How to Play Battleship Without Grid Paper

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Co-authored by 25 contributors
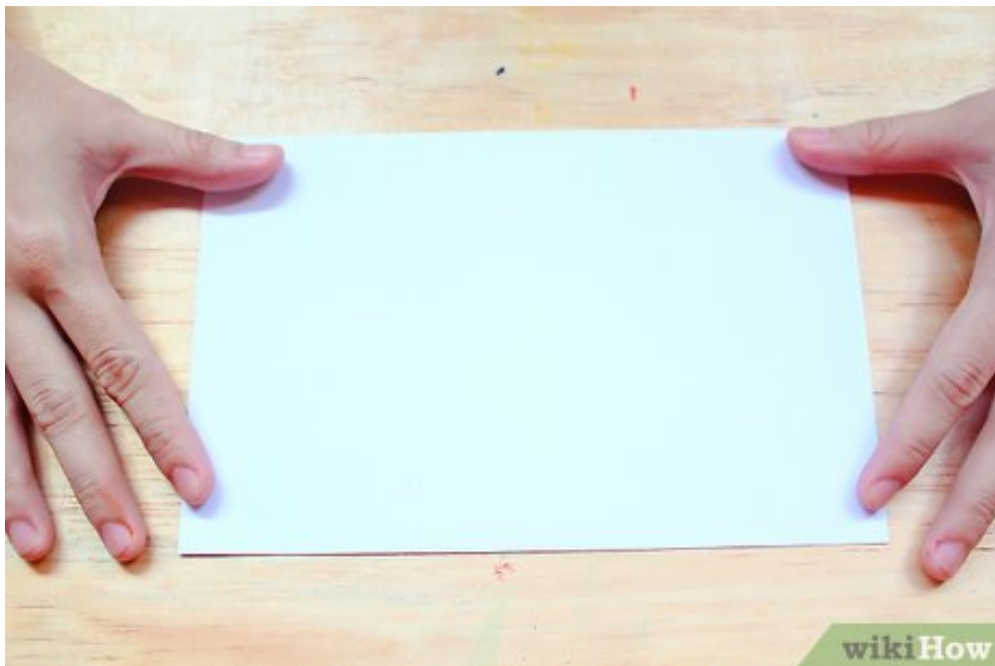Last Updated: May 6, 2021

So, you're in a plane or just bored in class, and you want to play battleship, but you don't have graph paper. Don't worry, because with only a piece of plain paper and a pencil, you can be on your way to sinking your opponent's battleship!

Things You'll Need
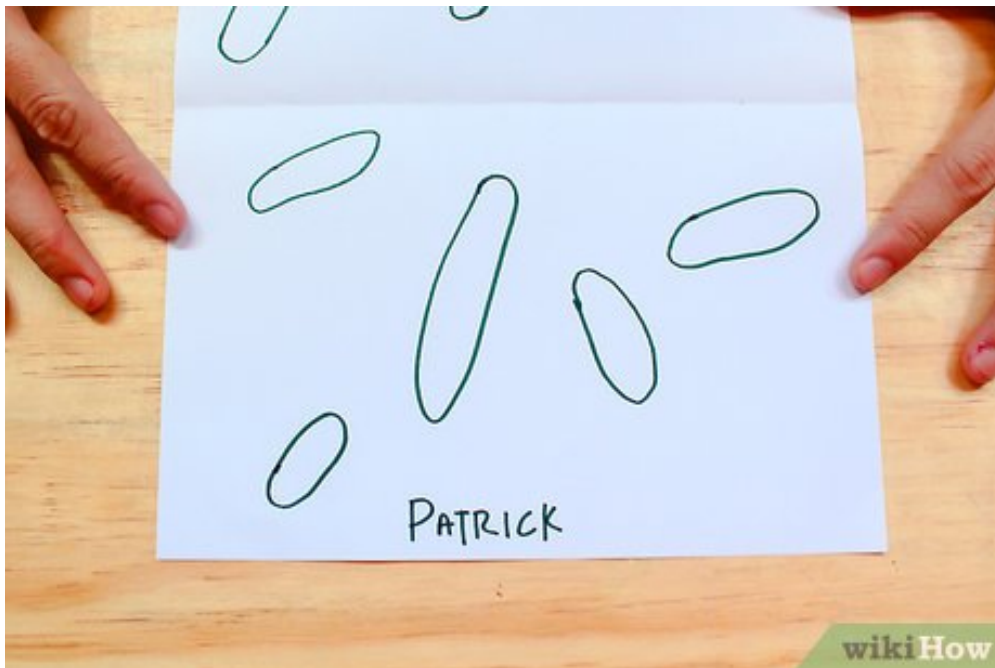
☐ A piece of paper, any kind available
☐ A pen or pencil

