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(54) Title: BOARD GAME AND METHOD OF PLAYING THE SAME

(57) Abstract: The present invention is a game board in which game pieces positioned on the game board are exchanged with one another on the game board until a winning combination of positioned game pieces on the board is evident. Each game piece has at least two defining characteristics and no two pieces have the same two defining characteristics.

## Board Game and Method of Playing the Same

### DESCRIPTION

#### Background

[Para 1] The present invention relates to a game. More particularly, the present invention relates to a critical thinking game in which one or more players exchange game pieces on a board until a predetermined arrangement of game pieces is realized.

[Para 2] Games played out on boards comprising grids defining a plurality of spaces are well known. Checkers, chess, OTHELLO® and Go are well known examples. The object of the game in many such board games comprising grids of spaces is to capture an opponent's game pieces or position, or move all of one's own playing pieces to an opposing side of the board, or both.

[Para 3] Such board games typically require a minimum of at least two individual players, as the object of the game is to capture or outflank an opposing player's playing pieces.

[Para 4] The rules of such games may be difficult to initially learn and require years of playing until the game is mastered. Difficult rules can significantly decrease mass appeal of a game.

[Para 5] Games requiring a minimum of one player are of a growing popularity. This is especially true because of the growing popularity of portable gaming systems as well as devices, such as, for example, mobile phones and personal data assistants (PDA) on which games can be a secondary function. Often, individuals may play the games on such systems and devices to pass short periods of time, break up monotony of a job, keep one's mind fresh, and to be intellectually challenged.

**[Para 6]** WO 2006/133121 is desired is a board game that can be played individually, is easy to learn, can provide critical thinking challenges, while also providing entertainment. PCT/US2006/021790

## Summary

**[Para 7]** The various exemplary embodiments of the present invention include a game board apparatus. The game board apparatus comprises a board and a set of individual game pieces. The board comprises a two or three dimensional grid of playing spaces in a fixed area. The individual game pieces of the set each comprise at least a first predetermined characteristic and a second predetermined characteristic. None of the individual game pieces comprise both an identical first predetermined characteristic and an identical second predetermined characteristic as any other of the individual game pieces of the set. The number of individual game pieces in the set is preferably equal to a number of playing spaces on the board. It is preferred that each of the individual game pieces is positioned on the board such that each of the individual game pieces singly occupies a related playing space. Individual game pieces are exchanged with other individual game pieces positioned on the board until one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements are evident on the board.

**[Para 8]** The various exemplary embodiments further include a method of playing a game board apparatus. The game board apparatus comprises a board and a set of individual game pieces. The board comprises a two or three dimensional grid of playing spaces in a fixed area. The individual game pieces of the set each comprise at least a first predetermined characteristic and a second predetermined characteristic. None of the individual game pieces comprise both an identical first predetermined characteristic and an identical second predetermined characteristic as any other of the individual game pieces of the set. The number of individual game pieces in the set is equal to a number of playing spaces on the board. The method of playing the board game apparatus comprises positioning the individual game pieces on

the board with each of the individual game pieces singly occupying the related playing space. Then, the individual game pieces are exchanged with one another on the board until one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements are evident on the board.

### Brief Description of Drawings

[Para 9] Various exemplary embodiments of the present invention, which will become more apparent as the description proceeds, are described in the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which:

[Para 10] Figure 1 is an illustration of an exemplary embodiment of a game board comprising the game board apparatus of the present invention.

[Para 11] Figures 2a and 2b are illustrations of exemplary embodiments of game pieces comprising the game board apparatus of the present invention.

[Para 12] Figure 3 is a graphic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the game board apparatus of the present invention with the individual game pieces of the set positioned on the game board.

[Para 13] Figure 4 is a graphic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention showing two individual game pieces exchanged for one another's position on the game board.

[Para 14] Figure 5 is another graphic representation of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention showing another two individual game pieces exchanged for one another's position on the game board.

