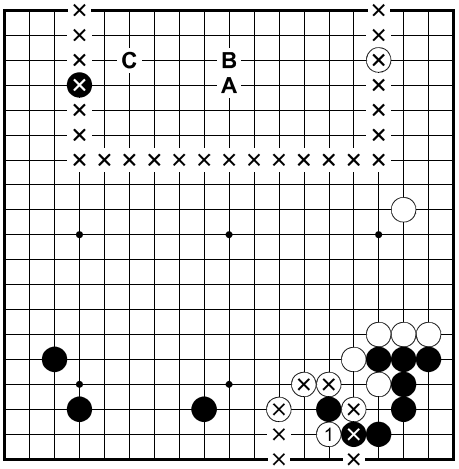
1 Choose the Big and Valuable

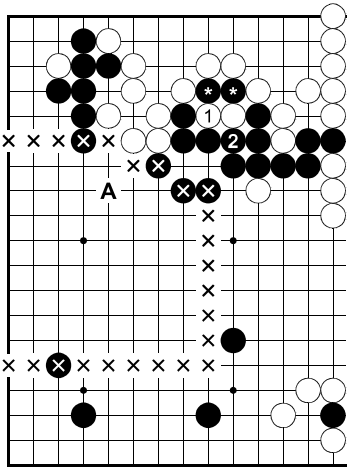
At the game end, the winner is the player having the greater number of points. A player cannot win by collecting all the peanuts in front of his nose while his opponent has a whole board vision and conquers the huge spaces. The big gaps and spaces are by far more valuable than the small endgames. It is not the aim of the game to collect the most prisoners. A beginner must learn to notice the big spaces. Do not attach your mind only to a local battle with its too small spaces and strings but be the first to claim the widest gap.

Avoid premature endgame.

Every beginner violates this simple principle at least once per game. Playing an endgame move while there are still big empty spaces loses 10 or 20 points. Always avoid premature endgame moves and you are already one rank stronger! Recognise what is only endgame and claim the big spaces.

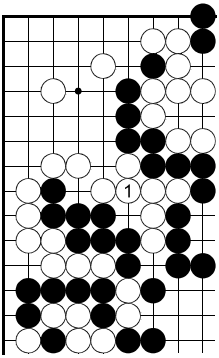


Example 1: mistake 'premature endgame'

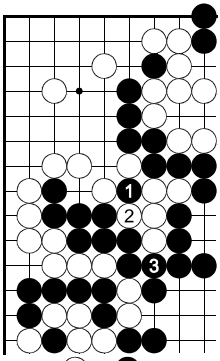


Example 2: mistake 'premature endgame'

Example 1: White plays the premature endgame move 1. It is a mistake because it conquers only the marked small space on the bottom. The correct choice is to conquer the big empty space on the upper side with a move such as A, B or C.

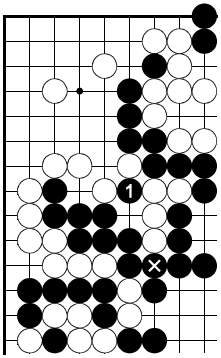


Example 15: mistake 'connecting connected stones'



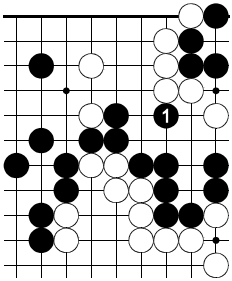
④ at ❶.

Dia. 15.1: already connected

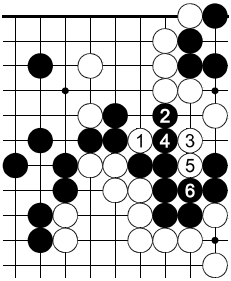


Dia. 15.2: snapback illusion

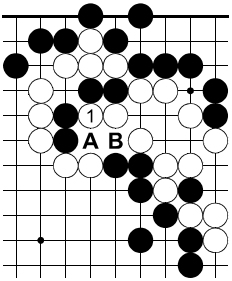
Example 15: White 1 makes the mistake to connect an already connected string. As *Dia. 15.1* shows, Black cannot capture the white string. White has the illusion of the snapback, in which a capture is immediately followed by a recapture, in *Dia. 15.2* because he sees the marked mirage.



