HOW TO PLAY

TOTEMO

TONY BOYDELL

SURPRISED STARE

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Credits

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Special Thanks to: The Hemel Hempstead Games Club, Richard Clyne, Jimmy Chung, Ian Vincent - and my Dad for making all of the wooden pieces used in the splendid prototype!

TOTEMO
BY TONY BOYDELL

Create colourful totem poles in Totemo, a 3D stacking game for all braves, squaws and papooses of 6 years or more!

Players compete to gain the highest score by placing custom-designed coloured Totemo blocks onto a wooden board. Totemo blocks must be placed according to their colour, and the colours of the blocks they touch.

Game components checklist

49 x Totemo blocks (coloured wooden blocks)

9 x blue (7 x normal, 2 x toppers)

9 x red (7 x normal, 2 x toppers)

9 x yellow (7 x normal, 2 x toppers)

6 x green (4 x normal, 2 x toppers)

6 x orange (4 x normal, 2 x toppers)

6 x purple (4 x normal, 2 x toppers)

4 x rainbow blocks (3 x 0-value, 1 x 3-value starting block)

1 x game board (wooden board with holes)

1 x playing surface (large cloth with Chief's Path, score tracks and clearing for game board)

4 x sets of player markers (wooden cylinders, 3 each in black, green, red and white)

8 x bonus tiles (square wooden tiles with numbers on them - 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 8, 8, 9)

1 x start player marker (brown wooden cylinder)

1 x Chief piece (gold wooden cylinder)

1 x cloth bag

1 x rulebook

Normal Totemo blocks are stackable and have a hole in the top that is deep enough for the peg in the bottom of another block to fit in it. However, some Totemo blocks, known as 'toppers', can only be placed on the top of a totem pole and cannot have another block on top of them. Toppers have a shallow hole in their tops, so that you cannot stack another block on top, and you cannot tell them apart from normal blocks when they are in the bag.

PLACING BLOCKS SCORES POINTS.

PLAN YOUR SCORES TO LAND ON BONUS TILES, IF YOU CAN.

Setting up the game

Each player chooses a set of three player markers of one colour, black, green, red or white. Two of these are used to mark the player's score, the other shows which colour markers each player is using.

Lay out the cloth playing surface, then place the wooden game board in the clearing in the middle of the cloth.

Mix up the bonus tiles face down, and select one at random. Place it on the 10 space on the scoring track with its number face up. Count clockwise along the score track the number of spaces shown by the face up bonus tile, starting from the marker on the 10 space. Select another marker at random and put it face up on the new space on the score track. Select and place more markers in this way until you have returned to the start of the track past the number 30. Once a bonus tile has been placed in the 1 to 9 section of the score track, stop placing them and put the remaining 3 or 4 bonus tiles to one side - they will not be used. Place the last marker face down - its number is not relevant; this last marker does not give players an extra placement until they have scored at least 30 points.

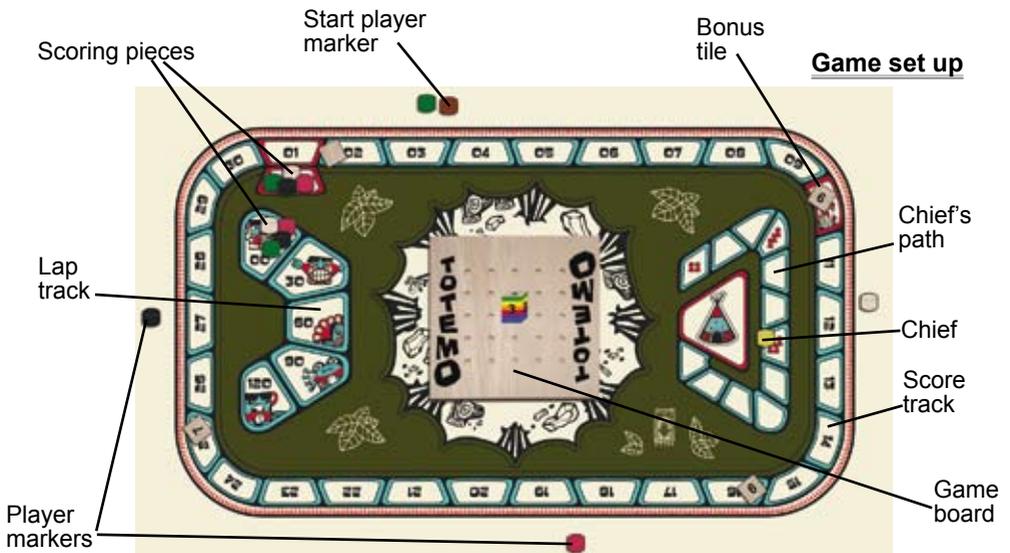Place the Chief piece on the Chief's Path on the space marked with the number of players (from 2 to 4).

Find the 3-value rainbow Totemo block and put it into the central hole of the 5x5 grid on the game board.

Mix up all of the other blocks in the bag. Each player draws three at random and keeps them out of sight of the other players[1]. If a player picks three topper blocks at this point, they may mix the blocks back into the bag and draw another three, so that each player starts with at least one normal block.

