

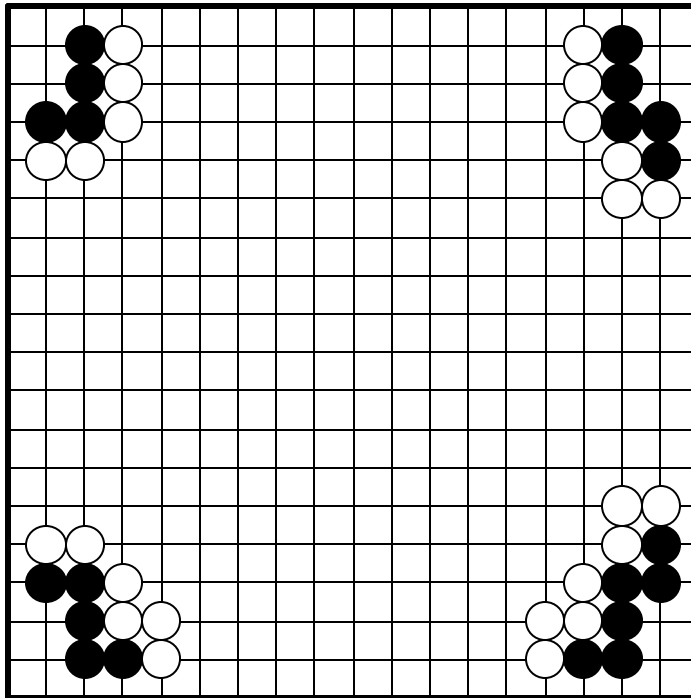
## Life and Death: Roland's Canonical Positions

In all cases it is assumed that it is impossible for Black to connect out to other stones or otherwise make an outside eye. The problem books almost always show two additional stones which prevent escape. I leave them off here because the basic shape is what is of interest and because during a game it is your responsibility to determine that enclosure is secure. Note that sometimes a defensive descent to the first line will set up a connection out; in such cases you must first secure the outside or abandon the attempt to kill.

The other assumption is that all these life and death statements require perfect play.

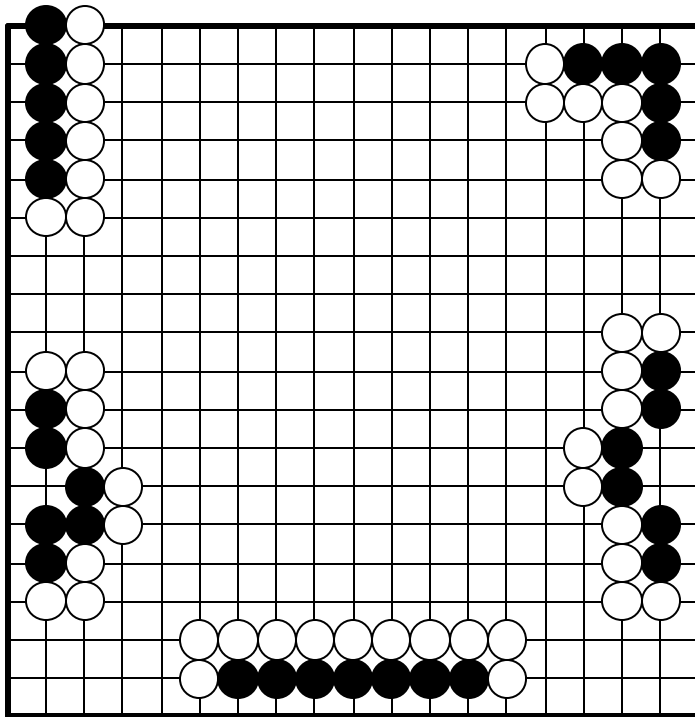
The importance of knowing these canonical positions is two-fold: first, it becomes easier to analyze a game position since you have a known starting point; second, you can make more secure strategic decisions when you know whether a position is defensible. I have made money (figuratively) by tempting opponents to defend secure groups. Others have killed my dead groups, much to my profit. In other words, you can reduce wasted moves.

### The L Group



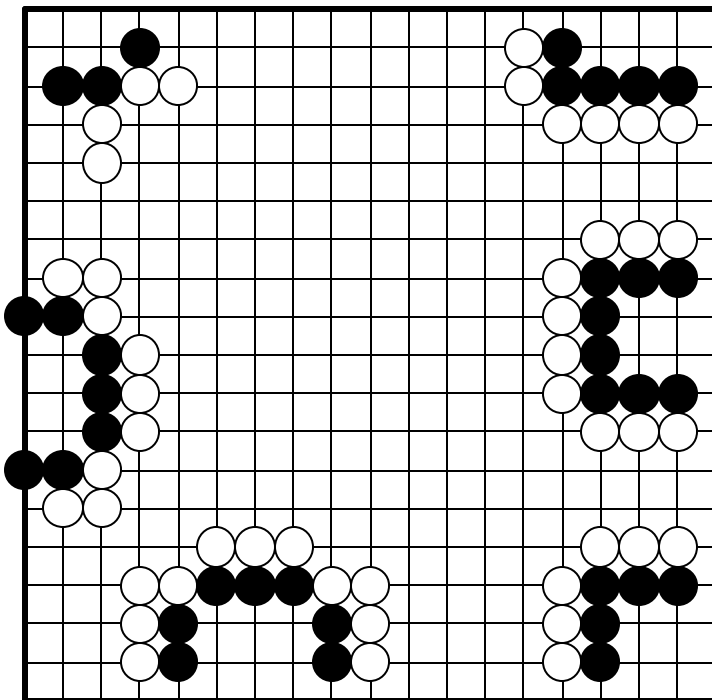
This includes the basic L group, which is dead, two L+1 groups, which live or die with *sente*, and the L+2 group, which is alive.

### The Second Line



Seven in a row live or die in *sente*. That number is reduced to five in the corner. Five is enough with *sente* on the side if you can get one eye on the second line. But six is not enough if there are two cut points.

### Miscellaneous



The Tripod group is related to the L group, but is alive. The Long L group and the Carpenter's Square live outright or with *ko*. The Comb is alive, but the giant comb depends on *sente*. The Door group is dead.