

The Othello Problem

History and provenance

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The related coin puzzle

Replacing the Othello chips with coins gives the familiar blindfolded-coin puzzle: a known number show heads, and the solver must create two piles containing equal numbers of heads without seeing them.

A documented printed example appears in M. Kaykobad's *Some Puzzles for Brainstorming* (2026), using 50 coins, 16 initially showing heads [1]. This is evidence of a published variant, not evidence of its first invention. The Othello wording in Philip Thomas's supplied page uses 1,017 chips and 23 black faces; these numbers do not change the underlying problem.

Limits of the attribution

I did not establish an original author or earliest publication for the blindfolded-coin puzzle. It would be misleading to credit Kaykobad, the Othello game designers, or the author of this solution with inventing it on that evidence alone.

The essential rule is that the solver may turn chips over. No ability to distinguish the two faces by touch is assumed.

Sources

[1] M. Kaykobad, Some Puzzles for Brainstorming, Olympiads in Informatics 20 (2026), 171–177.

https://ioinformatics.org/journal/v20_2026_171_177_Kaykobad.pdf

Sources checked September 7, 2026. A documented appearance is not necessarily the earliest appearance.