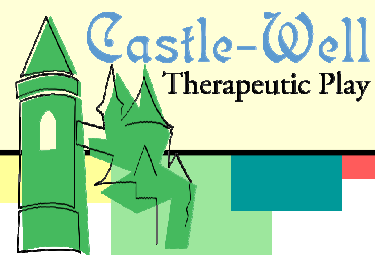


I was wrong.



# Courage to Admit:

A Game of Personal Responsibility



# ***Courage to Admit: A Game of Personal Responsibility***

## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to work on a problem, a person must first admit that it *is* a problem. However, admitting problems and mistakes takes strong ego strength – which is sometimes lacking in some children and adolescents. *Courage to Admit: A Game of Personal Responsibility* was developed with the goal of helping individuals become desensitized to the discomfort of admitting mistakes and problems (i.e. feeling less emotionally reactive). It will assist those children and adolescents who need to take responsibility for their actions, to learn how to admit mistakes and problems and, when necessary, to apologize.

The *Courage to Admit Game* uses a simple board game to create game play with three kinds of cards: Role-play cards, Consequence cards and Discussion cards. Individuals will benefit from the game by

- Developing better introspection and self-awareness skills
- Recognizing that it is OK to make mistakes and admit problems, (feeling less invested in impression management)
- Becoming less emotionally reactive about admitting mistakes and problems
- Developing skills in responsibility-taking and apologies
- Learning about everyday events that need apologies

## **GAME RATIONALE**

Admitting to a problem thought, feeling or behavior is difficult for almost everyone. It can be especially difficult for children and adolescents who do not have the life experiences to see the *benefits* of admitting problems and mistakes. They may realize that something is not working well for them, but do not connect this to themselves. If the problem is mentioned, they change the subject or blame other factors/people besides themselves.

There are several explanations for why some children have difficulties admitting problems and mistakes. They may be afraid of feeling weak, or of others' further criticisms and attacks. They may have a limited capacity for introspection or self reflection. They may be over invested in appearances and impressions. Some children, because they are not able to separate themselves from their behaviors, may feel overwhelmed with shame if they admit to wrongdoing.

Despite these explanations for why it is so difficult, the ability to admit problems and mistakes is an important life skill. Indeed, it is needed in almost every domain – at school, at work, in family life, in social relationships and even in one's own personal reputation and sense of integrity. Admitting problems and mistakes is vital if one is going to work well with others and feel good about oneself.

Finally, admitting a problem is absolutely essential if one is going to *correct* a problem. Before being able to actually remedy a problem, one must have the ability to take ownership of the problem. This is needed in order to accurately process information about that problem. This is the beginning of change. From a transtheoretical model of change perspective, this is what can help people move from a precontemplative stage of change to a contemplative stage of change (e.g. Prochaska, & DiClemente, 1992; Prochaska, Norcross, & Di Clemente, 1994). But this takes courage and strength. The *Courage to Admit* game can help children and adolescents gain that courage.

## PLAYERS

Ages 6-12, 2-4 players

## PROVIDED GAME MATERIALS

- Game board
- Six (6) stick people playing pieces
- Three (3) sets of game play cards (Role-play cards, Consequence cards and Discussion cards)
- One (1) set of Traveling cards

## NEEDED MATERIALS

Color printer

Paper or card stock

Scissors

Tape

OPTIONAL: glue stick (if using paper rather than card stock)

## BEFORE YOU PLAY

### If using regular paper:

1. Print out pgs. 5-37 of this document
2. Place the two pages of the game board (pgs. 5-6) side by side so that the black lines go around the periphery of the entire board. Tape or glue the sheets together on the back.
3. Matching the fronts and backs of the cards by color, glue the backs of the cards to the front of the cards. (i.e. glue pgs. 8-10 to pgs. 11-13; glue pgs. 14-16 to pgs. 17-19; glue pgs. 20-22 to pgs. 23-25; glue pgs. 26-31 to pgs. 32-37). (TIP: a glue stick works best so that the paper does not become too wet)
4. Cut along the dotted lines of playing cards AND the stick people
5. Roll the rectangles that have the individual stick people printed on then into tubes so that the stick person is on the *outside* of the tube; tape the narrow ends together so that stick person playing piece “stands up.”
6. OPTIONAL: You can laminate the game board and cards for a longer lasting game