### Detailed Description

[Para 15] The various exemplary embodiments of the present invention include a method and a board game apparatus and a method of playing with the board game apparatus.

**[Para 16]** The board apparatus of the various exemplary embodiments herein includes a board on which the game is played. As shown in Figure 1, the board 10 is preferably a two or three dimensional grid of individual playing spaces 20. The playing spaces of the grid are preferably significantly identical in size and shape from one another.

**[Para 17]** In exemplary embodiments, the board 10 may comprise multiple playing levels (not shown) perpendicular to a surface plane of the grid shown in Figure 1. Such multiple playing levels may significantly increase the challenge of the game as it would be played within three dimensions rather than two dimensions as shown in Figure 1.

**[Para 18]** The grid in the various exemplary embodiments comprises multiple rows 22 and multiple columns 24 comprised of the playing spaces. It is preferred that the number of columns and the number of rows are equal. In the various exemplary embodiments, there are at least four rows of playing spaces. In other exemplary embodiments, there are at least four columns of playing spaces.

**[Para 19]** Although the playing spaces in Figures 1 and 3-5 display the playing spaces as being significantly square in shape, the playing spaces may comprise any shape, with the preferred caveat that the playing spaces overall form a grid shape. For example, the playing spaces may be circular in shape and be formed in a grid of four rows of circular playing spaces and four columns of circular playing spaces.

**[Para 20]** The board of the various exemplary embodiments need not be of traditional board game composition. That is, although the board of the various exemplary embodiments herein may be of cardboard, plastic, wood, metal, cloth, or similar material, the board may be electronically generated and displayed such that the game may be played on a computing device such as, for example, a computer, a mobile phone, a personal data assistant (PDA), a gaming device, and similar. If the board is metal, the game pieces may be magnetic in order to more substantially remain positioned on the board.

**[Para 21]** In addition to the board, the game board apparatus of the various exemplary embodiments comprises a set of individual game pieces 30.

[Para 22] As shown in Figures 2a and 2b, the individual game pieces of the set each comprise at least a first predetermined characteristic 35 and second predetermined characteristic 45. In Figure 2a, the first predetermined characteristic is the circular shape of the individual game piece. The second predetermined characteristic is the symbol or letter "E" on the top of the individual game piece. In Figure 2b, the first predetermined characteristic is the square shape of the individual game piece. The second predetermined characteristic is the symbol or letter "C" on the top of the individual game piece.

[Para 23] No multiple individual game pieces of the set comprise identical first predetermined characteristic and second predetermined characteristic. As such, each game piece in the set is unique. For example, in Figure 3, only a single game piece is both circular in shape and had a symbol "A."

[Para 24] Although no individual game piece comprises the same first predetermined characteristic and same second predetermined characteristic as any other individual game piece, individual game pieces may have the same first predetermined characteristic or same second predetermined characteristic as other individual game pieces.

[Para 25] For example, in reference to Figure 3, five individual playing pieces are shown having the shape of, for example, a circle. Each of the five individual playing pieces shown having the first predetermined characteristic of a shape of a circle comprise five different second predetermined characteristics. In Figure 3, the second predetermined characteristic is a symbol of the letters "A," "B," "C," "D," or "E."

[Para 26] The number of individual game pieces in a set is preferably equal to the number of playing spaces. Thus, if there are a total of sixteen playing spaces comprised of four columns 24 of playing spaces and four rows 22 of playing spaces, it is preferred that there are a total of sixteen individual playing pieces.

[Para 27] The first predetermined characteristic 35 of the individual playing pieces may be based on color, shape, size, or one or more printed symbols.

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[Para 28] In the exemplary embodiment comprising a twenty-five individual game pieces for twenty-five playing spaces comprised of five columns of playing spaces and five rows of playing spaces, there should be at least five different first predetermined characteristics. That is, the number of different first predetermined characteristics is equal to the number of rows of playing spaces.

