

Geminos

An Astrological Dice Game

Geminos is played with two twelve-sided dice, which have a different sign of the zodiac on each side. You roll the dice once each turn, and your score for that turn is based on the two signs displayed by the dice. You record your score in one of five categories — called “affinities” — which depend on the astrological relationship between the two signs.

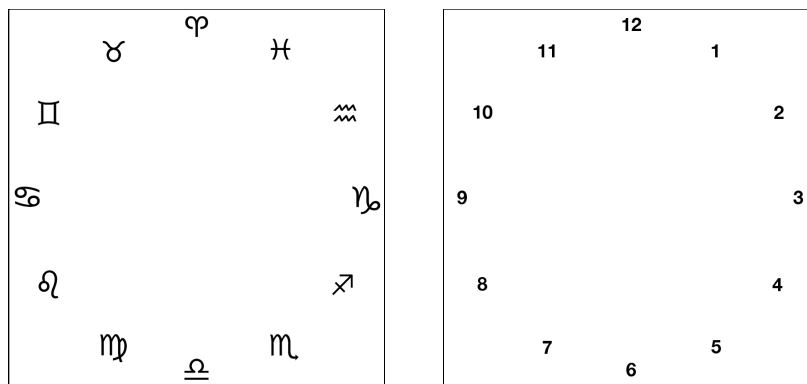
The game ends when one player has recorded scores for all five affinities. Then the player with the highest total score is the winner.

The Zodiac

These are the names and symbols of the twelve signs of the zodiac:

♈ Aries	♌ Leo	♐ Sagittarius
♉ Taurus	♍ Virgo	♑ Capricorn
♊ Gemini	♎ Libra	♒ Aquarius
♋ Cancer	♏ Scorpio	♓ Pisces

They are listed here in the order in which the sun moves through them during the year. For the Geminos game, the signs are arranged in a counter-clockwise circle. The score for each sign is simply the corresponding number you’d find on a clock face. This is what the arrangement looks like:

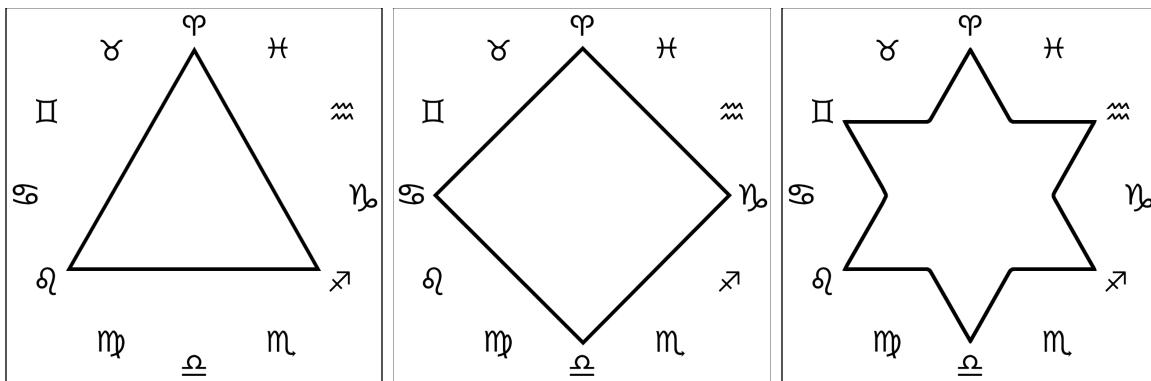


When you roll the dice, you simply add the scores of the two signs together. So if you roll ♉ Taurus and ♎ Libra, the combined score is $11 + 6 = 17$.

The Affinities

Before you record the score for your turn, you have to figure out the relationship between the two signs you’ve rolled on the dice. There are five of these “affinities”:

- Two signs are in **opposition** when they're directly opposite one another on the zodiac circle. For example, ♈ Aries is in opposition with ♎ Libra, ♋ Cancer is in opposition with ♏ Capricorn, and so on.
- Two signs are in **conjunction** if they're next to one another on the zodiac circle. For example, ♈ Aries is in conjunction with ♉ Taurus and ♊ Pisces, ♐ Sagittarius is in conjunction with ♏ Scorpio and ♏ Capricorn, and so on.
- The remaining three affinities are **triangulation**, **quadrature**, and **syzygy**. It's easiest to characterize these relationships using diagrams. Here's what these affinities look like for ♈ Aries:



Thus ♈ Aries is in triangulation with ♌ Leo and ♐ Sagittarius, in quadrature with ♋ Cancer, ♎ Libra, and ♏ Capricorn, and in syzygy with ♊ Gemini, ♌ Leo, ♎ Libra, ♐ Sagittarius, and ♒ Aquarius.

Playing the Game

Game play is quite simple:

1. Roll the dice to get your two signs for the turn.
2. Add the numerical scores of those two signs to get your total score for the turn.
3. Enter that score under the correct affinity on your score card.