Example 16: mistake 'connecting connected stones'



Dia. 16.1: already connected

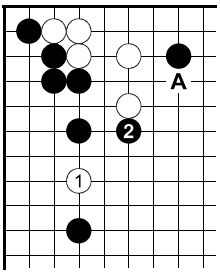


Example 17: mistake 'connecting connected stones'

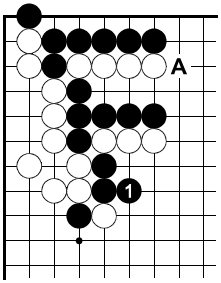
Example 16: Black 1 connects already connected stones. Move 2 in *Dia. 16.1* captures the white cutting stone 1 in a net. Black can easily maintain connection.

Example 17: White 1 is a superfluous move. Without it, Black A is answered by White B; Black B is answered by White A. The white stones are connected.

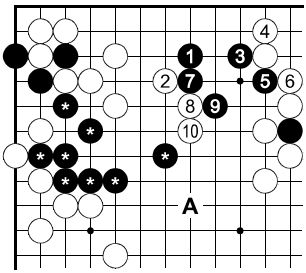
Example 18: Black must not play 1 because the sequence in *Dia. 18.1* demonstrates his already existing connection. White 3 at 4 is answered by Black 3.



Example 17: White mistake



Example 18: mistake



Example 19: mistake Black 1

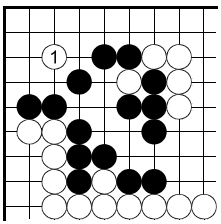
Example 17: Since White does not defend at A but invades at 1, Black 2 becomes a double-attack on the two weak white groups.

Example 18: Instead of defending at A, Black 1 self-attacks the third parallel running group. It is impossible to defend them all. Next, White A attacks the two biggest black groups.

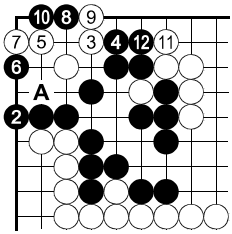
Example 19: Failing to defend the marked weak group at A and installing a nearby second weak group is a hopeless overplay. One of the black group dies.

Do not kill yourself.

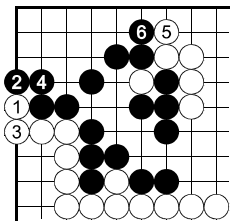
Killing yourself is a worse variation of attacking yourself. A gote suicidal invasion is 1 point worse than passing because the opponent gets another prisoner. If the player continues and adds further dead stones, the loss grows with the increasing boundary of the opponent's territory.



Example 20: mistake



Dia. 20.1: dead



Dia. 20.2: correct

Example 20: White 1 kills itself. *Dia. 20.1* shows a typical sequence. White 5 at A is answered by Black 5. White's correct choice is the endgame sequence in *Dia. 20.2*. White must not increase but reduce the black territory.

The Slave

It was a grey landscape and a rocky hill. On a foggy day, Fast Fox saw the world's light a quarter of an hour before his younger brother Slow Stone. This delay was his life's omen.

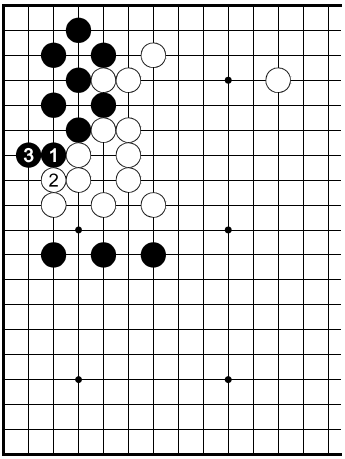
Agriculture was their tough life. Every winter rocks were rolling down the hill and had to be removed from their land. Whenever Fast finished the seed, Slow was still collecting stones. In fact, he loved stones and appreciated their lasting value and beauty.