[Para 29] In this exemplary embodiment, five different first predetermined characteristics are needed. If the first predetermined characteristic is based on color, then five different colors are chosen as, for example, red, yellow, green, blue, and white. Of course, any other color could be chosen to replace one of these exemplary colors, as long as no two identical colors are chosen for the first predetermined characteristic.

[Para 30] In this example, the first predetermined characteristic could instead be based on size. In such an embodiment, the individual game pieces would differ from one another in five different sizes.

[Para 31] Wherein the first predetermined characteristic is based on shape, five different shapes would be chosen. For example, five different shapes may be five different animal shapes such as, for example, a dog, a kangaroo, a fish, an elephant, and a giraffe. The different shapes need not be based on animals, of course, and can represent different buildings, people, geometric shapes, vehicles, and the like.

[Para 32] Finally, the first predetermined characteristic may be based on symbols on the individual game pieces. Such symbols may be simple such as, for example, any combination of one or more symbols, numbers or letters; or symbols or logos representing different business, literary or cartoon characters, colleges and universities, athletic teams, states, countries, and the like.

[Para 33] In this exemplary embodiment comprising a total of twenty-five individual game pieces for twenty-five playing spaces comprised of five columns of playing spaces and five rows of playing spaces, there should also be at least five different second predetermined characteristics. That is, the

number of first predetermined characteristics is preferred to the number of columns of playing spaces on the board. WO 2006/133121 PCT/US2006/021790

[Para 34] The second predetermined characteristic 45 may also be based on color, size, shape, or printed symbols as set forth above. However, the second predetermined characteristic should be based on different characteristics than the first predetermined characteristic 35.

[Para 35] That is, if the first predetermined characteristic is based on color, for example, then the second predetermined characteristic should be based on one or more of size, shape, or printed symbols.

[Para 36] Since each individual playing piece has two different predetermined characteristics, no two playing pieces in a set have the same combination of first predetermined characteristic and second predetermined characteristic. For example, in Figure 1, there is only one piece that is circular in shape and has a printed letter "A" on it.

[Para 37] In the various exemplary embodiments, during game play, one or more players position the individual game pieces in individual playing spaces of the board into one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements.

[Para 38] The one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements may be, for example, an arrangement of individual game pieces on the board such that each individual playing space is occupied by an individual game piece, each row of playing spaces consists of individual playing pieces having different first predetermined characteristics and different second predetermined characteristics, and each column of playing spaces consists of individual playing pieces having different first predetermined characteristics and different second predetermined characteristics.

[Para 39] Another predetermined winning configuration of game piece arrangements may be, for example, an arrangement of individual game pieces on the board such that each individual playing space is occupied by an individual game piece, each row of playing spaces consists of individual game pieces having different first predetermined characteristics and different second

WO 2006/133121 characteristics, each column of playing spaces consist of individual game pieces having different first predetermined characteristics and different second predetermined characteristics, and each corner-to-corner "X" shape, or other desired shape, of playing spaces consist of individual game pieces having different first predetermined characteristics and different second predetermined characteristics.

[Para 40] Yet another predetermined winning configuration of game piece arrangements may be, for example, an arrangement of individual game pieces of the board such that each row of playing spaces consists of game pieces having identical first predetermined characteristics, and each column of playing spaces consists of game pieces having different second predetermined characteristics.

[Para 41] Another predetermined winning configuration of game piece arrangements may be, for example, an arrangement of individual game pieces of the board such that each row of playing spaces consists of game pieces having identical first predetermined characteristics, each column of playing spaces consists of game pieces having different second predetermined characteristics, and each corner-to-corner "X" shape, or other desired shape, of playing spaces consist of individual game pieces having different second predetermined characteristics.

[Para 42] Yet another predetermined winning configuration of game piece arrangements may be, for example, an arrangement of individual game pieces of the board such that each game piece is adjacent to or adjoining at least one other game piece having the same first predetermined characteristic, but no two or more game pieces in any row, column, or corner-to-corner "X" shape of playing spaces have the same second predetermined characteristic.

