

Battleship Advance Rules

Soren Bjornstad

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1 About This Game

These rules are a series of additions to the standard game of Battleship. These rules assume that you know standard Battleship rules and will follow them unless otherwise noted; if you've never played normal Battleship, you should go read up on the rules and play a couple of games with them before you try these.

I created them because I was feeling a little bit bored with normal Battleship. There may be a little bit of strategy in it, but far too much of it is dumb luck for my taste. Besides that, I'd often found that the game got a bit boring when both players were just sitting around trying random spaces and hoping to get lucky.

Much of the game depends on special stacks of pegs. I notate these with the letters W and R, for White and Red, the two colors of pegs in a standard Battleship set. So if I write "WRW", that means that you should stack a red peg between two white pegs. (This game could probably also be played on paper if you don't have a Battleship set, but since I've never tried, you'll have to adapt it yourself.)

Please feel free to contact me with questions, comments, or suggestions. It's hard for me to know if my rules will be clear to other people since I've played the game, so if they don't make sense please let me know so that I can clarify them. My email address is soren.bjornstad@gmail.com.

1.1 Cheating

This game is fairly complicated, and since everything is private in Battleship except for a few verbal questions and replies, it's extremely easy to cheat. Most notably, it's easy to cheat *accidentally* while you're still learning the game. The Collected Tables section may help you a bit, but mostly you will probably just have to change your philosophy. Accept that you will probably end up breaking the rules and cheating, then just do your best to avoid doing it. Don't get mad at your opponent or claim the game is invalid if he or she didn't follow the rules completely—next game it's liable to happen to you. As you play a few games and read the rules again, you'll probably notice that you were playing wrong and can adjust for it.

For obvious reasons, you should not play this game with anyone you don't trust not to cheat on purpose.

2 Rules

2.1 Setup

1. Place your ships as in standard Battleship.
2. Place a helicopter port (RWR) on any open water space; this will be one of the places that your helicopter can refuel. Helicopter ports will be explained in more detail later.

Table 1: *Item Setup*

Item	Symbol	Distribution
Airplane	W	3 on Carrier, 2 on Battleship
Missile	WRW	2 on Submarine
Torpedo	WR	1 on Destroyer
Super Battery	WWW	2 on Battleship, 2 on Patrol Boat
Anti-Helicopter Battery	RRR	1 on Carrier
Helicopter	WW	1 on Carrier

3. Add the items to your ships (place them in the hit peg holes). Use Table 1, Item Setup, for reference.

2.2 About Items

You can move one item from one ship to another on each turn (if you so desire). You cannot move an item to a ship that is not on that item’s “acceptable ships” list (see the table under Setup). (These are roughly practical—it does not make sense to have an airplane that can take off from a submarine.) Items can be moved and rearranged within a ship indefinitely and at any time (even when it is not your turn). No more than one item can occupy each hole at one time. Squares that have been hit are no longer legally considered part of the ship, so you may not place items on top of hit pegs either.

All items except Helicopter may be used only once. To use an item, you remove it from the ship, announce your intention to use it and provide the square you wish to use it on, then pull the pegs apart and place them in the peg compartment. This works on the honor system—there’s nothing to stop you from using three missiles if you don’t think the other player will notice—but then again, so does all of Battleship.

When a ship is hit, you must place a red peg on the square where it was hit (as in standard Battleship). If there is an item on that square but there are other empty spaces on the ship, you may rearrange the items as necessary to allow the placement of the hit peg in the correct spot. If you cannot do this (i.e., all spaces on the ship are currently filled with either items or hit pegs), then you must choose one of the items to discard. Obviously, this should be avoided (by moving items to ships that are less at risk and/or using them), as it causes items to be wasted.

2.3 Turns

On your turn:

1. Move your helicopter fueling peg forward if your helicopter is not currently refueling.

2. Take any Secondary Actions you wish to perform (that is, move things on your own board).
3. Take one Primary Action (that is, do something that affects your opponent's board).
4. If you wish, perform any Secondary Action you did *not* perform in step 2.

Play then passes to the other player. It is acceptable to carry out step 4 while the other player's turn begins; if you have not finished by the time your opponent reaches step 3 and asks you something, simply ask him or her to wait a moment.

Primary Actions affect the other player's board. They include:

1. Shooting at a square (as in standard Battleship).
2. Using an airplane to attempt to find ships.
3. Using an offensive item (missile, torpedo, super battery, anti-helicopter battery).