Steps

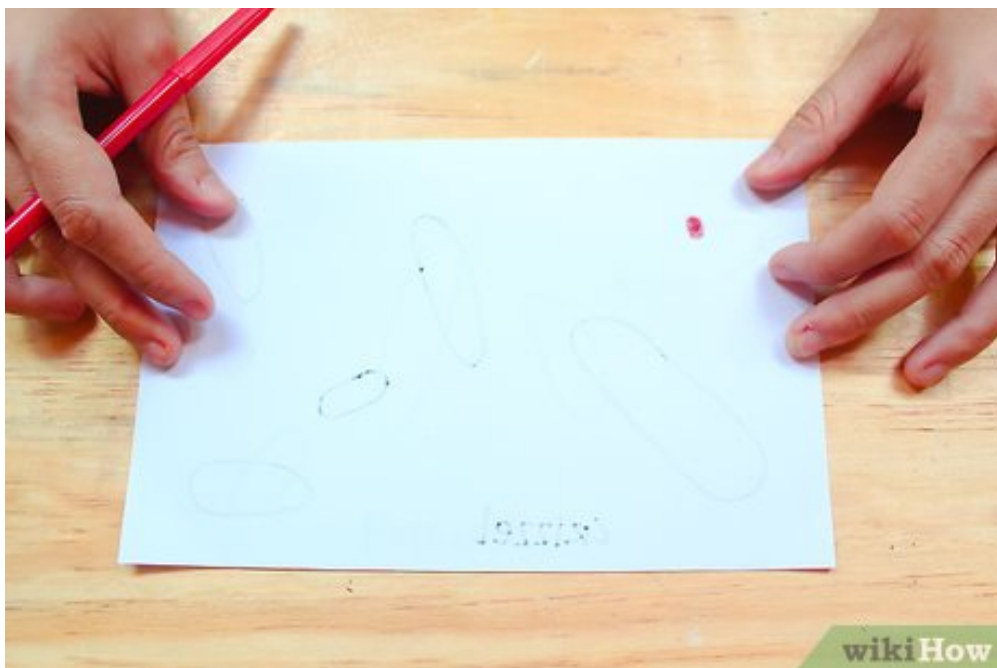**1** Fold a piece of paper in half "width-wise" (hamburger style).