### If using card stock:

1. Print out the game board and stick people playing pieces (pgs. 5-7 of this document)
2. Print out the fronts of the Role-Play cards (pgs. 8-10); reload the pages into your printer so that the backs can be printed. Make sure that the card stock is facing the right direction. Print pgs. 11-13.
3. Print out the fronts of the Consequence cards (pgs. 14-16); reload the pages into your printer so that the backs can be printed. Make sure that the card stock is facing the right direction. Print pgs. 17-19.
4. Print out the fronts of the Discussion cards (pgs. 20-22); reload the pages into your printer so that the backs can be printed. Make sure that the card stock is facing the right direction. Print pgs. 23-25.
5. Print out the fronts of the Traveling cards (pgs. 26-31); reload the pages into your printer so that the backs can be printed. Make sure that the card stock is facing the right direction. Print pgs. 32-37.
6. Cut along the dotted lines of the stick people and all the playing cards

7. Roll the rectangles that have the individual stick people printed on them into tubes so that the stick person is on the *outside* of the tube; glue or tape the narrow ends together so that stick person playing piece “stands up.”

## GAME PREPARATION

Lay the game board flat on a table. *Separately* shuffle the four (4) decks of cards (the 3 decks of game cards and the Traveling cards) and place them face down in four (4) piles beside the game board.

## OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to be the first player to get to the Finish Space at the end of the game board. This is done by moving the stick people playing pieces around the game board using Traveling cards.

## GAME PLAY

Each player selects a stick person playing piece and places it on the START space on the game board. The youngest player goes first. Play then goes to the person on the youngest person’s left. Other players follow in turn.

In order to take a turn, players select a Traveling Card and move their stick person playing piece the corresponding number of spaces. After landing on a colored space, players draw a card from the same colored deck and follow the instructions/answer the question. Play for that turn ends after following the instructions on the card (even if the player is directed to move backwards or forward to another space). After cards have been read, they are placed at the bottom of the deck from which they came.

Two players may be on the same space. Play continues until a player reaches FINISH.

OPTIONAL: To enhance the process of admitting mistakes, facilitators (adults monitoring the game) may allow players to move an extra space if, during game play, they admit a mistake or apologize for something that happens during the course of the game (i.e. moving the wrong number of spaces, knocking over someone’s playing piece, etc.). However, if players begin to intentionally create problems during game play so that they can move ahead, the facilitator may choose to discontinue this practice or let players know that intentional mistakes are not allowed.

## REFERENCES

- Prochaska, J.O., & DiClemente, C.C. (1992). In search of how people change. *American Psychologist*, 47 (9), 1102–1114.
- Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClemente, C. C. (1994). *Changing for good*. New York: Avon Books.



I was wrong.

# A Game of Personal Responsibility



START



**FINISH**

I should  
apologize.

**Courage to Admit:**

# Stick People Playing Pieces



You knocked over your drink in a restaurant and got a someone's pants wet. Pretend that the person on your left is that person. Apologize sincerely for this.

You used the computer while a family member went to the bathroom; you messed up her/his project. Pretend that the person on your left is that family member. Apologize sincerely for this.

You found \$5 and spent it before you found out that it belonged to your friend. Pretend that the person on your left is that friend. Apologize sincerely for this.

You knocked your friend's video game off of the table and broke it. Pretend that the person on your left is that friend. Apologize sincerely for this.

You used your sister's crayons and broke one. Pretend that the person on your left is your sister. Apologize sincerely for this.

You were playing a board game with your friend and accidentally went out of turn. Pretend that the person on your left is your friend. Apologize sincerely for this.

You were playing with a friend and accidentally hit her/him with the ball when you threw it. Pretend that the person on your left is that friend. Apologize sincerely for this.

You were late coming home for dinner. Pretend that everyone is at the dinner table. Apologize to everyone sincerely for this.



You argued with a family member about something. Later you found out that you were wrong. Pretend that the person on your left is that family member. Apologize sincerely for this.

You accused a classmate of lying. Pretend that the person on your left is that classmate. Apologize sincerely for this.

You forgot a family member's birthday. Pretend that the person on your left is that family member. Apologize sincerely for this.

You sneezed on a classmate. Pretend that the person on your right is that classmate. Apologize sincerely for this.

You laughed at your sister's new haircut and hurt her feelings. Pretend that the person on your right is your sister. Apologize sincerely for this.

