


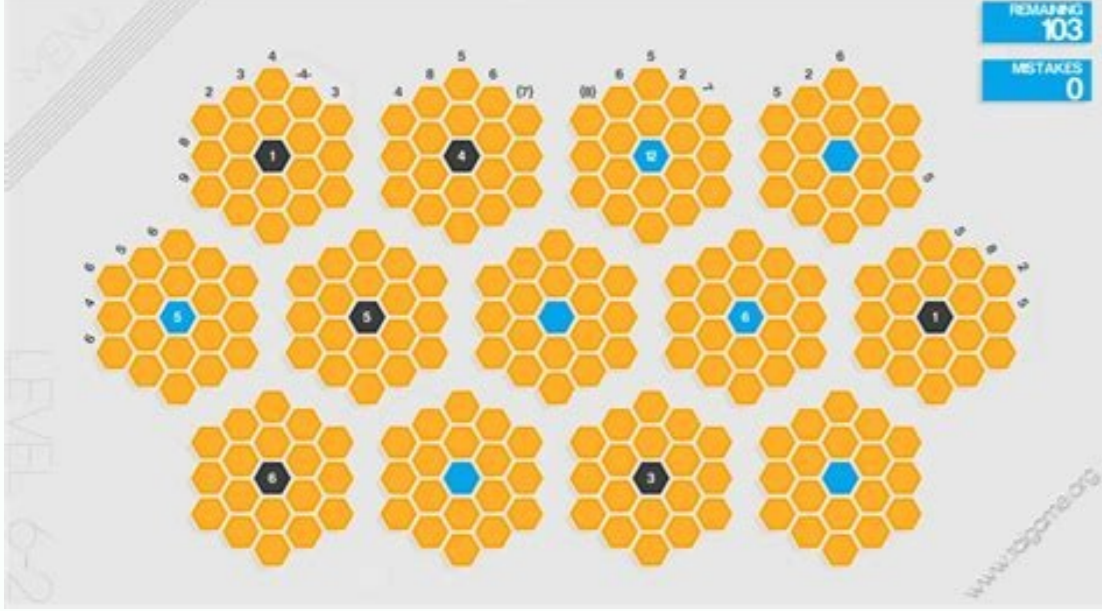
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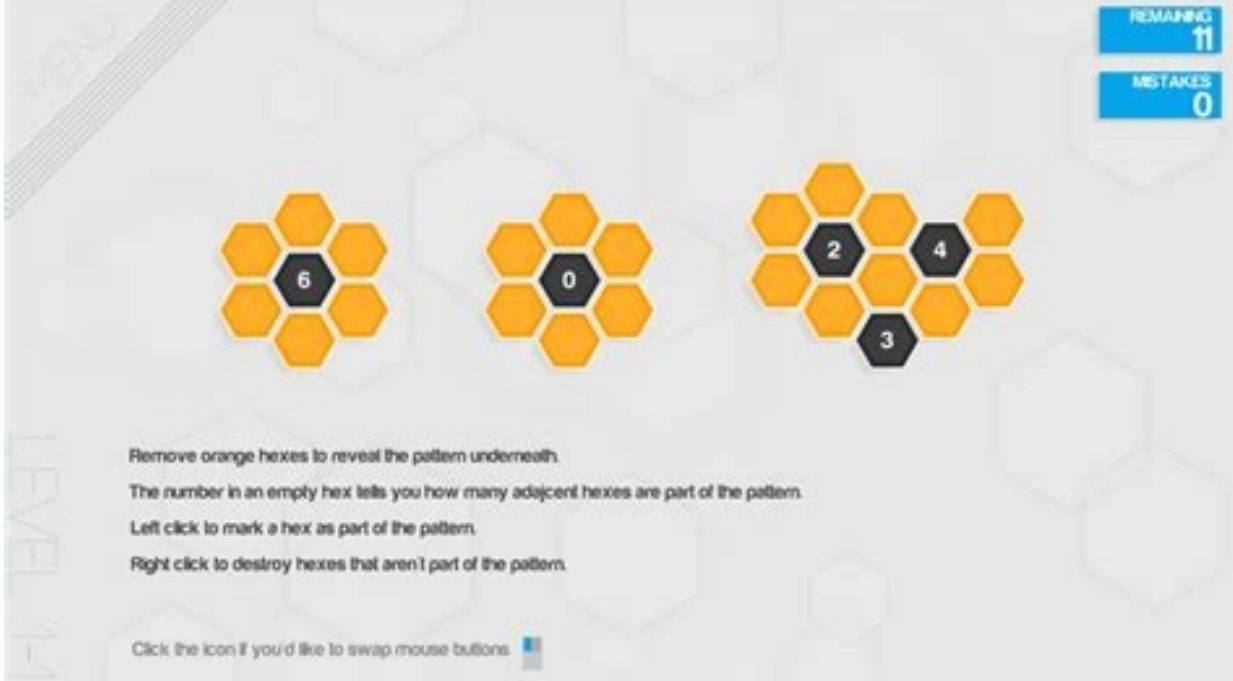
# Hexcells infinite guide