Secondary Actions affect only your own board. They include:

1. Moving your helicopter.
2. Moving one item between ships.
3. Moving items within a ship.

Secondary Action 3 is special because you may do it multiple times on the same turn and even when it is not your turn.

2.4 Item Effects

Airplanes

Airplanes are used to speed up the game by giving you a rough overview of a 3x3 area on your opponent's board. The area is centered on a square that you pick. When you use the airplane (my usual language is "Please show me the

Table 2: *Item Overview*

Symbol	Item	Acceptable Ships	Effect Summary
W	Airplane	Carrier, Battleship	You get an overview of the 3x3 area around your shot.
WRW	Missile	All	If the shot hits, you get another hit automatically.
WR	Torpedo	All	You get two shots.
WWW	Super Battery	All	If you miss, you get another shot.
RRR	Anti-Helicopter Battery	All	Normal shot, but ignores helicopters.
WW	Helicopter	Carrier, Battleship, Destroyer	Moves around and blocks your opponent's shots.

area around [square]”), your opponent must tell you the numbered columns in the 3x3 area around your shot which contain any ships. For instance, if you direct an airplane at square B2 and your opponent has a submarine from A2–A4, your opponent would say “columns 2 and 3.” Unlike other items, airplanes never cause any hits or do any damage; they only gather information.

Missiles

A missile acts as a normal shot, but if it hits, your opponent must mark another hit on the ship and announce which one it was. (If there are multiple possibilities, your opponent may choose which one to mark and announce.) If the first shot either misses or sinks the ship immediately, the second shot is lost.

Torpedoes

A torpedo gives you two shots at any two squares. Nothing is special about either shot.

Super Batteries

A super battery gives you a second shot if and only if the first shot *misses*. (If the first shot hits, your turn is over.)

Anti-Helicopter Batteries

An anti-helicopter battery has no special effect (it acts as a normal shot). However, as it is a special item, it ignores the effect of helicopters (thus the name). See the next section for more information on helicopters.

Normal Shots

This is not technically an item, but remember that you may always take a regular shot as in standard Battleship. You have an infinite number of normal shots.

2.5 Helicopters

The helicopter is different from all other items in that it is a defensive tool rather than an offensive one: it helps prevent your ships from being hit even when your opponent has found where a hit is. Additionally, it can freely move around the board under its own power.

The “zone of no effect” is the 3x3 area centered on the location of a helicopter while it is over open ocean (not refueling). If your opponent takes a normal shot at a square within the zone of no effect, say, “That is within the zone of no effect,” and do not mark a hit even if it was one. This effectively wastes your opponent’s turn: no information about whether the shot was a hit or miss, nor even whether there is a ship nearby at all, is provided.

The zone of no effect includes the square of the helicopter itself; shooting at the helicopter has no special effect.

Special items of any sort are *not* affected by the zone of no effect—the shot hits or misses as usual (and any effects caused by the item still happen). Therefore, one of the ways to get around not being able to shoot at a square due to a helicopter is to use any special item (such as a Super Battery or an Anti-Helicopter Battery).

As mentioned earlier, helicopters are moved differently from other items. You may not move your helicopter between ships as you can with other items; instead, you must move it under its own power. A helicopter may move 0, 1, or 2 squares orthogonally each turn (by extension, it may also move one square diagonally).

A helicopter may remain aloft for nine turns; if it is still in the air on the tenth turn, it is destroyed and cannot be replaced. A helicopter may refuel before then by landing on your aircraft carrier, battleship, destroyer, or helicopter port. Helicopters may not refuel on any ship with three or more hits on it (it is considered too damaged). Your helicopter port cannot be damaged, so you may always refuel on it. Squares that have been hit are no longer considered part of the ship, so they behave as open ocean for purposes of refueling. Additionally, ships that cannot refuel a helicopter are considered open ocean for purposes of refueling (so the zone of no effect still applies even if the helicopter is above one of those ships).

The time aloft can be easily measured by placing a peg in the empty ship holders on the left side of the Battleship tray. At the beginning of the game and whenever you refuel, place the peg in the first hole in the upper-left-hand corner. When you move your helicopter away from the refueling location (either ship or helicopter port), move the peg into the second hole down, as this will be its first turn aloft. At the beginning of each subsequent turn during which your helicopter is aloft, move the peg to the next hole down (skipping to the second column when necessary). If your turn begins with the peg in the last hole, your helicopter has run out of fuel and must be dismantled.