You told a friend's secret to someone. Pretend that the person on your right is that friend. Apologize sincerely for this.

You borrowed something from your brother and forgot to return it in a timely manner. Pretend that the person on your right is your brother. Apologize sincerely for this.

You have a problem staying organized with your schoolwork. Pretend that the person on your right is your teacher. Admit your problem to her/him.

You have a problem paying attention and often get distracted. Pretend that the person on your right is your teacher. Admit your problem to her/him.

You have a problem controlling your temper. Pretend that the person on your right is your counselor. Admit your problem to her/him.

You have a problem lying when you are in trouble. Pretend that the person on your right is your parent. Admit your problem to her/him.

You get really nervous when you have to read out loud in front of people. Pretend that the person on your right is your teacher. Admit your problem to her/him.

Everyone in your class already knows their multiplication tables, but you still do not know them. Pretend that the person on your right is your teacher. Admit this to her/him.

You like to argue and disagree with adults. Pretend that the person on your right is your parent. Admit this problem to her/him.

You like to tease other kids but they often get their feelings hurt. Pretend that the person on your right is your friend. Admit that you were wrong in teasing her/him.

You made a loud, silly noise in class and the teacher asked who did it. Pretend that the person on your right is teacher. Admit that it was you.

Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



Role-play cards



You didn't apologize for bumping into another student in the hallway. Go back one space.

You didn't say "Sorry" to another kid for splashing her/him in the swimming pool. Go back one space.

You didn't admit that it was your fault that your family was late for church. Go back two spaces.

You blamed your sister for the mess you made in the kitchen. Go back four spaces.

You refused to apologize to your brother for calling him a mean name because he called you a mean name first. Go back four spaces.

You didn't say you were sorry for embarrassing your mother in front of a group of people. Go back two spaces.

You didn't say you were sorry for shutting the car door too hard. Go back one space.

You didn't admit or apologize for being bossy with your friends. Go back two spaces.

You broke your mother's lamp and blamed it on another family member for it. Go back four spaces.

You refused to admit or apologize to your cousin for eating all her candy. Go back three spaces.

You didn't say you were sorry when you didn't pass the salt when asked. Go back one space.

You made excuses for not feeding the dog when you were supposed to. Go back two spaces.

You apologized for getting chip dip on your sister's book. Move ahead one space.

You admitted and apologized for borrowing your classmate's pen without permission. Move ahead three spaces.

You apologized for not picking up your dirty clothes in the bathroom. Move ahead two spaces.

You took responsibility for your behavior and admitted that you took money out of your mom's purse. Move ahead two spaces.

You admitted that you were in a grumpy mood; you apologized to your entire family. Move ahead four spaces.

You apologized to your mother for not listening to her. Move ahead three spaces.

You did not make any excuses and simply apologized for being late to the dinner table. Move ahead one space.

You admitted that you wore your brother's shirt without permission. Move ahead three spaces.

You admitted that you were wrong and apologized when you hit someone at school. Move ahead three spaces.

You told a friend that you were sorry for teasing her/him. Move ahead two spaces.

You told a friend that you were sorry for teasing her/him. Move ahead two spaces.

You admitted that you ate the last piece of pizza in the refrigerator. Move ahead one space.



Consequence cards



Consequence cards



Consequence cards



Consequence cards



Consequence cards



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Consequence cards



Tell about a time that you apologized for something that you did either on purpose or on accident.

Tell about a time that you apologized for something that you did either on purpose or on accident.

Tell about a time that you apologized for something that you did either on purpose or on accident.

Tell about a time that you apologized for something that you did either on purpose or on accident.

Tell about a time that you did *not* apologize for something that you did either on purpose or on accident. Is there any way that you could go back now and apologize? Explain.

Tell about a time that you did *not* apologize for something that you did either on purpose or on accident. Is there any way that you could go back now and do it? Explain.

What do you need to tell yourself in order to have the courage to admit that you are wrong?

What is your opinion about people who can admit their mistakes and problems?

How do you feel about yourself when you apologize for things that you need to apologize for?

Why do you think that it is hard for some people to talk about their problems?

What is one of your biggest faults or bad habits? How does it feel to admit this?

Who is someone that you know who apologizes easily? What do you think about that person?

Have you ever written an apology letter? Why would this be a good thing to do?