2 Draw five long ovals on one half, representing ships.
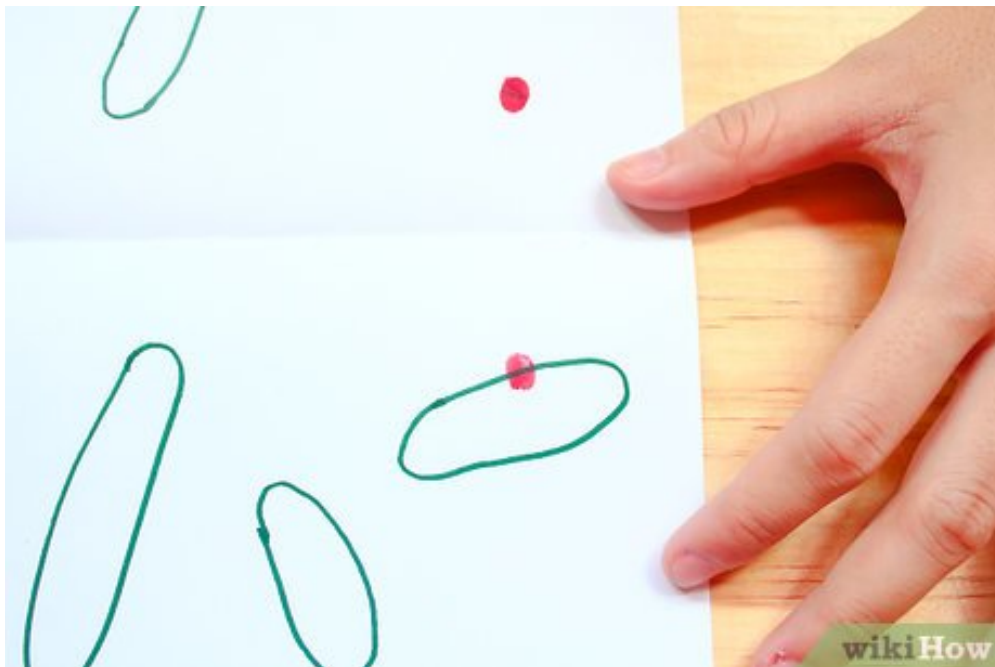

3 Let your opponent do the same on the other half. It's all right if your opponent sees where your ships are, or if you see his!

4 **To fire, mark a dot anywhere on your side.** Where you mark it will determine where it will show up on your opponent's side: the higher you mark the dot on your side the lower it will show up on your opponent's side, and the lower you mark the dot on your side the higher it will show up on your opponent's side.
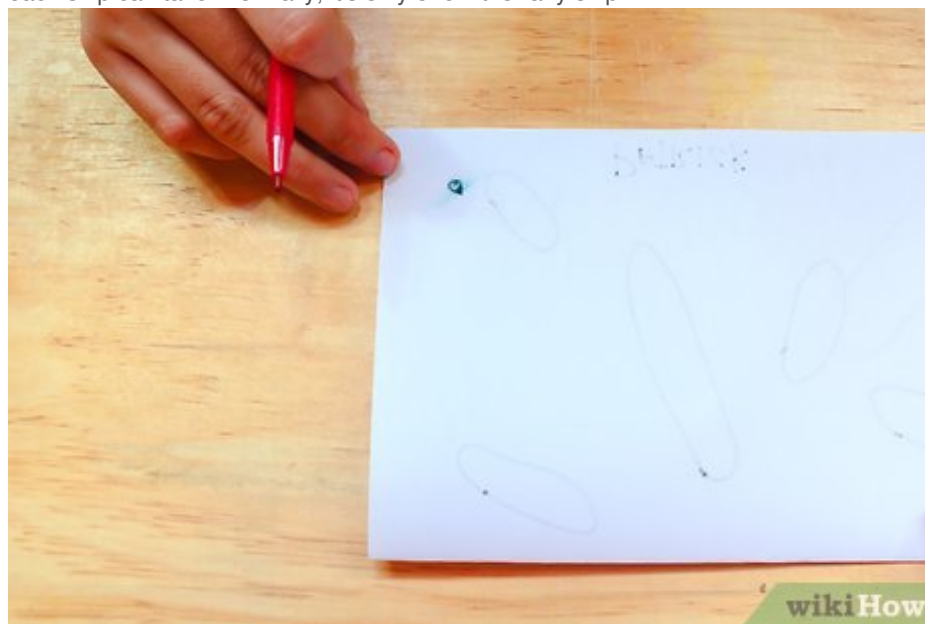