The zone of no effect does *not* apply while your helicopter is refueling. A helicopter is considered to be refueling when it is over any non-hit square on a ship it can legally refuel on (a carrier, battleship, or destroyer with two or fewer hits) or a helicopter port. See Table 3, Helicopter Refueling, for a summary of what counts as refueling.

When taking off from a ship on which it has refueled, a helicopter may start from any non-hit square on that ship (like any other item, intra-ship moves are free and infinite).

Unlike other items, a helicopter cannot be destroyed by the sinking of a ship. If the ship where the helicopter is refueling is sunk, the helicopter takes off and remains on the square while the ship sinks as usual. (The helicopter is considered to have refueled normally.) However, if a ship is hit and an item must be destroyed to insert the hit peg, the helicopter may not take off to free space; if you wish to choose the helicopter as your lost item, you must destroy it completely. If the helicopter's square is hit but there are still free spaces on

Table 3: *Helicopter Refueling*

A helicopter IS refueling if . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is over a helicopter port. • It is over a non-hit square of a carrier, battleship, or destroyer with no more than two hits on it.
A helicopter is NOT refueling if . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is over a submarine or patrol boat. • It is over any ship square containing a red peg. • It is over a carrier or battleship that has taken three or four hits. • It is over the site of a sunken ship or open ocean.
The zone of no effect applies if and only if a helicopter is NOT refueling.	

the ship, it may move there without penalty.

2.6 Helicopter Ports

The helicopter port is a space for a helicopter to refuel. It can never be destroyed and behaves in all respects as open ocean (it’s a normal “miss” if your opponent fires at it) except that stopping over the square allows your helicopter to refuel.

3 Balance/Reasoning Behind New Game Features

Addition of Airplanes

Airplanes were the first thing I added to standard Battleship. I put them in because I was extremely frustrated with having to repeatedly shoot at random squares hoping to find things. With five airplanes, you can find many ships and greatly decrease the allowable area for the remaining ones.

Addition of Missiles

Missiles serve two functions, both of which involve allowing you to hit ships faster. It’s nice to be able to sink a ship faster when there’s a helicopter defending it—otherwise, you’d have to waste turns trying to get through the zone of no effect. It also allows an element of surprise: you’re never sure when your opponent might be able to sink your ship. In standard Battleship that doesn’t really matter, but when you have items to deal with, you have to worry about

avoiding item destruction, which might cause you to have to use items in a sub-optimal manner to avoid losing them. If your opponent could never shoot two squares at once, you would always have plenty of warning time to move items away, which would make the very real fear of item destruction (which should be a fairly important tactical influence) essentially nil.

Addition of Torpedoes

Torpedoes let you do something like missiles. They can also help balance out the effect of helicopters by letting you knock out a couple of squares on several ships that may be protected by a helicopter. Besides, if you're going to have special items, one that lets you take two shots is pretty much a no-brainer.

Addition of Super Batteries

Since airplanes don't cover the entire board, super batteries can help fill in the gap by letting you shoot at places that are almost certainly going to miss but just might turn out to have a ship on them. They're also an important tool in preventing helicopters from being too powerful, as they can pass through the zone of no effect and you get four of them.

Addition of Anti-Helicopter Batteries

A common theme in some of my first Battleship Advance games was reaching a temporary deadlock at the end of the game where both people were repeatedly shooting at the one remaining square waiting for their opponent's helicopter to run out of fuel. That was the original reason why I created the AHB—if you save it for the end, it can give you an advantage in terms of sinking your opponent's last ship before your protection runs out. Of course, you can use it at any point in the game where you're particularly frustrated at a helicopter.

Addition of the Helicopter

Without helicopters, this game would just be Battleship with a few things that allowed you to play faster (and a slight threat of having items destroyed). You may have noticed that the balance description for every other special item except "airplanes" has the word "helicopter" in it. Essentially, a helicopter makes it harder for your opponent to get things done, while every other item makes it harder for the helicopter to protect things. It also removes the usual certainty that if you know where one square of a ship is, you can hit it. Assuming you have a special item, you can—but you might not want to waste it. I believe that, for the most part, the helicopter is the heart of the added depth of this game.

