

PLAY THE VIKING GAME OF “KING’S TABLE”

– the game that Magnus in *The Rings of Doom* plays against Grim Gruesome!

King’s Table – called *Hnefatafl* in the Old Norse language that the Viking people spoke – was a very popular game in Viking times. Old Viking sagas describe players arguing over the game, leaping to their feet and scattering both the board and the playing pieces!



Here’s a picture of a real Viking Age Hnefatafl board. It was found by archaeologists in Ireland.

And here are some real Viking Age playing pieces, from Denmark.



This picture of an old Viking rune-stone shows two men playing the game with the board balanced on their knees - which is probably why some of the boards had handles.



This is how Grim Gruesome’s gaming board and playing pieces are described in *The Rings of Doom*:

There was a large board, beautifully made from yellowish-white walrus ivory, so highly oiled and polished that it gleamed in the firelight. Its border was carved with entwining stems and galloping horses. In the middle of this were nine-times nine-rows of small holes. Handles protruded from either side, cleverly carved to look exactly like horse heads.

There was also a set of round playing pieces, each with a sharp spike at the bottom, to slot into the holes. Sixteen were made of translucent, orange amber and eight of shiny, black jet. One of the jet pieces was twice the size of the others.

Please turn to the next pages to learn how to make your own King’s Table set, and how to play the game.

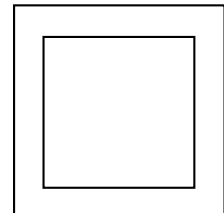
TO MAKE YOUR KING'S TABLE GAME SET

You will need:

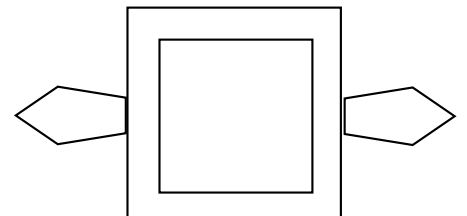
- A large, strong piece of cardboard – about the size of a chess-board
- Enough white paper to completely cover the surface of the cardboard
- A ruler and pencil
- Two smaller pieces of strong cardboard
- Glue and sticky tape
- Felt tips or coloured pencils
- Coloured paper in three different colours.

To make the board

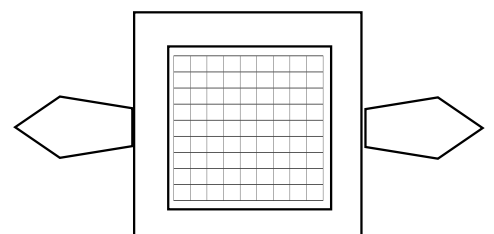
1. Measure and cut the cardboard into an exact square.
2. Cover it completely with the white paper, using glue to stick it on.
3. Measure and draw a border going right round the edge, so that it looks like this:



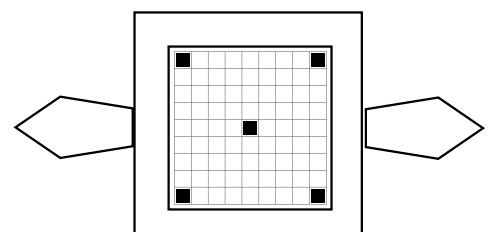
4. Use the the smaller pieces of cardboard to make two handles for the board. Use the sticky tape to fix them onto either side of the board, so that it looks like this:



5. Mark out the centre of the board into a grid of 9 squares up and 9 squares across like this:



6. Mark:
 - the centre square
 - the corner squareby colouring them in, like this:



7. Using the felt tips or coloured pencils, draw a pattern on the border, showing entwining stems, leaves, flowers and fantastical creatures. Here are some examples:



8. Draw and colour in a picture of a horse's head on each of the handles. Here's Faithful from The Rings of Doom to inspire you:



To make the playing pieces

Use the coloured paper to cut out a set of counters in three different colours, as follows:

- Colour **A** (1 counter) = **The King**
- Colour **B** (8 counters) = **The King's Men**
- Colour **C** (16 counters) = **The Attackers**

Each counter should be the right size to fit neatly inside one of the squares on the grid.

HOW TO PLAY KING'S TABLE

A game for two players

THE AIM OF THE GAME - HOW EACH SIDE CAN WIN

One player is in charge of **The King** and **The King's Men**.

The King's Men can win by getting the King safely into one of the corner squares.

The other player is in charge of **The Attackers**.

The Attackers can win by completely surrounding the King, so he is trapped and cannot move in any direction.

TO START THE GAME

Set the board up with the counters arranged like this:

■			C	C	C			■
				C				
				B				
C				B				C
C	C	B	B	A	B	B	C	C
C				B				C
				B				
				C				
■			C	C	C			■

HOW CAN THE COUNTERS MOVE?

- All the counters can move in straight lines, in any direction.
- They are *not allowed* to move diagonally.
- They are *not allowed* to pass over any other piece.
- They *can* move between the other player's pieces without being taken.

HOW CAN ONE PLAYER 'TAKE' THE OTHER PLAYER'S COUNTERS?

- By trapping the other player's counters like a sandwich **between 2** of his own counters.
- These can be either *above + below*, or *on left + right sides* of the other player's counters; but *not* on the diagonal.
- A counter can also be taken by being trapped **between 1 of the other player's counters and a corner square**.

HOW CAN THE ATTACKERS TRAP THE KING?

- At any place **in the middle of the board**, the Attackers can surround the King with **4 counters**, one above, one below, and one on each side.
- **On the edge of the board**, the Attackers can surround the King with **3 counters**.
- **Immediately next to the centre square**, the Attackers can surround the King with **3 counters**.
- **Immediately next to one of the corner squares**, the Attackers can surround the King with **3 counters**.

WHAT OTHER RULES ARE THERE?

- The King's side moves first.
- Each player can only move one counter at a time.
- Each move must be in a straight line.
- Each player can move as many squares at a time as they wish
but
- Counters are not allowed to jump over other counters.
- The King may not help his men take the Attacker's counters.
- Only one counter can be in each square at any one time.
- One player's counters can move between two of the other player's counters without being taken.
- Only the King can go into the 4 corner squares and the centre square

**You are now ready to play.
Remember that the King's side moves first.
Good luck!**