In those times, ruthless men were hunting the poor. Fast recognised the danger in time and escaped but Slow admired the stones and became a slave. He was brought to a remote volcano island.

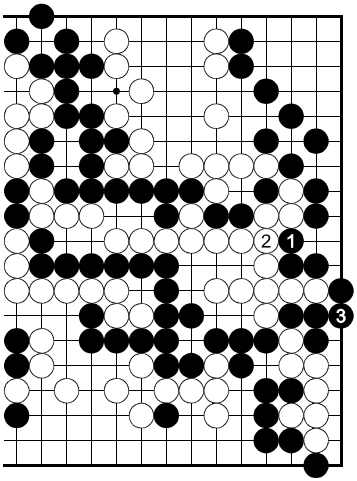
"Collect that stone!" - "Yes, master!" - "There is another rock!" - "Yes, master!" - "Follow me, here is another stone!" - "Yes, master!" - Slow Stone learned to hate stones.

Problems

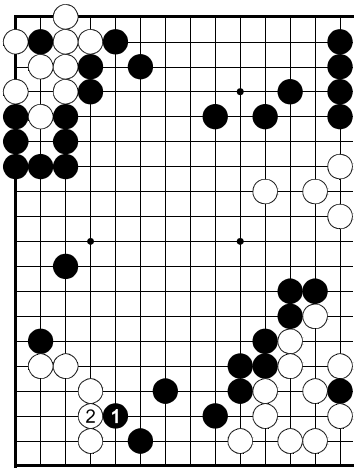
Not always the slave's role is taking small endgame. The slave can have different but nevertheless inferior roles. Correct each problem's move 2, understand why it is a mistake and which kind of help the opponent wants from you.



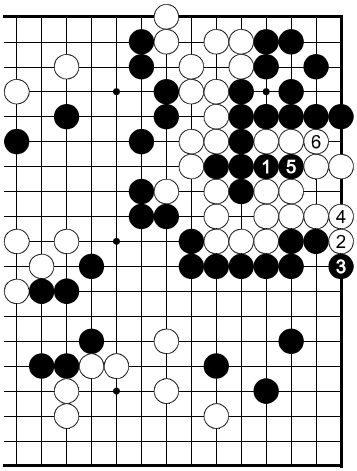
Problem 1



Problem 2



Problem 3



Problem 4

7 Shapes

Making good, efficient shape and avoiding bad shape is a short-cut to tactical reading and limits complexity of strategic decision making. This chapter's shape principles are 95% rules, which almost always are correct. First consider moves suggested by the principles. Only if you have doubts, it is worth studying exceptional, possibly overriding reasons for alternative moves.

40% of all beginners make one or two important shape mistake per game and 20% make several such mistakes. If players fail to occupy an urgent shape point, then they continue with that mistake during several successive moves because they do not understand the urgency.

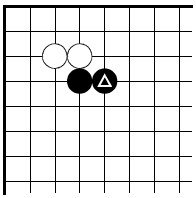
The frequencies of violated principles are as follows: 35% valuable shape points, 35% efficiency, 5% pushing from behind, 5% double advantage shape settling, 5% empty triangles, 5% josekis, 10% miscellaneous.

Take the valuable shape points.

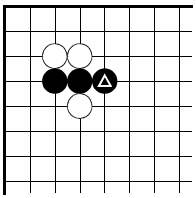
Prevent the opponent from taking the valuable shape points.