Addition of the Helicopter Port

The Helicopter Port was the last thing I added to the game. It was actually initially created mostly for an attempted further expansion of the game, in which there were multiple rounds that involved money and purchasing special items. It was somewhat fun, but proved a lot of additional complication for not much added strategy. So, in some ways, the helicopter port is dispensable. I think it does still serve a function, though: it provides a space for refueling that cannot be destroyed (thus ensuring that with proper planning, the helicopter will not run out of fuel unless you choose to allow it to). It also adds an additional element to the considerable strategic element of ship placement. In normal Battleship, it hardly matters unless you put your ships in a totally obvious arrangement, but when you have to consider helicopter protection of ships and helicopter refueling, some ship placements are considerably better than others.

Turn Setup

Secondary Actions may be taken either before or after Primary Actions. This is for two reasons: first, it helps prevent you from forgetting to do something and thus making stupid mistakes; second, it allows you to use an item and then move another item onto the space formerly occupied by that item, which helps prevent item destruction from becoming too large of a problem.

4 Strategy

Before reading this section, you should play a few games and learn how things work. Once you think you have the hang of it, this part is probably worth reading. I haven't done any real studies into how my game works; this is just what I've noticed in my considerable experience with it.

Also read the section on Balance and Reasoning: it might give you a few tips.

4.1 Airplanes

I generally use my airplanes in a configuration that leaves only one or two rows of space between the 3x3 areas—this way, I can easily clear the space in between by shooting at it. There may be better ways (or other good ways), though—if you think of one, let me know!

It makes sense to use your airplanes fairly early in the game and before many of your other items. Ships don't move, so there's no advantage to holding onto your airplanes—they accomplish exactly the same thing whether used on turn one or turn forty. Therefore, if you're running out of space for items because your opponent is getting a bunch of hits on your carrier and/or battleship, you should use an airplane before anything else, since it won't be any more helpful later on.

4.2 Missiles

4.2.1 Offense

As mentioned in Balance, missiles give you the best opportunity to cause your opponent to lose items. It's obviously to your advantage to do this, so you should try to use a missile when your opponent is least expecting it. People are generally likely to remove items when a ship is nearly sunk (for instance, when they have a carrier with three hits on it). On the other hand, if you use a missile on a ship that's still relatively undamaged, you're probably more likely to take out one or two items. This is particularly true if you know your opponent has not used any of the items that start on that ship yet, as people don't tend to move things around for no reason. (For example, if you believe you've found your opponent's submarine—perhaps because you've already found the destroyer and you see that the ship can only be three squares long—and you know your opponent has as yet used no missiles, you probably have a fair chance of destroying at least one missile if you use a missile on it.)

You should be pretty certain that you are targeting a square that a ship is present on before you fire a missile at the square, as you'll lose a free shot if you miss. That said, you might choose to take the risk if you're going for surprise (see the previous paragraph) or you need to use a missile quickly because you're running out of space to keep items.

4.2.2 Defense

Obviously, you wish to avoid item destruction. To this end, it's typically a good idea to use items when a good opportunity comes up to avoid having more items than spaces. This doesn't mean you should fire a missile at a random square (unless all you have left is missiles, the only squares that still remain unhit are covered by missiles, and you have no leads on any location where an opponent's ship might be), but it does mean you should use a missile (or any other item) when it looks like you might have a shot at quickly sinking a ship or destroying items. With a few exceptions, you shouldn't worry about saving items thinking that you might need them later.

It's also useful to distribute items over ships so as to leave one or two free spaces open on each ship for hits. Obviously, if one or more ships are about to be sunk, you should break this pattern and move all items from unsafe ships to safer ones even if you fill all the squares on the safer ships.

If you notice your opponent very carefully marking out all the possible squares a ship could be in without shooting at the correct one, you should be on the alert for a missile attack (make two empty spaces on that ship if you can!).

If you're hit by a missile, you get to choose the second hit if there's more than one option. This may seem like common sense, but if possible, you should pick a square that gives your opponent no further information about the orientation, location, or length of your ship. In general, a square right next to the one your opponent hit should be a safe bet. (You can still move items around to allow the

hit to occur in the square you wish without losing any of them, so this should not be a consideration.)

