

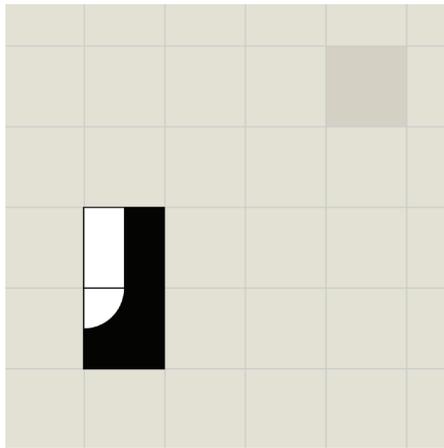
Surround territory to win. Sounds easy, right? Not so fast. In Kenté each play you make helps out one of your opponents as well as yourself. Who is your ally at any given moment, and who is your enemy? Victory goes to the player who best answers that question. Ready to give it a try? Great, let's get started.

1. Getting Started

Kenté is a three-player game. Place the board between the three players (for a longer game, use the 12X12 side of the board). Next, arrange the pieces to one side of the board where all players can easily reach them. It is helpful to organize the pieces into piles with the same color patterns so the players can easily find the pieces they want to play. Decide who will play black, white, and green. Black plays first, then white, then green.

Black, playing first, chooses a piece that contains the color black and places it on one of the darker colored squares on the board. These squares are called Free Squares. In general, play proceeds by playing off of pieces already on the board. The Free Squares are an exception to this. They may be played on even when there is no piece adjacent to them.

Next it is White's turn. White can play on one of the Free Squares. Alternatively, if Black has played a piece that contains the color white, White may play off that piece, matching the white color of the piece being played with the white of the piece already on the board. This situation is illustrated here.



It is now Green's turn. In this example, as no pieces with green on them have yet been played, Green must play on a Free Square or pass. Usually, there is no reason for a player to pass until the end of the game when no more territory can be gained or there are no legal moves available.

Note that each piece played must match the colors of pieces in adjoining squares. This will mean that some squares will become unplayable. Using these squares will be helpful in preventing your opponents from surrounding territory.

Here is an example from a different game after a few plays have taken place. As you can see, there is no piece that can legally play in the square d03.

This will make it difficult for Black (or anyone else) to surround territory in that area.

2. Surrounding Territory

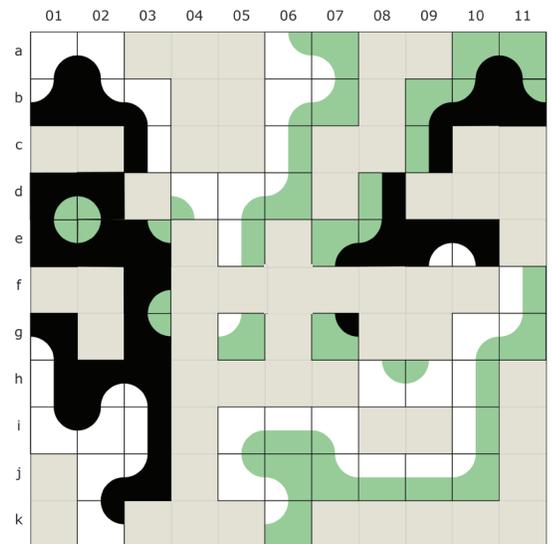
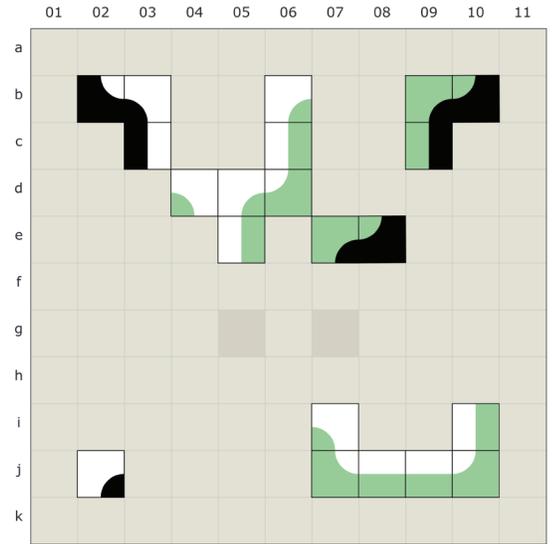
Looking at the previous illustration you can see that the players are beginning to surround territory, White in the upper left, Black on the right side and upper left corner, and Green along the bottom right. All of this territory, however, is still open to attack and invasion. In Kenté, territory is never safe until it has been completely surrounded.