[Para 43] In starting to play the game of the exemplary embodiments herein, each individual game piece may be positioned randomly and singly in a playing space. In another exemplary embodiment, the individual game pieces may be positioned singly in playing spaces such that an initial pattern is formed such as, for example, positioning game pieces having identical first predetermined characteristic in the same row and positioning game pieces having identical

second predetermined characteristics in the same column. See, for WO 2006/133121 PCT/US2006/021790  
Figure 3. As an alternative to a starting position, this same pattern shown in Figure 3 may be a predetermined winning configuration, especially for younger players.

[Para 44] In playing the game, the game pieces do not need to be placed on the board initially and then exchanged for one another. In different embodiments, the game pieces may be left off the board initially and then placed on the board by one or more players as desired.

[Para 45] In order to play the game, one or more players exchange playing spaces of individual game pieces with one another on the board until the one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements is evident on the board.

[Para 46] For example, Figure 4 shows the exchange of two individual game pieces on the board. A first moved individual game piece 50, having a first predetermined characteristic of a star shape and a second predetermined characteristic of a symbol "E," is changed on the board with a second moved individual game piece 55, having a first predetermined characteristic of a hexagon shape and a second predetermined characteristic of a symbol "A."

[Para 47] Figure 5 shows the exchange of another two individual game pieces on the board. A third moved individual game piece 60, having a first predetermined characteristic of a circular shape and a second predetermined characteristic of a symbol "E," is changed on the board with a fourth moved individual game piece 65, having a first predetermined characteristic of a star shape and a second predetermined characteristic of a symbol "A."

[Para 48] The game play progresses in a similar fashion of exchanging individual game pieces with one another's position on the board until one or more winning combinations, examples of which are set forth above, are realized.

[Para 49] Although the above description describes the game with regard to arranging game pieces, a first predetermined characteristic and a second characteristic, the game also may be played wherein the same rules apply but

wherein there is also a third predetermined characteristic such that pieces are to be arranged such that the same third predetermined characteristic is not evident in the same row or column as described above for the first predetermined characteristic and the second predetermined characteristic.

[Para 50] If present, the third characteristic may also be based on color, size, shape, or printed symbols as set forth above. However, the third predetermined characteristic should be based on different characteristics than the first predetermined characteristic and the second predetermined characteristic.

[Para 51] While this invention has been described in conjunction with the specific embodiments outlined above, it is evident that many alternatives, modifications and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the preferred embodiments of the invention as set forth above are intended to be illustrative, not limiting. Various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

[Claim 1] 1. A game board apparatus, comprising:

a board comprising a grid of multiple rows and multiple columns of playing spaces in a fixed area;

a set of individual game pieces, wherein each individual game piece comprises at least a first predetermined characteristic and a second predetermined characteristic such that none of the individual game pieces comprise an identical first predetermined characteristic and an identical second predetermined characteristic as any other of the individual game pieces of the set, and the number of individual game pieces in the set is equal to a number of playing spaces on the board;

each of the individual game pieces is positioned on the board such that each of the individual game pieces singly occupies a related playing space; and

individual game pieces are positioned, exchanged with other individual game pieces positioned on the board, or a combination thereof, until one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements are evident on the board.

[Claim 2] 2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first predetermined characteristic is selected from the group consisting of color, shape, size, and printed symbol.

[Claim 3] 3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second predetermined characteristic is selected from the group consisting of color, shape, size, and printed symbol.

[Claim 4] 4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first predetermined characteristic and the second predetermined characteristic are not of the same group.

[Claim 5] 5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a number of first predetermined characteristics is equal to a number of rows.

[Claim 6] 6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a number of second predetermined characteristics is equal to a number of columns. WO 2006/133121 PCT/US2006/021790

[Claim 7] 7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a number of rows is equal to a number of columns.

[Claim 8] 8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the number of rows is at least four.