5 **Fold the paper over, as shown.**
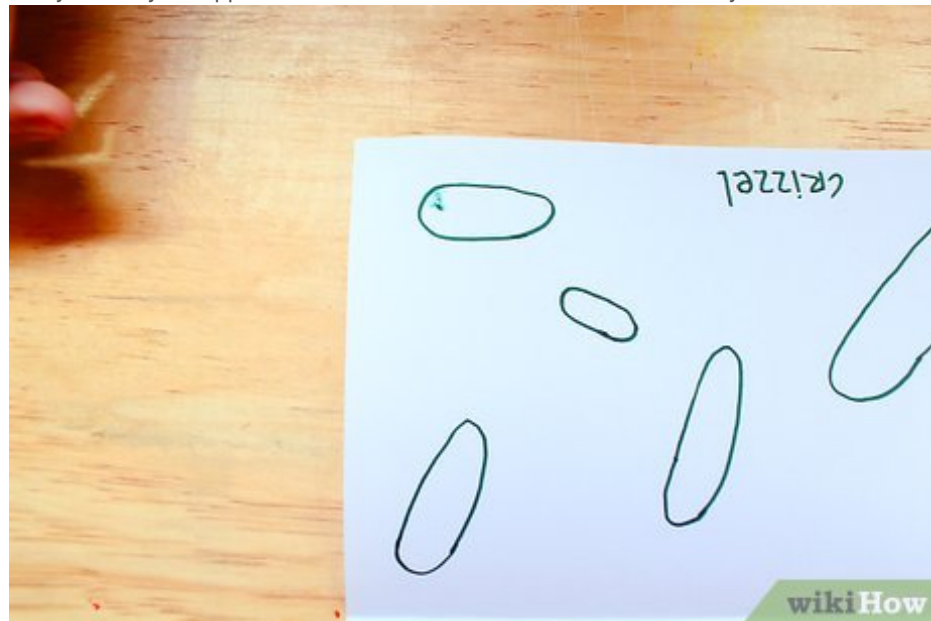
6 **If you did it correctly, you should be able to faintly see the dot you made (in step 4) on the reverse side.** If not, hold it up to the light. **Mark a dot in the exact same place as you did in step 4.** Then fold the paper back over.

- **See how the dot shows up** on your opponent's side. It's up to you how many hits each ship can take. Normally, it's only one hit for any ship.

- **Watch to see if you manage to sink a ship**, and then write the word *sunk* on it so that you and your opponent will know there is no need to fire at it anymore.

7 **Continue as your opponent fires, and then you fire, and again he fires etc.**
Whoever sinks all of the other person's ships first wins!

Community Q&A

How do I play Battleship on grid paper?

T. Chinsen
Top Answerer

Create a grid with numbers 1 - 10 and letters A - J along the edges of your grid. This gives the position of a square on the grid. The combination of ships in the game is up to you. For example: 4 subs -S in a single square; 3 cruisers -CC; 2 destroyers -DDD; 1 battleship -BBBB. Fill in the designated letters on your grid (ships cannot be positioned diagonally). Begin calling your shots on the grid; for example, "D7". You can always change the size of the grid and number of ships in the game.

Helpful 7   Not Helpful 2

💡 Tips

- Use two different colored writing utensils for convenience if you have to mark your own ship.

- Blank paper is good too and can make cheating more difficult.

- It is advised to play with a timer so your opponent will have no time to cheat. Set the timer to about 5 seconds so your opponent will have no time to count the amount of lines to your ship.

- If you have to make a dot that is inside one of your own ships, it has not been sunk. Only your opponent can sink your ships.

- This game works best when played with a pencil (pencil marks have been outlined with marker in the pictures to make them easier to see).

- You can make up your own rules, such as if you hit a ship, do you get to fire until you miss? How many hits can each ship take? Maybe you can add special weapons for each ship. It's up to you!

- Agree on what to do in the event that a shot you fire is only partially inside a ship. Is it a hit or is it a miss? This is a rather common occurrence and subject of argument when playing battleship in this way.

- Press your pen/pencil down hard while making a dot, so that you'll be easily able to see it when you fold the paper over.

⚠ Warnings

- Avoid placing your ships anywhere near the middle (where the fold is). Ships placed in this space are very easy to hit.

- Another form of cheating is making ships very thin and/or short so that it is extremely hard to hit them.

- Discourage cheating such as counting lines or measuring distances using fingers/a ruler, etc. in order to calculate shots precisely.

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