

How to play Connect the Dots

In this connect the dots puzzle you join each pair of matching dots with a line. Lines run between neighbouring squares and never cross or branch. You solve the board when every pair is joined and every square is filled. Each board has exactly one solution, so careful thinking always works.

Goal

Join every pair of matching dots with a line, and fill every square of the board so that no empty square is left.

Setup

- You see a square grid with coloured dots on it. Each colour appears exactly twice, as a pair.
- In Pathtide the dots are called buoys. Twins share both a colour and a symbol.
- At the top you see how many pairs are joined, and how much of the board is filled.
- Below the board are Undo, Clear and Hint buttons.

How to play

1. Find a pair of dots with the same colour and symbol.
2. Press on one dot and drag along neighbouring squares to its twin. Let go when you reach it.
3. Do the same for the other pairs. Lines can only go up, down, left or right, never diagonally.
4. Do not let two lines cross, and do not pass through a dot of another colour.
5. If a line is in the way, drag into it to cut it back, or tap its dot to clear that line and redraw it.
6. Keep going until all pairs are joined.
7. Check that every square is filled. If a square is empty, re-route a line to cover it.
8. When every pair is joined and every square is filled, the board is solved.

Key rules

What are the rules of the connect the dots puzzle?

Join each pair of matching dots with a line along neighbouring squares. Lines may not cross, branch or share a square. To finish, every square of the board must be filled. In Pathtide each board has exactly one solution, so you can reason your way to it.

Do you have to fill every square in a connect the dots puzzle?

Yes. In Pathtide a board is only solved when every pair is joined and every square holds water. If all pairs are joined but a square is still empty, the board is not finished yet. You need to re-route some lines to cover the empty squares.

Can lines cross each other?

No. Each square can hold only one line. Lines run between neighbouring squares, and they never cross or branch. If you draw into another line, that line is cut back from that point, so you can reroute it.

How do you fix a wrong line?

Draw into the line to cut it back, or tap its dot to clear the whole line and start again. Undo is always free in Pathtide, so you can take back as many moves as you like. The Clear button removes every line on the board.

How does the Pipes puzzle work?

In Pipes mode you tap a pipe to turn it a quarter turn. Water runs from the spring through every pipe joined to it. You solve the board when all the tiles are joined into one network with no open ends. There is exactly one way to do it.

How do you win a connect the dots puzzle?

You win when every pair of dots is joined and the whole board is filled. Pathtide gives up to three stars: one for solving, one for using no hint, and one for drawing every line in one go. On a Pipes board the third star is for finishing within par turns.

Winning and scoring

Dots boards give up to three stars: one for solving the board, one for using no hint, and one for drawing every stream in one go. Pipes boards give one star for finishing, one for no hint, and one for finishing within par, which is the fewest turns that finish the board. A hint costs that board one star. The Daily Tide scores points, and the optional Time Trial scores the squares of every board you finish before the clock ends.

Tips

- Start with the dots in corners and along the edges. They have the fewest choices, so their lines are often forced.
- Hug the walls. A line that runs along the edge leaves the middle open for other pairs.
- If a square has only one free neighbour, a line must end or pass there, so use that fact.
- Look for pairs that sit next to each other. Join them with a short line right away.
- Think about dead-end squares early. A square with only one open neighbour must be an end of a line.
- Draw the long, awkward pairs after the easy ones have reduced the open space.
- On Pipes boards, begin at the spring and work outwards, turning pipes so that each one joins its neighbour.
- Use Undo freely. It never costs anything, and trying ideas is part of the puzzle.

Avoid these mistakes

- Joining all the pairs first and then finding that squares are left empty. Think about the empty squares from the start.
- Drawing long lines through the middle of the board, which cuts it in two and traps other pairs.
- Leaving a single empty corner square that no line can reach.
- Running a line through a dot of another colour. A stream can only end at its own twin.
- Redrawing from scratch instead of cutting a line back to the point where it went wrong.

Words to know

Pair: Two dots with the same colour and symbol. You join them with one line.

Stream: The line of water you draw between a pair.

Buoy: A dot on the board in Pathtide. Twin buoys share a colour and a symbol.

Par: On Pipes boards, the fewest turns that finish the board.

Spring: The source of water on a Pipes board.