – once for each colour.

Scoring is the same and the highest total wins.

Playing the Game With 3 Players

City Blocks is not really designed for 3 players. However, it can be played with 3 players if each player, during their turn, places either one of their own pieces or one of the 4th colour pieces.

Thus in a game of 3 players using the colours red, green and yellow, the red player could play a red piece or a blue piece, the green player could play a green or a blue piece and so on.

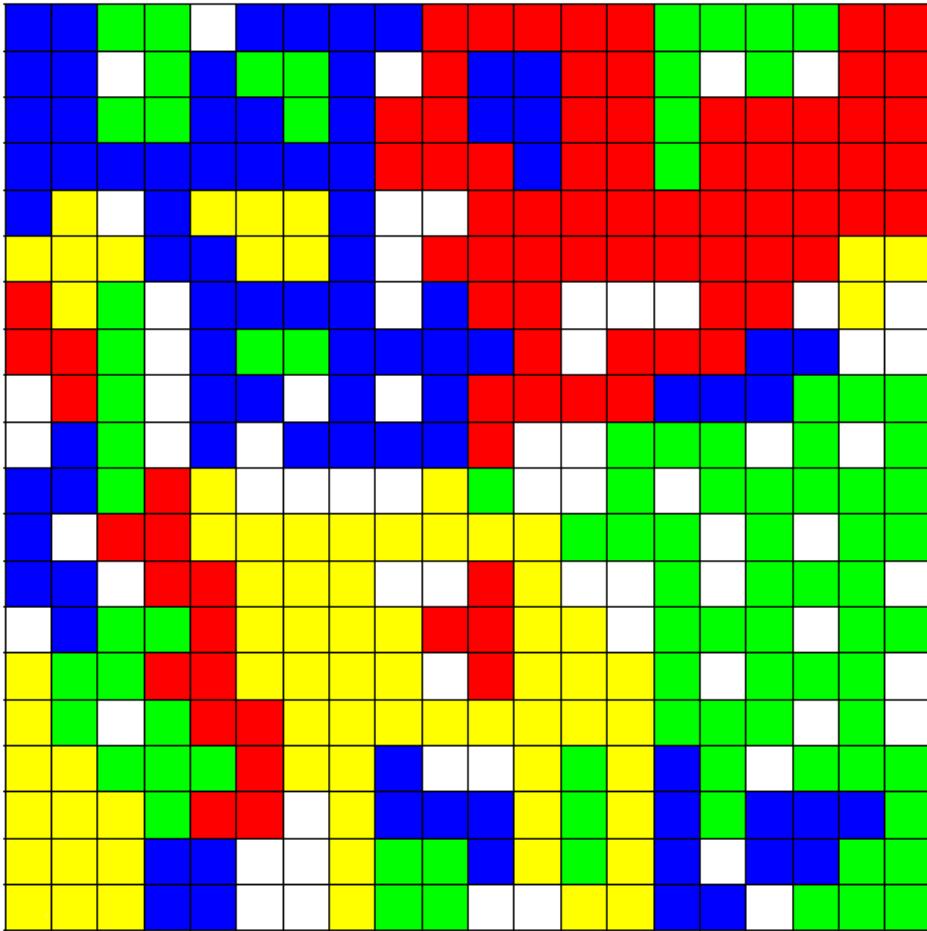
The game ends when all players have passed and the scoring is the same.

Printing Out the Rules

If you wish to print out these rules you probably want to remove the image of the board and the pieces template. This will then give a more concise set of rules. Also, if you are using a paper size other than A4, you will probably have to adjust the layout to fit correctly. Please feel free to do so. You may remove the images in the file, but not change or remove any of the text.

Example of End Game Scoring

Below is an example of how the board looks at the end of a game of City Blocks.



The Red Player has created 4 separate areas covering 63, 13, 4 and 4 squares.

The Blue Player has created 8 separate areas covering 48, 7, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5 and 4 squares.

The Yellow Player has created 5 separate areas covering 48, 13, 5, 5 and 3 squares.

The Green Player has created 11 separate areas covering 48, 8, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2 and 1 squares.

So, each player scored the following for their largest areas: Red 63, Blue 48, Yellow 48 and Green 48.

Several pieces were not played by each player as those pieces could not be fitted into the remaining spaces at the end of the game.

The scoring for free internal edges is: Red 37, Blue 53, Yellow 33, Green 75.

The total scores are then:

Red	63 + 37	=	100	
Blue	48 + 53	=	101	
Yellow	48 + 33	=	81	
Green	48 + 75	=	123	– the winner