Has anyone ever talked to you about a problem that s/he was having? Did you think less of this person for talking to you? Why or why not?

Some people make excuses for their mistakes. What do you think of people who do this?

Sometimes people apologize and it doesn't sound sincere (real). Why is it important to sound sincere (real)?

Name 3 things that people should apologize for.

Is it important to forgive yourself for your problem or mistake? Why?

Describe a problem within you that you are currently struggling with (i.e. distractibility, being bossy, being disorganized, etc.)

Describe a problem within you that you are currently struggling with (i.e. distractibility, being bossy, being disorganized, etc.)

Benjamin Franklin said, "How few there are who have courage enough to own their faults or resolution to mend them." What do you think this means?

What do you think stops you from admitting mistakes and apologizing more often?

What can you tell yourself to make yourself feel good after you have admitted a problem or mistake?

In addition to an apology, what is something else that you can do to correct a mistake?

**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



**Discussion cards**



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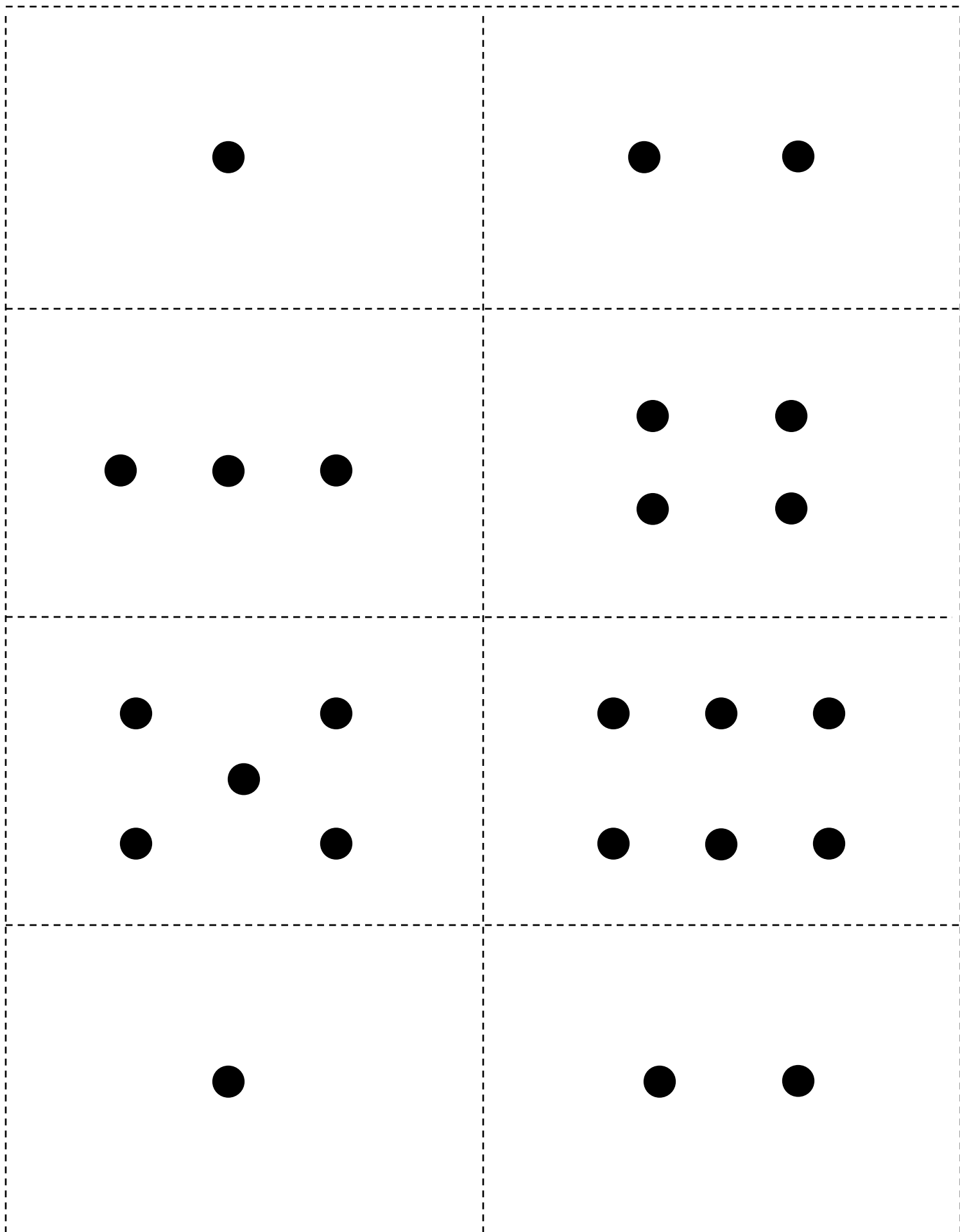