[Claim 9] 9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the board comprises multiple levels of play perpendicular to the grid.

[Claim 10] 10. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a third predetermined characteristic.

[Claim 11] 11. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the one or more predetermined winning configurations is selected from an arrangement having rows and columns of the grid each consisting of different first predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each row, different second predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each row, different first predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each column, and different second predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each column.

[Claim 12] 12. A method of playing a game board apparatus, wherein the game board apparatus comprises a board and a set of individual game pieces, the board comprising a grid of multiple rows and multiple columns of playing spaces in a fixed area, and the set of individual game pieces, wherein each individual game piece comprises at least a first predetermined characteristic and a second predetermined characteristic such that none of the individual game pieces comprise an identical first predetermined characteristic and an identical second predetermined characteristic as any other of the individual game pieces of the set, and the number of individual game pieces in the set is equal to a number of playing spaces on the board, the method comprising:

positioning the individual game pieces on the board such that each of the individual game pieces singly occupies a related playing space; and

ing the individual pieces, exchanging the individual pieces with other individual game pieces positioned on the board, or a combination thereof, until one or more predetermined winning configurations of game piece arrangements are evident on the board.

[Claim 13] 13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the first predetermined characteristic is selected from the group consisting of color, shape, size, and printed symbol.

[Claim 14] 14. The method according to claim 12, wherein the second predetermined characteristic is selected from the group consisting of color, shape, size, and printed symbol.

[Claim 15] 15. The method according to claim 12, wherein the first predetermined characteristic and the second predetermined characteristic are not of the same group.

[Claim 16] 16. The method according to claim 12, wherein a number of rows is equal to a number of columns.

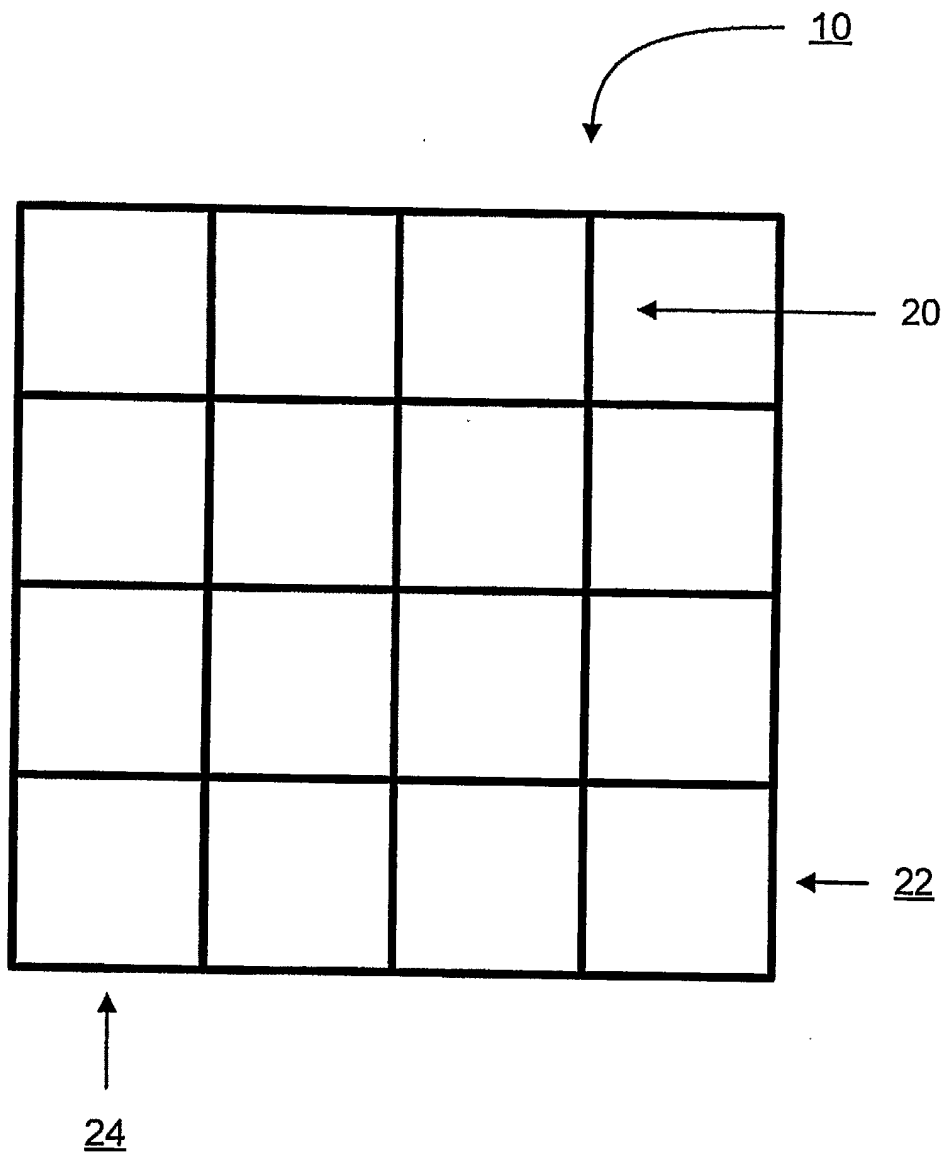
[Claim 17] 17. The method according to claim 12, wherein the number of rows is at least four.