## Hexcells infinite rules.

Chapter 8: Wrapping Up! Well, we have reached the end of our journey through the Hexcells universe. But before I wrap up the series with my own final thoughts, I have something special for you. About 3/4 of the way through creation of the Hexcells Plus and Infinite guides, I got the idea of asking creator Matthew Brown if he might be open to an E-mail interview, so that we might be able to get a glimpse into the the thought processes involved with making the games. Much to my surprise and delight, he agreed, and I have it available for all of you. I thought this would be a great way to conclude this series of strategy guides. I want to thank Matthew for taking the time out to do this, and I hope you all enjoy it. --)1. How did the idea for Hexcells come about?After completing my first game, which had a long and messy development, I wanted to try a smaller and more focused project. I thought a logic puzzle game would be a good fit for this, and being a big fan of Picross I wanted to try something in that style. I tried to emulate some of the logic and thinking that goes into solving a Picross, but in a new format and style.2. Approximately how long did it take you to complete each game?Hexcells was roughly 5 months, Plus was around 3 and Infinite was about 7.3. When you created the first game, did you always know that you wanted it to be a trilogy, or did that decision come about after watching the reception of the original?No, it was only planned as a single game, but it had such a great reception that I immediately started work on a follow up - intended as an advanced set of levels for people who had played the first. After Hexcells Plus I moved on to working on a brand new game but again the reaction was so positive and people were keen for more, so I went back to make one final game in the series.4. As I mentioned in my original E-mail to you, I first learned of Hexcells from Rock, Paper, Shotgun's initial coverage. As far as I've seen, there are still no other games journalism outlets covering the series. What is your reaction to this? Did you personally contact any other games journalism outlets to try and garner more coverage of the games?With the first game I made a big effort and tried contacting a lot of different places, but RPS was one of only a handful of sites who were interested in the game. With the subsequent games I didn't really do any promotion because I figured if the sites weren't interested in the original game they probably wouldn't be interested in the sequels. I think it didn't get a lot of coverage because at first glance it looks a lot like Minesweeper and so didn't really stand out.5. I have heard Hexcells likened to be a sort of spiritual successor to the old game Minesweeper. Do you feel that this is a fair comparison?The 2 games do share the same basic mechanic and a similar look but I think the logical steps a player goes through when solving them are quite different. I've never really played much Minesweeper because of it's lack of logical solving, so it wasn't really an inspiration for the game.6. Hexcells is a very simple game to play, with a very simple, even minimalist, interface: Just the board, the two progress counters, and the music. Did you consider making the games more complicated? Was there a particular atmosphere you had in mind for players?Minimalism was definitely a theme of the game. I tried wherever possible to cut additional rules, mechanics and UI stuff and only make things as complicated as they needed to be. I think a sign of a good puzzle game is when it is able to produce many interesting puzzles from few mechanics, and only introduces new rules when all possible combinations have been exhausted.7. What do you want players to feel when they play Hexcells, especially for the first time?I wanted it to be a relaxing experience.



I think the process of solving a puzzle can be very satisfying and calming, so I tried to emphasize that in the music and visuals as well.8. In terms of difficulty, I found Hexcells Plus to be, overall, the most difficult of the trilogy, mainly because the difficulty seems to spike much more quickly than in the original and even in Hexcells Infinite. Was this intentional? How did the overall difficulty curve come about for each game, and for the trilogy as a whole?Yes, Hexcells Plus was a reaction to the most common complaint about the first game, that it was too short and too easy. I think with Infinite I realised I may have over-done it and tried to make the ramp up in difficulty less sudden. The difficulty across the puzzles in each game is structured like a sawtooth wave that increases with each level set. So the last level of the previous set is harder than the first level of the next set. This gives a nice escalation but also gives the player a rest after a particularly hard puzzle, before building back up again.9. One of my favorite puzzles from a design perspective is Puzzle 6-3 of the original. I really liked the idea of having large, concentric hexagons comprised of the individual smaller hexes. What are some of your favorite puzzles from both a design and a player's perspective?I really enjoyed designing levels where I placed a restraint on myself, such as making a complex puzzle using only column numbers etc. My favourites of these are the smaller puzzles in Infinite like 6-3. They're very concentrated puzzles where every step is a mini-puzzle and every piece is there for a reason. They are quite fatiguing for the player so you have to space them apart, but I think they are the most fun to solve as well.10. One of the more unusual aspects of Hexcells, compared to a lot of other puzzlers I've personally played, is that all of the puzzles truly can be solved using logic alone. Was it always a goal to ensure that players who took the time to learn the game could win without ever having to guess?This always surprises me when people say this. I don't consider anything that requires guessing to really be a puzzle, and I don't play any games like that. So there was never any question, the game always had to be 100% logic driven. 11. How would you describe the overall response to the series by the gaming community?It's been incredible! I've received a lot of emails from people who really loved the series and the games have a lot of really positive reviews on Steam.12. As of this writing, the original Hexcells has almost 1,000 user reviews on Steam.



How do you feel that the games' availability on the Steam platform has helped or hurt you in terms of exposure?It's helped enormously.



Before releasing on Steam the only way people had heard of the game was through RPS, but releasing on Steam exposed the games to a vast new audience. In the first few days on Steam the games sold more than they had in all the months I'd been selling them through my website.13. Some of the puzzle solutions are incredibly involved and intricate. When you were designing some of those levels, was there ever a point where you got turned around in the design or even stumped yourself during playtesting?Absolutely. Even coming back to play a puzzle a few hours after I'd finished designing it I was essentially playing the puzzle from scratch. I think there's just too much information to hold in your head at once, and even if you have a vague idea about how the puzzle is laid out, it misleads you more often than it helps. There were more than a few times in play testing where I was convinced there was a fault in the puzzle and I'd have to go back and change it only to discover I'd missed something.