4.3 Super Batteries

Super Batteries are probably the most versatile offensive item you have. You also have more of them than of any other item (except airplanes, which are not really an offensive item). Here are some uses for super batteries:

- Shoot at a square that is unlikely to have a ship (or even a random one), then at a square that you're pretty sure has a ship.
- Speed up shooting at random squares at the end of the game when you have no more airplanes.
- Break through a zone of no effect.
- Determine which end of a ship you should shoot at (for instance, if you have pegs in C5 and C6, you might want to know if the ship went towards C7 or towards C4—or both). You should start with the end that seems less likely first to maximize the chance that you get two shots.

In general, you should try your hardest to get both shots out of a super battery by shooting at a square that's likely but not certain to miss first. There are always plenty of good squares like that—pick one that seems unlikely to contain a ship, but one where it would be really nice to know that it did. If that shot misses, you can carry on to another intended purpose, like breaking a zone of no effect or shooting at a square that you already know is a hit.

I often wind up using super batteries because I need to get rid of items, but they're the best item to use like that, assuming you don't try your hardest to sink each ship as you find it (which is generally a bad way to go, as explained later in "Should I Sink Ships in Series or Parallel?").

4.4 Torpedoes

4.4.1 Offense

Torpedoes are essentially upgraded super batteries that allow you to take a second shot even if the first shot hits. For that reason, you can use one just like a super battery if you so desire. However, it generally makes more sense to capitalize on the extra chance for a hit. You can use it like a missile if you're pretty sure you know two squares that are hits. You can use it to sink two ships in one turn if you know two ships that are probably one hit away from sinking (this will probably give your opponent a nasty shock, but is probably less likely to destroy an item than making two hits on the same ship). You can use it to break through zones of no effect in two different places. You can also just use it as two normal shots if you have nothing better to do with it, but in general it's best to save the torpedo if you don't have one of those situations on hand.

That said, a torpedo is probably second to a super battery in terms of utility when you have to use an offensive item on a particular turn or risk losing it.

4.4.2 Defense

Essentially everything that was said about missiles applies to torpedoes, as the primary risk beyond simply having your opponent outpace you is having items destroyed. You should avoid keeping any items on ships that are about to be sunk anyway, so having two ships sunk at once is not much to worry about.

4.5 Anti-Helicopter Batteries

Anti-Helicopter Batteries are probably best saved for near the end of the game to help you break through deadlocks (as mentioned in the Balance section). If you have one left and your opponent doesn't, you'll have a very big advantage. That said, super batteries do everything that anti-helicopter batteries do and more, so if you have an early shot that you really need to take from under the nose of a helicopter and a super battery wouldn't be useful, go ahead and use it and save the super battery instead.

4.6 Ship Placement

Unlike in standard Battleship, the location of your ships in Battleship Advance makes a difference. I have not attempted to study anything about the optimal locations of your ships, so I'll just give some basic observations. (Besides, if I came up with an "optimal" arrangement, it still wouldn't make sense to use it each game, because your opponent would catch on and have a serious advantage.)

- It makes sense to create blocks of open space, because an airplane that finds nothing is generally less helpful to your opponent than one that finds two ships is harmful to you. That's for two reasons: first, you can protect both ships at once with your helicopter; second, because your opponent only gets the numbered rows, he or she may completely miss the fact that there are two ships there at all (or at least have more trouble locating and sinking them).
- It makes sense to keep ships at least somewhat close to each other so that your helicopter can move around to protect them quickly. However, you'll probably want to put at least a couple of your ships further away so that your opponent won't find all of them at once. The smaller ships may be better for this, since they're harder to find; it might make sense to put your helicopter port near your patrol boat so that it can refuel nearby if your other ships are sunk.
- Even with these tips, there's always space for creativity; you can't do the same thing every game, or your opponents will start to catch on.

4.7 Should I Sink Ships in Series or Parallel?

Parallel. No contest. In other words, you shouldn't locate one ship, focus on sinking it until it's sunk, then move on to the next ship, as most people do in regular Battleship. That's because of the helicopter—if your opponent knows what he or she is doing and the ship you've found is not all by itself, you will likely eventually find that you're blocked by the zone of no effect. If you use your special items to break through this and sink the ship, you may have succeeded in getting this one, but you still have four more to go, and so you're likely to run out of items with which to get through helicopter zones. Even if you don't, you'll probably end up using some of your items in a suboptimal manner.

