

Alien Checkers

Goal

The game is for two players. There are three ways to win. First, you can win by capturing all of your opponent's checkers, as you would win a normal game of checkers. Also, before the game starts you draw one card to determine which planet you represent; this card affects the game by giving you a second way to win. Third, you can win by having 5 kings (or a total of 5 kings and emperors: emperors are like super-kings).

The Playing Board

The playing board consists of a normal checker board.

Setup

Set up the board and checker-pieces as you would for a normal game of checkers.

Put the tokens off to the side of the board where both players can reach them.

Shuffle the cards that represent the nine planets, and have each player draw one. Put the other planet cards face-down off to the side where they will not get in the way: they are not used for the rest of that game. Player look at their planet cards, then keep them face down and secret.

Shuffle the deck of cards and set it face down as a draw pile where both players can reach it. Turn over the top card face-up next to the draw pile.

Game Play

Players take turns. On your turn, you do three things.

- (1) move a checker
- (2) turn over a second card from the draw pile
- (3) choose one of the two face up cards to use

It is important to move your checker *before* turning over or using a card. This ensures that when you move you know half but not all the options the cards will give you. It also allows your opponent to force you to move in certain ways because of the rule from normal checkers that if you can make one or more jumps you must make one.

All but one of the cards can be used at any time: their instructions are worded so that if you play them when they are not "useful" then they do nothing. The Antimatter card cannot be played unless it is "useful" and will remain face up next to the draw pile until it is eventually used or the draw pile is reshuffled.

The cards refer to a **checker** as one or more checker-pieces on a square. When the distinction is important the cards and these rules call a "normal" checker with one checker-piece a **pawn**, and a "normal" king with two checker-pieces a **king**.

Most of the cards have self-explanatory effects. There are a few details that clarify situations or resolve potential problems.

WALLS

When you build walls, make sure you use wall tokens representing "your" color. You can move through your walls, but your opponent cannot. Walls must be placed in pairs along adjacent edges of checkerboard squares. You may choose to place walls on two edges of a single square (making an "L" shape) or along edges of two different squares (making a line segment two edges long). Walls only block diagonal checker movement if the checker crosses from one side the wall to the other: specifically, walls in an "L" shape block diagonal movement that crosses their vertex but not diagonal movement that skims beside their vertex.

THE MONOLITH

The monolith cannot be put on the board on squares that contains something.

If the monolith moves into a square filled with water or fire, the water or fire is removed. If the monolith moves across an edge with a wall, the wall is removed. If a monolith is moved into a square with a checker, the checker is "pushed" into the next square, which may begin a chain reaction of "pushing". A checker that is "pushed" off the board or against a wall is removed from the board (it is treated as captured). The monolith may not be moved halfway or completely off the board.

RESHUFFLE

When the deck is reshuffled, the top card is turned face up next to the draw pile (just as was the case at the start of the game). That way every time a player's turn starts there is one face up card.

Making Kings

Once a pawn is across the board it becomes a king, as in a normal game of checkers.

However, you cannot make a pawn into a king unless one or more of your checkers has been captured. If none of your checkers has been captured, you will not have a checker to physically place on top of the pawn. Similarly, if you have already used all your captured pawns to make kings, you will not have a checker to physically place on top of the pawn. Since you lack an available checker, that pawn must wait to become a king. (Perhaps it will not become a king, if it is captured or moved before you can make it a king.)

If a checker of yours is captured on your opponent's turn, you can immediately make any of your ready pawns into a king. If the board is rotated on your opponent's turn, you can immediately make kings of any of your pawns that are then across the board. Thus it is possible to win the game on your opponent's turn by having five kings/emperors!

A standard checkers set has 12 pawns of each color. If your set has more, remove the extras from the game when you set up or it will be too easy to make kings!

Winning

There is one final rule: if you cannot move a checker, the game is a draw! Thus if you are very far behind you can still attempt to force the game to end as a tie.

Mercury

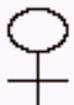
The creatures of Mercury are most comfortable in very hot places.



Special Victory Condition:
Three squares are filled with fire

Venus

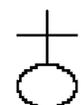
The creatures of Venus enjoy letting smaller creatures ride on their backs.



Special Victory Condition:
Carry 4 Snookles on your checkers

Earth

The creatures of Earth brag about their planet's many, varied lifecycles.



Special Victory Condition:
Six of your checkers revived as pawns

Mars

The creatures of Mars enjoy conquering with excessive force.



Special Victory Condition:
Make 3 captures with an emperor(s)

Jupiter

The creatures of Jupiter revere size.



Special Victory Condition:
The monolith is centered in the board

Saturn

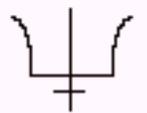
The creatures of Saturn love jewelry.



Special Victory Condition:
Four of your checkers have rings

Neptune

The creatures of Neptune love water.



Special Victory Condition:
Three squares are filled with water

Uranus

The creatures of Uranus travel in places most creatures avoid.



Special Victory Condition:
Four of your checkers on off-color squares

Pluto

The creatures of Mercury respect both distance and symmetry.



Special Victory Condition:
Have checkers in two diagonally opposite corners of the board

Flood!

Either fill an empty square with water
or
remove fire from a square.

Fire!

Either fill an empty square with fire
or
remove water from a square.

Emperor

You may sacrifice a pawn on the board to change a king into an emperor. An Emperor is three checkers tall, moves as a king, and cannot be jumped except by another emperor.

Revive

You may place one checker not on the board (captured, etc.) as a pawn on any main-color square on your half of the board. This card does nothing if all your checkers are on the board.

Monolith

If the board has one or more empty 2x2 areas, put the monolith on one of them. If the monolith is on the board, move it (see the rules for how).

Doom

If the monolith is on the board, move it twice (see the rules for how). This card does nothing if the monolith is not on the board.

Galactic Hippo!

If there are fewer than three Galactic Hippos on the board, another one wanders by and sits on one of your opponent's checkers. That checker cannot move or be moved until the hippo or checker is removed.

Snookle

Place a Snookle creature on one of your checkers. The Snookle remains until that checker is captured or otherwise removed. Snookles remove and protect from Galactic Hippos.

Reshuffle

Make a second move this turn, with a different checker. (If you have only one checker, do not move twice.)
Reshuffle the cards including face-up.

Translation

Either move any checker (yours or opponent's) one square vertically or horizontally or you may make one or more jumps vertically or horizontally.

Wormhole

The checker just moved may teleport to any empty square of the same color as its original square. No jumping happens.

Wanderlust

Next turn your opponent must, if possible, move a checker out of his or her "back row". (This has precedence over the need to make a jump.)

Queen

If you have any kings or emperors, you may take a second move with one of these moving any number of squares horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. (It cannot jump or capture.)

Fortify

If your opponent has played walls, you may remove two of them
or
If there are less than ten walls on the board you may play two adjacent walls

Fate

Choose one of your opponent's checkers. On his or her next turn, your opponent must first move that checker. (This has precedence over the need to make a jump.)

Double Agent

Remove one of your opponent's checkers, make a 2nd move in a way that leaves its square empty, then replace that checker in its square.

Ring

One of your checkers gets a ring. The ring remains until the checker is captured or otherwise removed.

Antimatter

A 2x2 area that has at least one of each player's checkers is emptied. (The monolith is unaffected by antimatter. You cannot play this card if there is no appropriate 2x2 area!)

Cheater!

You may rearrange the order of the cards still in the deck.

Rotate

Rotate the board 90 degrees in either direction. The board edges where pawns become kings change, as do each player's "half of the board".