But there are several points to keep in mind that make the game more challenging:

- Not every pair of signs are related by an affinity. For example, no sign has an affinity with itself; and ♈ Aries has no affinity with either ♍ Virgo or ♏ Scorpio. So on some turns, you may not be able to record any score at all.
- Two signs may have more than one affinity. For example, ♈ Aries is in both triangulation and syzygy with ♌ Leo. In these cases, you have to choose under which affinity to record your score.
- You *must* enter a score whenever an affinity is available. For example, suppose you roll ♈ Aries and ♉ Taurus. Then you must enter a score of 23 for conjunction, since that's the only affinity these two signs share.

- But then suppose you roll ♒ Aquarius and ♓ Pisces on a later turn. Once again, the only available affinity is conjunction. So now you must *replace* your previous conjunction score of 23 with the new score of 3. This means your total score may go up or down during the game.
- The game ends when one player has entered a score for all five affinities. But it's the player with the *highest* score who wins the game. So, provided you have a choice, you won't want to enter a score for your last remaining affinity, if that would leave another player with more points than you have.

Maximums and Probabilities

Here are the maximum possible scores for each of the five affinities:

Conjunction	23
Syzygy	22
Quadrature	21
Triangulation	20
Opposition	18

Keep these in mind when you're deciding how to enter your score for a turn. You also need to keep in mind the chances of getting a particular affinity on any single roll of the dice. The odds are these:

- There's a 3-in-4 chance of rolling one of the five affinities. This means there's also a 1-in-4 chance that you'll get no score at all on a given turn.
- The chances of rolling two signs that are in syzygy is 5-in-12, or nearly fifty-fifty.
- There's a 1-in-4 chance of rolling a quadrature.
- You have a 1-in-6 chance of rolling a triangulation, and the same chance of rolling a conjunction.
- You have only a 1-in-12 chance of rolling two signs that are in opposition.

Suppose you roll ♈ Aries and ♌ Leo. This gives you a score of 20 for that turn. You now have to choose whether to enter 20 as a triangulation, or as a syzygy.

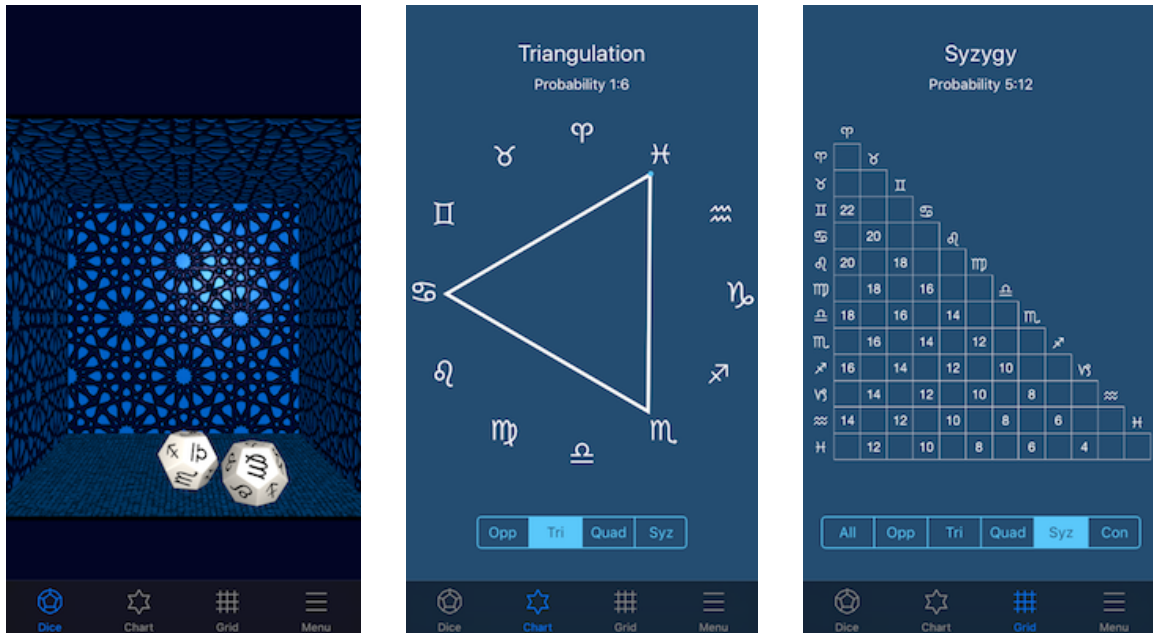
If you enter the score as a syzygy, there's a 5-in-12 chance you'll have to overwrite it on a later turn. And since the highest score you can get for a syzygy is 22, chances are the new score will be lower. But if you enter your score as a triangulation, there's only a 1-in-6 chance of having to overwrite it later.

Of course, your decision will be more complicated if you've already entered scores for either of these two affinities. In that case, you may have to overwrite a previous score.

The Geminos iPhone App

Provided you have some dice, you can play Geminos with just a pencil and paper. Astrological dice can easily be found on the internet. But of course, it's much more fun to use the Geminos app.

The app includes animated 3D dice, scoring tables, a chart for finding affinities, and score cards for up to five players per game. Here's some samples of the app screens:



You can roll the dice by shaking the phone, or by using an upward swiping gesture. You also use right or left swiping gestures to rotate the affinity charts between the different signs. The score cards let you enter player names, and automatically keep track of your total score. The app also keeps a record of the three top winning scores.