[Claim 18] 18. The method according to claim 12, wherein the board comprises multiple levels of play perpendicular to the grid.

[Claim 19] 19. The method according to claim 12, further comprising a third predetermined characteristic.

[Claim 20] 20. The method according to claim 12, wherein the one or more predetermined winning configurations is selected from an arrangement having rows and columns of the grid each consisting of different first predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each row, different second predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each row, different first predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each column, and different second predetermined characteristics in each playing space of each column.

Figure 1



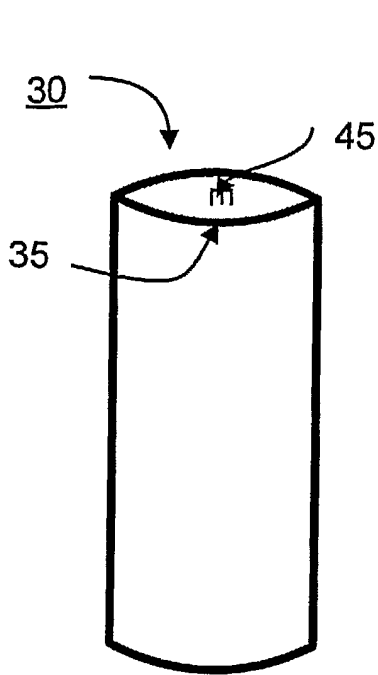


Figure 2a

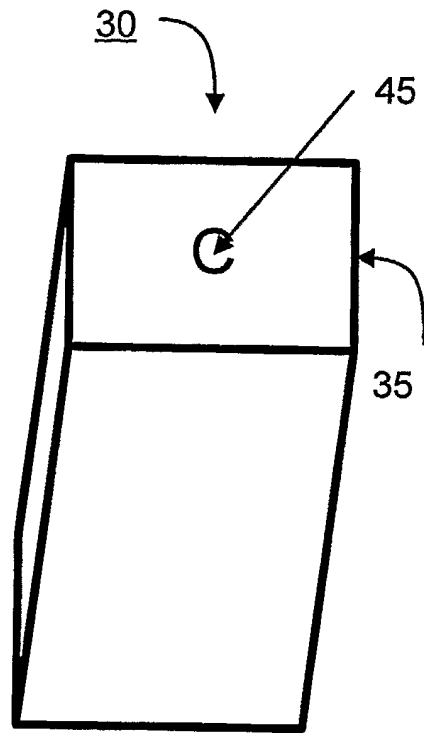


Figure 2b

Figure 3

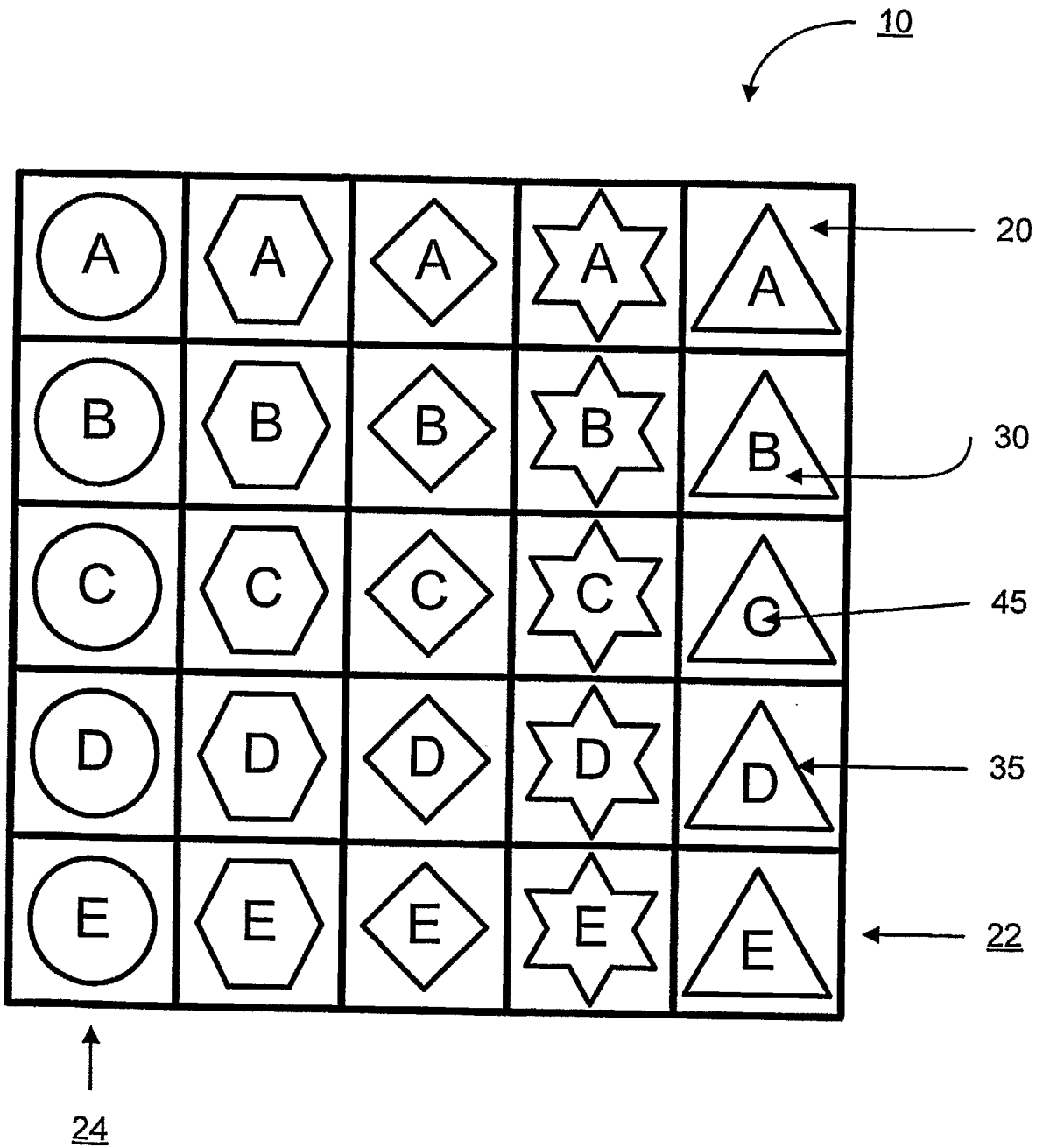


Figure 4

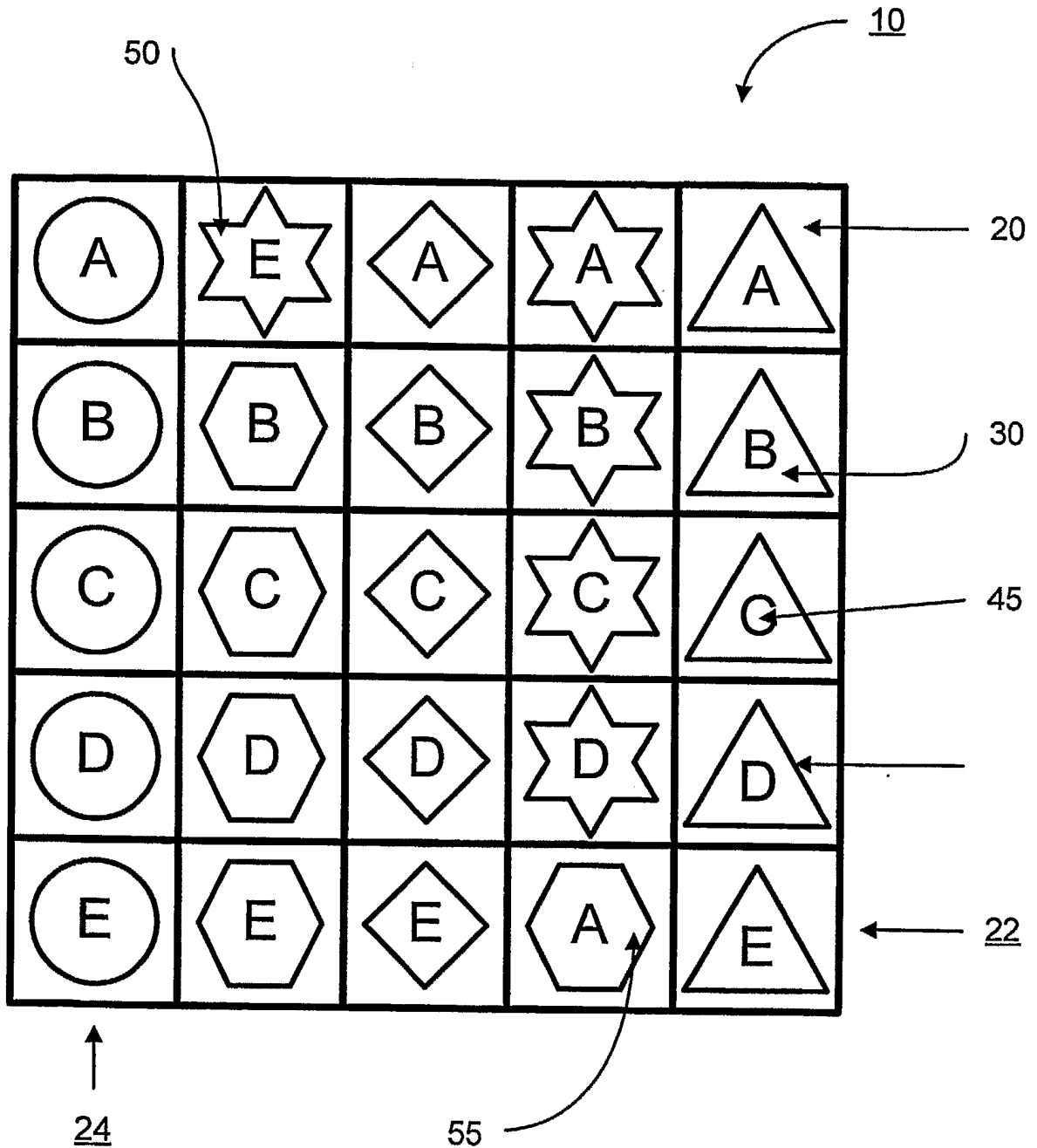


Figure 5