The valuable shape points are those where a player can create thick shape or his opponent can prevent him from doing so. The term 'thick' means 'very strong': the player protects development directions while the opponent cannot capture, cut or play painful forcing moves against the shape. These criteria characterise the great value of thick shape. The following diagrams show the possible types and names of those thick black shapes that already a beginner must know. Their definitions are found in the book *Joseki 1 Fundamentals.*

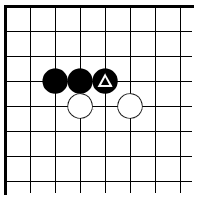
Of the valuable shape point mistakes, 38% are related to overlooked thick extensions, 25% to overlooked thick turns and the rest to the various other types of thick shapes. This is explained by two reasons: 1) the great value of thick extensions and thick turns is not appreciated, 2) some of the other shapes are infrequent.



Dia. 1: thick extension (ordinary)

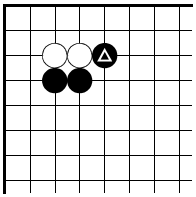


Dia. 2: thick extension (cut)

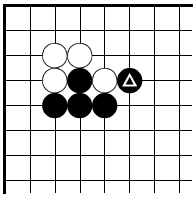


Dia. 3: thick extension (threat to cut)

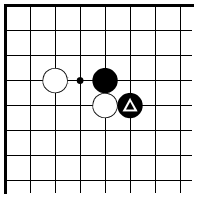
Dia. 1 - 3: A 'thick extension' extends from a string to conquer empty space in three development directions. There are the types 'ordinary', 'cut' and 'threat to cut'.



Dia. 4: thick turn (ordinary)

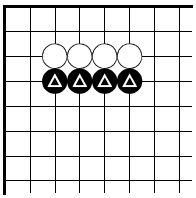


Dia. 5: thick turn (atari)

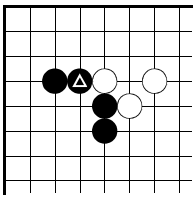


Dia. 6: thick turn (around a single stone)

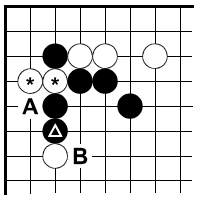
Dia. 4 - 6: A 'thick turn' bends around an opposing string to conquer another development direction and block the opponent's easy access to it. A thick turn occurs in one of the three types 'ordinary', 'atari' or 'around a single stone'.



Dia. 7: thick blocks (ordinary)

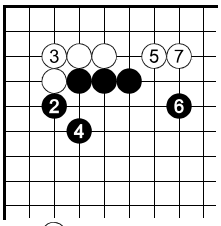


Dia. 8: thick block (connecting block)



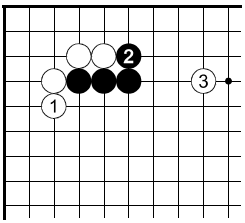
Dia. 9: thick block (cutting block)

Dia. 7 - 9: While the ordinary 'thick blocks' simply block a direction and deny the opponent's access to it, there are also the special types 'connecting block' and 'cutting block'. Needless to say, a connecting block greatly increases the degree of connectivity of one's own strings. The marked black cutting block in *Dia. 9* prevents White's connection A, threatens to capture the marked white string and so prepares Black's thick turn B. The adjacent single white stone is cut apart.

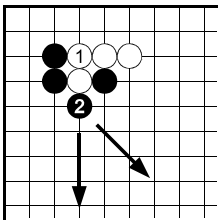


(1) elsewhere.

Example 28: mistake White 1



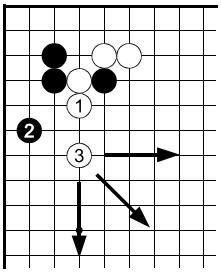
Dia. 28.1: correct thick extension 1



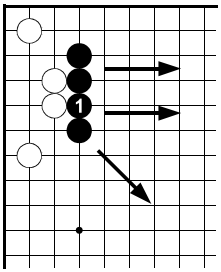
Example 29: Black controls the center and left side

Example 28: Playing elsewhere is White's mistake because a joseki can be created. The thick extension 1 in *Dia. 28.1* is correct: White instead of Black controls the left side and the black group is attacked. This is much better for White.