The player who last found a feather[2] will go first and takes the start player marker. Each player places a marker of their colour on the two "00" spaces on the playing surface. One will go round the outside score track, the other will go along the lap track. The third marker remains in front of you to show your player colour in the game.

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1 Players can choose to play with their blocks either 'concealed' or 'open'; if there is no agreement, then play concealed. In your hands or your lap is our favoured way of doing this.
2 Or use some other random method.

Scoring pieces

Start player marker

Bonus tile

Chief's path

Chief

Score track

Game board

Lap track

Player markers

Playing the game

Players take turns in a clockwise direction, beginning with the start player. At the beginning of each of the start player's turns, the start player will move the Chief piece clockwise along his path towards his Teepee (see 'Game end' section on p7).

Players will always start their turn with three blocks in hand.

In your turn you may either play one block and score it or discard all of your blocks. At the end of your turn you must draw blocks from the bag to make up your hand of blocks to three in total. A player turn is described in more detail in the following sections of the rules.

Option 1: Play and score

Place one coloured block onto an existing placed block or directly onto the board and score your block (see Scoring on p7).

Placement of blocks must obey the colour match and stacking rules (see p6).

If you have scored a block, and your scoring piece has landed on a bonus tile, you may place an additional block this turn, if you want to. If you play and score an additional block, and once again land on a bonus tile, you may place another block and score it. At that point you will have no blocks left, so you can place a maximum of three blocks per turn. Exception: if your score is 9 or less, and your scoring piece lands on the bonus tile in one of the 1-9 spaces, you cannot place another block; this bonus tile can only be used by players who have completed at least one circuit of the score track.

1. PLACE A BLOCK AND SCORE IT, OR DISCARD YOUR BLOCKS.
2. IF YOU LAND ON A BONUS TILE, PLACE ANOTHER BLOCK AND SCORE IT.
3. DRAW BACK UP TO 3 BLOCKS.

PLACE YOUR BLOCK, SO THAT ALL COLOURS MATCH APPROPRIATELY.

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Option 2: Discard all of your blocks

At the start of your turn only, if you choose not to, or cannot, play a block, you must discard all three of your blocks into the bag and mix the bag contents thoroughly.

Draw blocks

After you have either played and scored blocks or discarded your blocks, you must then draw back up to three blocks in hand. If you cannot draw enough blocks to make your hand up to three, the game will end at the end of the current round (see 'Game end' section on p7).

COLOUR MATCHING RULES

You can only play a block into an empty hole on the board or onto an existing block, if the colour of the block you are playing matches, according to the colour wheel (shown to the right), against all blocks it touches face-to-face around it and underneath it. Blocks only need to match touching faces, not corners.

Matches are as follows (see colour wheel diagram):

RED matches with RED, PURPLE or ORANGE

ORANGE matches with ORANGE, RED or YELLOW

YELLOW matches with YELLOW, ORANGE or GREEN

GREEN matches with GREEN, YELLOW or BLUE

BLUE matches with BLUE, GREEN or PURPLE

PURPLE matches with PURPLE, BLUE or RED

Rainbow blocks match with all colours when placed, or when blocks are placed next to them.

The stacking rules must also be followed.

STACKING RULES

You can only place a block on top of an existing block if:

the existing block is a normal block (not a topper), and

the stack will not be more than five blocks high.

Players can place a normal block in such a way that it does not touch any other block.

Players can only place topper blocks on top of other blocks, not directly into the board at ground level.

The colour matching rules must also be followed.
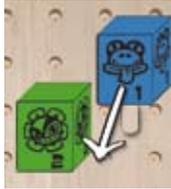
Scoring

A block scores its own value, plus the value of all blocks that it touches face-to-face around it and underneath it, but not corner to corner.
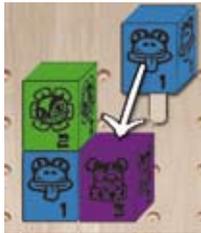
In example 1, the blue block would score 1 + 2 = 3 points for being placed next to the green block.

Example 1

In example 2, the blue block would score 1 + 2 + 3 = 6 points for being placed next to the green block and on top of the purple block. The blue block already placed in the corner doesn't score, because it doesn't touch the scoring block face-to-face.

Example 2

Game end

The game ends in one of two ways. When the Chief reaches his Teepee, each player will have one more turn, then the game will end. If there are not enough blocks in the bag for a player to make their hand up to three, the game will end at the end of that round. The game always finishes with the player to the right of the start player, so that all players will have had the same number of turns.

Winning

The player with the highest score at the end of the game is the winner. In the case of a tie, all tied players win.

TOPPERS CANNOT BE THE FIRST BLOCK AT THE BOTTOM OF A STACK.

SCORE THE BLOCK PLACED AND ALL OTHER BLOCKS THAT ITS FACES TOUCH.

LAST ROUND: WHEN THE CHIEF REACHES HIS TEEPEE OR A PLAYER CANNOT DRAW BACK UP TO THREE.

HIGHEST SCORE WINS.