When you run into a zone of no effect, consider carefully whether it makes sense to use the resources to get through it (generally when one of your special items, such as a missile, would really be useful) or whether it's better simply to wait and work on another area. If you can find a ship on the other side of the board, your opponent will have to choose one ship or the other to protect and you'll be able to take one of them out with all normal shots (if you so desire). Similarly, if you find several ships right from the beginning, your opponent will have to decide which ships to defend with his or her helicopter, leaving some of them unprotected.

There are benefits to completely sinking your opponent's ships, such as the loss of item space, but most of them are achieved in proportional amounts by simply gaining hits on any ship. For instance, once you've made three hits on a carrier, a helicopter cannot refuel there anyway. The two item spaces that remain could be removed by sinking the carrier, but you gain the same effect by making any two hits elsewhere (assuming the spaces are not taken up by airplanes that cannot go anywhere else, which is rare, as games typically begin with the use of several airplanes, making the airplane the least likely item to be lost).

4.8 Avoiding Item Destruction

The most important strategical element in Battleship Advance is probably the helicopter. But second to that is avoiding having your items destroyed. Many strategies for both maximizing your chance of destroying your opponent's items and avoiding having your own items destroyed are outlined in the sections on Missiles and Torpedoes.

One thing that has only been covered tangentially is which items to use first. Ideally, you would use items as they were most useful on a given turn. However, since items must share spaces with hit pegs, if you follow this strategy completely you're likely to end up losing items (unless your opponent is either extremely bad or extremely unlucky). Frequently you will find that you need to use an item to avoid the risk of losing it, either because you can only move one item between ships per turn and you need to move two or more because of imminent danger to ships or because you simply do not have enough total empty holes to store all your items safely. When you must use items at a suboptimal

time, you should generally use items in this order:

- Airplane.
- Super Battery.
- Torpedo.
- Missile.
- Anti-Helicopter Battery.

Airplanes are first because, as mentioned under Airplanes, they provide an equal effect on every turn of the game. Super Batteries are next; provided you're sinking ships in parallel, you will usually know at least one likely hit, and you can use the first shot to aim at a place that seems unlikely just in case. Torpedoes are third; they're essentially upgraded super batteries, and two shots is usually useful to at least some degree. Missiles are fourth; while they're very powerful, they're completely useless if you miss, so you should always be as certain as possible that a square will be a hit before you use them. Anti-helicopter batteries are last because they're only useful in a very specific situation (when you have a square that is known to be a hit but is currently blocked by a helicopter).

Since Battleship Advance has no order of actions within your turn—you can perform any legal action at any point during your turn, as long as you don't do it twice—it is legal to use an item and then move another onto the space it was formerly on (even though using an item or taking a shot is typically the last thing you would do on your turn). Therefore you can usually use whichever item you wish to, rather than being bound by which item is on the space that you need to free to avoid losing an item (the exception would involve an airplane, since they cannot legally be placed on every ship).

Keep in mind that this list is only a set of general guidelines, not the only sensible way to play the game: if you need to use either a super battery or a missile but you have a square that you're 95% certain is a hit, go ahead and use the missile.

4.9 Helicopters

4.9.1 Using Helicopters

Helicopters are the only real way to defend your ships in Battleship Advance. You therefore have a major interest in making sure your helicopter is not destroyed. Fortunately, this is relatively easy: the only way for your helicopter to be destroyed is for it to run out of fuel, and you can always see the fuel counter, so the only way to run out of fuel is user error. It makes sense, however, to place your ships and your helicopter port so that you can refuel without making a long journey to do so (see Ship Placement). It may also occasionally make sense to allow your helicopter to run out of fuel at the end of the game. For

instance, if your helicopter has two turns of fuel left but is guarding the only square that remains unhit on your entire board, it does not make sense to divert the helicopter away to the helicopter port to refuel, because you will lose when the zone of no effect ceases. It makes no difference whether that happens because the helicopter ran out of fuel or left to refuel, because in either case the turn when the zone of no effect ceases is the last turn of the game. It is much better to hang on and hope that you might be able to take out your opponent in the two turns that remain (assuming he or she doesn't have any special items left to break through your helicopter block).

You will have to prioritize which ships you want your helicopter to protect, because you can't protect every one at once. Generally it makes more sense to allow ships that are nearly sunk to be sunk while protecting the ones with more unhit squares, since the larger ones have more item space and will take a larger number of hits to sink in the future. However, bear in mind that larger ships are also a more attractive target for special items, particularly missiles, which will ignore the helicopter completely.