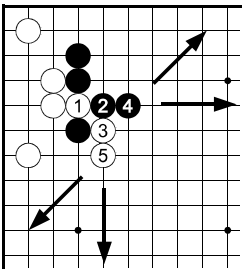
Example 29: White's mistake allows Black to play the thick turn 2 and control the center and left side. Instead, White must play the thick shape moves in *Dia. 29.1* to be the one controlling these parts of the board.



Dia. 29.1: White controls the center and left side



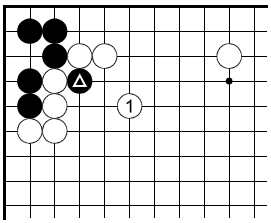
Example 30: Black controls the upper side and center



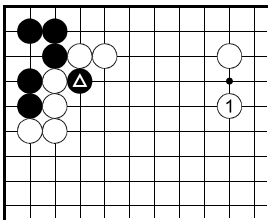
Dia. 30.1: fight for center control

Example 30: Black's thick block 1 is correct because it lets him control the upper side and center. If, in *Dia. 30.1,* White is allowed to start, then he controls the left side, Black controls only the upper side and neither player controls the center; this result is much worse for Black than in the middle diagram.

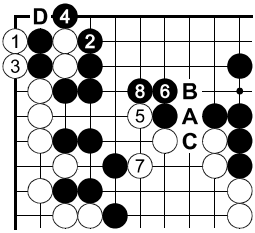
Example 31: Both moves are mistakes; they fail to occupy the valuable shape point. In *Dia. 31.1 + 31.2,* whoever gets it controls the big upper center.



Example 62: inefficient

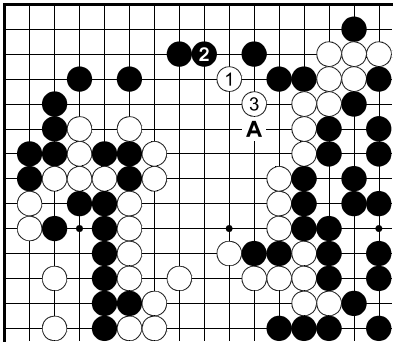


Dia. 62.1: efficient

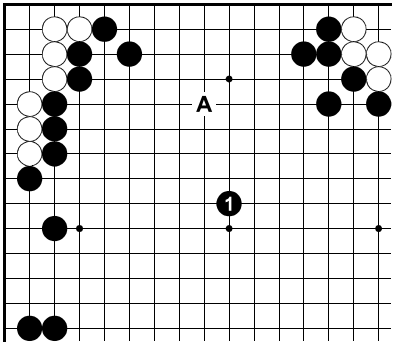


Example 63: efficient

Example 63: The game sequence White A - B - C - 5 was an inefficient reduction of the black territory. The sequence shown is much more efficient because Black's remaining territory is smaller. White 1 is a move beyond beginner level, but the reader can appreciate the ko after White 1 - 3 - D. Black cannot fight it.



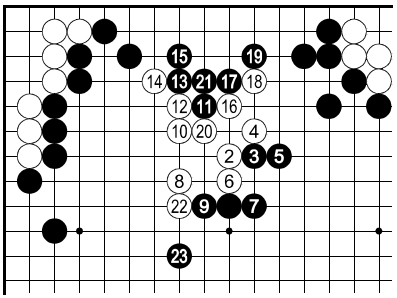
Example 64: efficient



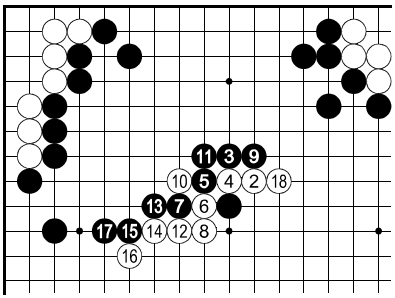
Example 65: efficient

Example 64: The game's move White A was inefficient. White's strong center position allows moves 1 and 3, which construct a bigger white territory.

Example 65: In the game, Black played the anxious move A. Instead, Black 1 is a very efficient move.



