

Checkers: A Very Old Game

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What's your favorite game? Today, video games are popular, but they're only about 60 years old. People around the world have been playing games

for thousands of years—long before computers were invented. Many of these games were played on boards, like checkers. In fact, checkers is one of the oldest board games still being played today. There is evidence that ancient Egyptian pharaohs played checkers years ago.

Checkers may also have been played centuries before the pharaohs played it. Some historians think that the first “board games” were played when people scratched a pattern in the dirt. They then may have moved stones, bones, or shells around on this “board.” The games might have been played for fun, but they might also have been used to practice the things people did every day, such as hunting and trading.

Checkers, which is played by two people, is played on a board with eight rows of squares. Players move small

pieces, called men, with each turn. Men are only moved diagonally, not forward or backward.

Checkers is a strategy game. This means that players plan how they will play. Having a strategy allows players to think several moves ahead. The goal is to capture the opponent's men by jumping over them. The game ends when a player captures all of the opponent's men.

Countries around the world have groups called Checkers Federations that organize competitions. The World Draughts Federation was formed in 1947 to organize and regulate these competitions. (Draughts is another name for checkers.)

Today, many players wish that checkers, and other mental games such as chess, were part of the Olympics. They consider these games to be mental sports. Whether or not checkers will ever become an Olympic sport is uncertain. What is certain is that people have played games for thousands of years, and they will probably play them for thousands more.



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