It is possible to protect two ships at once when they have three squares of open ocean between them by moving to the other ship on every turn. This can be extremely frustrating to your opponent for a little while, but it is obviously not a long-term strategy: eventually your opponent will just target the same square twice and hit it. It's a bit like playing a game of rock-paper-scissors that's deadlocked because both players keep choosing the same item. With good luck and practice, however, you may be able to delay your opponent for several turns while you get what are essentially free turns to attack him or her.

It is usually better to remain focused on one area of the board and ignore others—otherwise you will spend most of the game flying between ships instead of actually protecting them. However, if your opponent has only found one area of the board and your helicopter is in another, it's probably sensible to head over there.

When your opponent is in the last stage of the game, just looking for one or two ships by shooting randomly, an interesting but risky tactic is to move your helicopter to an area of the board that has no ships anywhere near it and hope that your opponent will try to hit it and think that since there's a helicopter there, there must be something worth hitting nearby. (This works better if you've marked where your opponent has searched on *your* board, so you know where he or she is actually likely to try shooting.)

4.9.2 Fighting Against Helicopters

The most important offensive technique against helicopters is switching locations. Helicopters move fairly slowly in relation to the size of the board in Battleship, so unless your opponent has placed all of his or her ships right next to one another, the helicopter won't be able to defend all of them at once. Therefore, when you reach a stubborn zone of no effect, you can simply switch to another semi-distant location (using an airplane or two to find another ship if necessary). Your opponent will have to either ignore the new ship, letting you

sink it easily, or fly over to protect it, leaving the first ship open to your attack.

If your opponent decides to use the extremely annoying technique of switching back and forth between ships that are close enough to move between in one turn (see the Using section), you've been outsmarted. One option is to switch to another location, hoping to decoy your opponent into moving over there, then taking out one of the two ships that are right next to each other. Unless your opponent has not read this strategy section and/or isn't thinking clearly, however, this is unlikely to work—you'll probably take out the other ship, but you'll still have to deal with the problem. You could use a special item or two on one of the ships, but keep in mind that you'll probably have to use a special item on the other one as well, since the helicopter will then be free to protect the other ship full-time. The other option is to simply play the game and hope you'll get lucky before you waste too many turns. (Eventually the helicopter will have to refuel, but this is no use because you have no idea when that will be. If one of the ships that is being protected can refuel the helicopter, it'll only be one turn out, so you'd have to shoot every turn to find out when it is.)

As you hopefully know, special items ignore helicopters, but you probably don't have enough of them to deal with every instance of a helicopter getting in your way, so you'll need to prioritize. Keep in mind that super batteries work very well to take out a stubborn space or two, and you get four of them. To get the best use out of the super battery, you should shoot at another square that you expect to be a miss before shooting at the troubled square—that way you can clear a miss in the same turn and just maybe find a ship you didn't even know was there.

5 Collected Tables

This page should be printed out and used as a reference during the game.

Item Setup

Item	Symbol	Distribution
Airplane	W	3 on Carrier, 2 on Battleship
Missile	WRW	2 on Submarine
Torpedo	WR	1 on Destroyer
Super Battery	WWW	2 on Battleship, 2 on Patrol Boat
Anti-Helicopter Battery	RRR	1 on Carrier
Helicopter	WW	1 on Carrier

Item Overview

Symbol	Item	Acceptable Ships	Effect Summary
W	Airplane	Carrier, Battleship	You get an overview of the 3x3 area around your shot.
WRW	Missile	All	If the shot hits, you get another hit automatically.
WR	Torpedo	All	You get two shots.
WWW	Super Battery	All	If you miss, you get another shot.
RRR	Anti-Helicopter Battery	All	Normal shot, but ignores helicopters.
WW	Helicopter	Carrier, Battleship, Destroyer	Moves around and blocks your opponent's shots.

Helicopter Refueling

A helicopter IS refueling if . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is over a helicopter port. • It is over a non-hit square of a carrier, battleship, or destroyer with no more than two hits on it.
A helicopter is NOT refueling if . . .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is over a submarine or patrol boat. • It is over any ship square containing a red peg. • It is over a carrier or battleship that has taken three or four hits. • It is over the site of a sunken ship or open ocean.
The zone of no effect applies if and only if a helicopter is NOT refueling.	