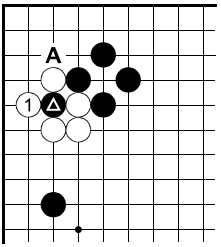
Dia. 65.1: not afraid I



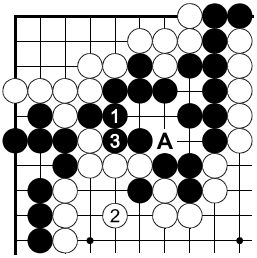
Dia. 65.2: not afraid II

Dia. 65.1: If White does not invade, he loses the game. Black attacks the white group, defends the upper side and builds a strong formation on the outside, which will enable him to get more points than he loses by getting a slightly smaller upper side territory than after his immediate defensive move A in *Example 65.* It is a standard strategy to sacrifice a few points in order to attack severely and gain more points back elsewhere later during the fight.

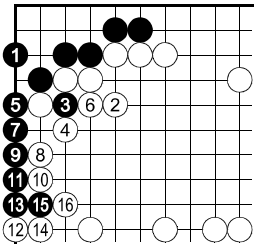
Dia. 65.2: White's reduction is not good enough. White 12 at 13 does not work because of an unfavourable ladder. In summary, Black need not fear White's answering strategies to his initial move 1.



Example 66: inefficient



Example 67: efficient

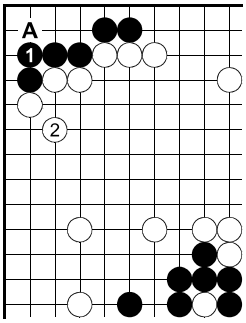


Example 68: mistakes

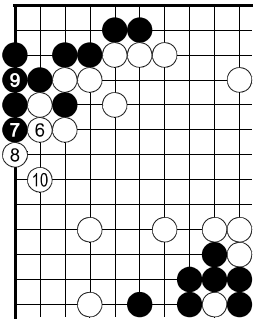
Example 66: White must replace the inefficient capture of the marked stone by the much bigger and efficient capturing move A, which expands the corner.

Example 67: The game move A showed fear without reason. The sequence gives him better endgame and his group is alive without any problem.

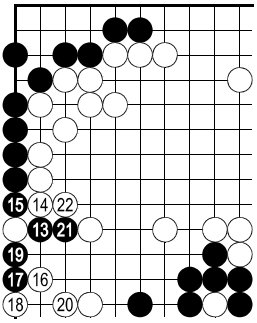
Example 68: The players make several mistakes by playing inefficient moves.



Dia. 68.1: efficient I



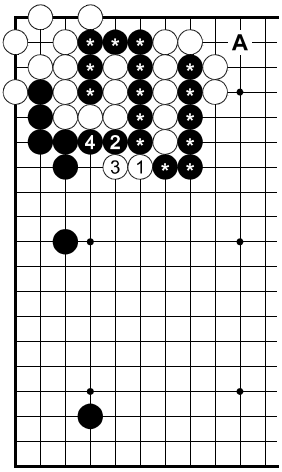
Dia. 68.2: efficient II



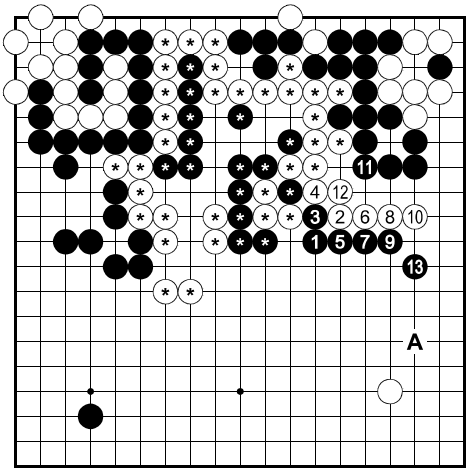
Dia. 68.3: efficient III

Dia. 68.1: Black 1 is efficient because it eliminates White's option of attacking at A later. White 2 is efficient because it defends the white territory border well.