Here is an example from a game that has concluded. The game is over because no more territory can be gained.

Now we can count the number of squares that each player has surrounded and determine the winner.

Black has territory at: c01-02, f01-02, and g02. White has territory at: a03-05, b04-05, c04-05, i08-09, and j-k01. And Green has territory at: h-k11, and k07-10. The final score of this game is: Black 5, White 11, Green 8.

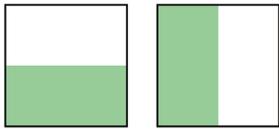
Interestingly, Black ended up not getting the territory at the upper right due to Green's play at f11. Green also did not get territory at the upper right due to Black's play at d08. In both cases they were prevented from completely surrounding their territory.



3. Notation

To record the moves of a game of Kenté, you need to be able to indicate both the square being played in and the piece being played. The square is identified by the grid of letters and numbers as we saw in the previous section.

We identify the piece by using upper case letters to stand

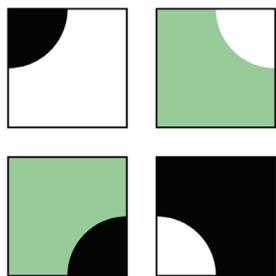


for the colors and symbols or lower case letters to indicate where the colors appear on the piece. For example, W/G indicates a piece with white on the top and Green on the bottom like the first piece shown above.

The same piece rotated 90 degrees to the right would be

described by the notation G|W as seen above.

But what about pieces such as these?



For these pieces the first letter indicates the predominant color in the piece. This is followed by a lower case letter that indicates what corner of the piece the other color appears in (q: upper left corner, p: upper right corner, b: lower right corner, and d: lower left corner). In each case the shape

of the letter is related to the position of the differently colored corner.

Following this convention, the notation for the above pieces (clockwise from the upper left) would be: WqB, GpW, BdW, and GbB.

Here is the notation for the first round of a game, showing the square then a dash, then the piece, with the moves for Black, White, and Green separated by colons.

1. B02-BpW : E05-W|G : J10-GqW

4. Sample Game

One of the best ways to learn Kenté is to play through a sample game. You can use the notation below to play out this game, which is the same game we were looking at earlier.

Early in this game Green begins to build a small territory at the bottom right of the board. Soon, he has more territory near the top of the board and appears unstoppable. At Round 19, however, all that begins to change. Here is the game through round 19:

1. b02-BpW : e05-W|G : j10-GqW
 2. b03-WdB : d05-WbG : j09-W|G
 3. c03-B|W : d04-WdG : i10-W|G
 4. b10-BqG : d06-GqW : j08-W|G
 5. b09-GbB : c06-W|G : e07-GbB
 6. c09-G|B : b06-WbG : j07-GpW

7. e08-BqG : j02-WbB : i07-WdG
 8. g07-GpB : g05-GqW : h10-W|G
 9. e09-BbW : j03-BqW : i06-W|G
 10. e10-BdW : i03-W|B : i05-WbG
 11. h03-BdW : j05-WpG : b07-GqW
 12. h02-Bbw : a02-WdB : a07-GdW
 13. g03-BpG : h09-WqG : a10-GbB
 14. f03-BbG : h08-WpG : a11-GdB
 15. b11-BpG : k02-WpB : g10-WbG
 16. e03-BpG : i02-WqB : j06-GdW
 17. e02-BqG : i01-WpB : k06-GqW
 18. d02-BdG : a06-WpG : g11-GqW
 19. d01-BbG : a01-WbB : f11-W|G
 20. d08-G|B : h01-W|B : PASS

Green's play

of f11-W|G might seem like a good one. In one move he denies Black a large territory. But look what happens next. Black retaliates by playing d08-G|B.

This denies

Green his territory at the top of the board.

The result is a victory for White as we saw earlier. If Green had played d08-GbB before attacking, the game could have turned out very differently.

Here are the remaining moves of Game One:

21. b01-BqW : PASS : PASS
 22. g01-BdW : PASS : PASS
 23. e01-BpG : PASS : PASS
 24. PASS : PASS : PASS
 Score. 5 : 11 : 8

5. More info

Kenté was created by 900Monkeys. For more information on Kenté, including tournament rules and additional sample games, visit: 900monkeys.net/kente.html. Kenté can be purchased at: thegamecrafter.com/games/kente. Other games by 900Monkeys can be found at 900monkeys.net.