Dia. 68.2: This variation on White 6 is a good chance for White to limit the consequences of his earlier mistake 2.



Example 39: bad continuation of an attack



Example 40: good continuation of an attack

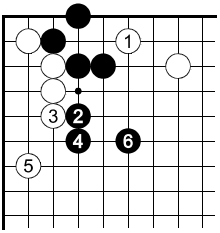
Example 39: White has just attacked the marked stones, but currently it is bad to continue the attack because White gets weak groups. As the follow-up *Example 40* indicates, White's defense at A to defend his unsettled important group on the upper side is the proper move.

Example 40: During the game, Black played at A in this diagram, and thereby made the mistake of not continuing the center fight, although all the marked important stones are weak and unsettled. Instead, Black should continue to attack strongly using, for example, the sample sequence shown; then White's position is hopeless.

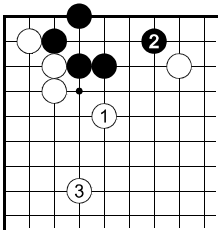
Choose the most valuable direction for attack or defense.

During a fight, one must not develop towards an arbitrary direction. If the attack or defense of important unsettled groups allows it, prefer directions pointing to big and valuable spaces.

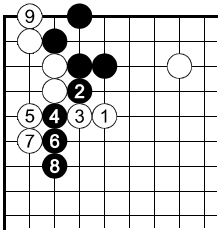
Example 41: White 1 is wrong: it attacks from the small upper side and allows the black group to move to the wide center. In *Dia. 41.1,* White attacks from the correct direction and makes much more new territory than Black. In *Dia. 41.2,* Black cannot counter-attack because he only double-attacks himself.



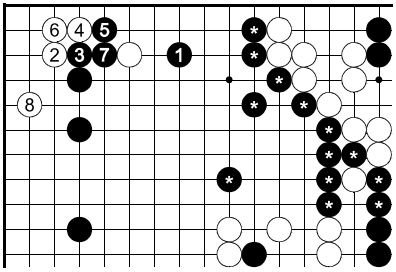
Example 41: mistake White 1



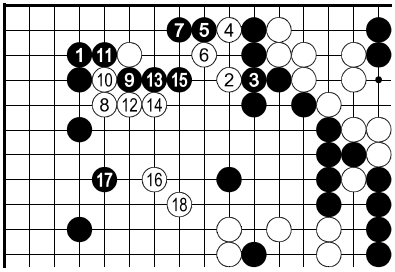
Dia. 41.1: correct



Dia. 41.2: Black double-attacks himself

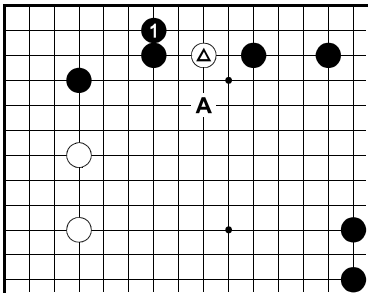


Example 42: mistake Black 1

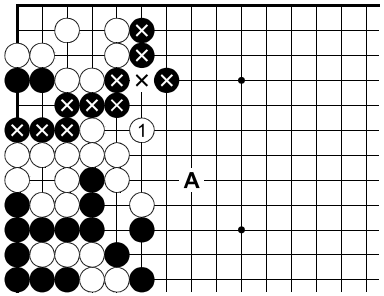


Dia. 42.1: correct

Example 42: Black 1 is too near to his marked strong wall, and therefore attacks the single white stone from the wrong direction. Black 1 in *Dia. 42.1* starts the attack from the correct direction. In both diagrams, Black makes a similar amount of territory. The difference is White's new territory: in the left diagram, he does make some points - in the right diagram, he does not make any, and this fact is advantageous for Black.



Example 43: mistake



Example 44: mistake

Example 43: Black attacks from the wrong direction: the marked white stone can escape very easily. Instead, Black should attack at A to block the stone's easiest escape route.