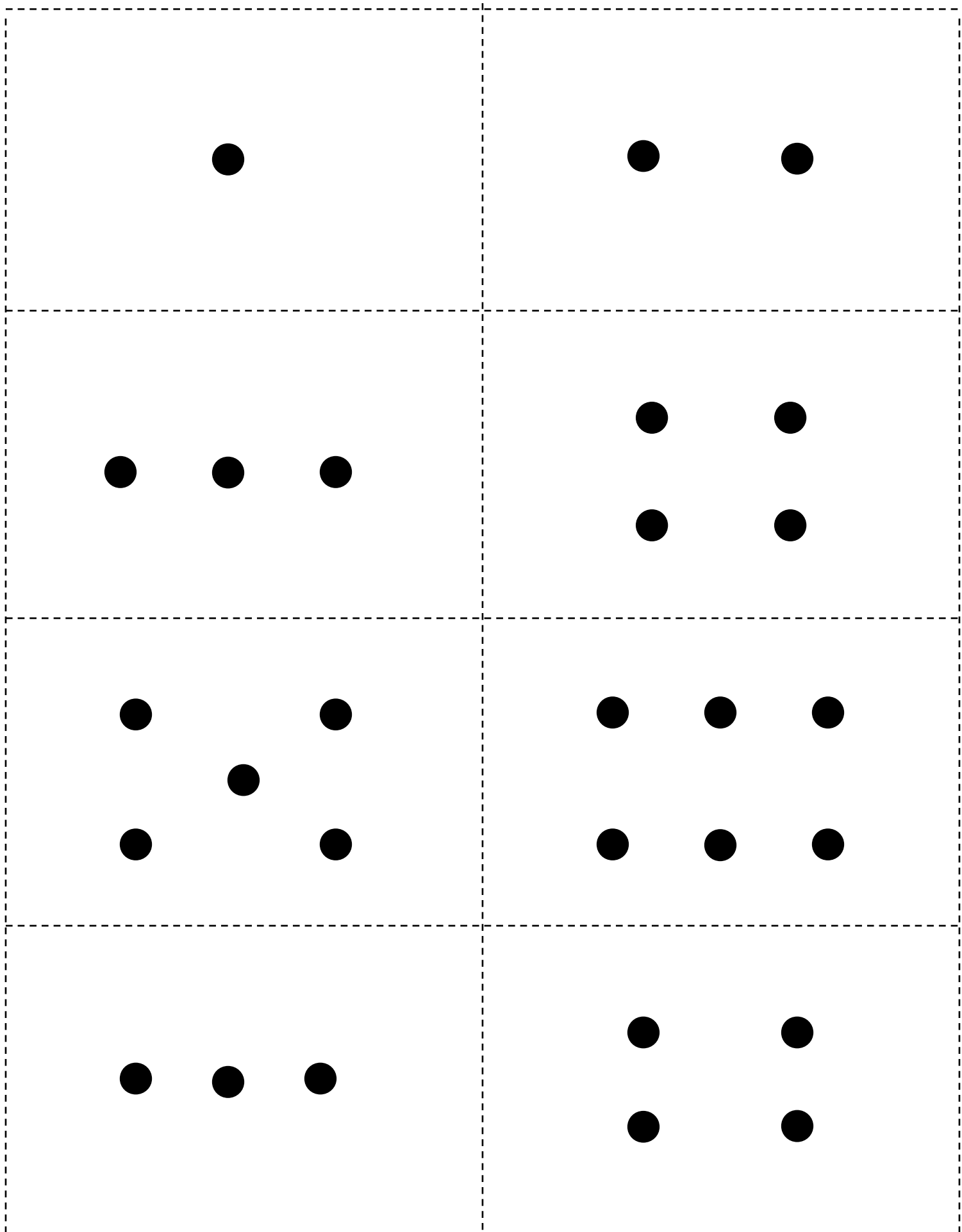
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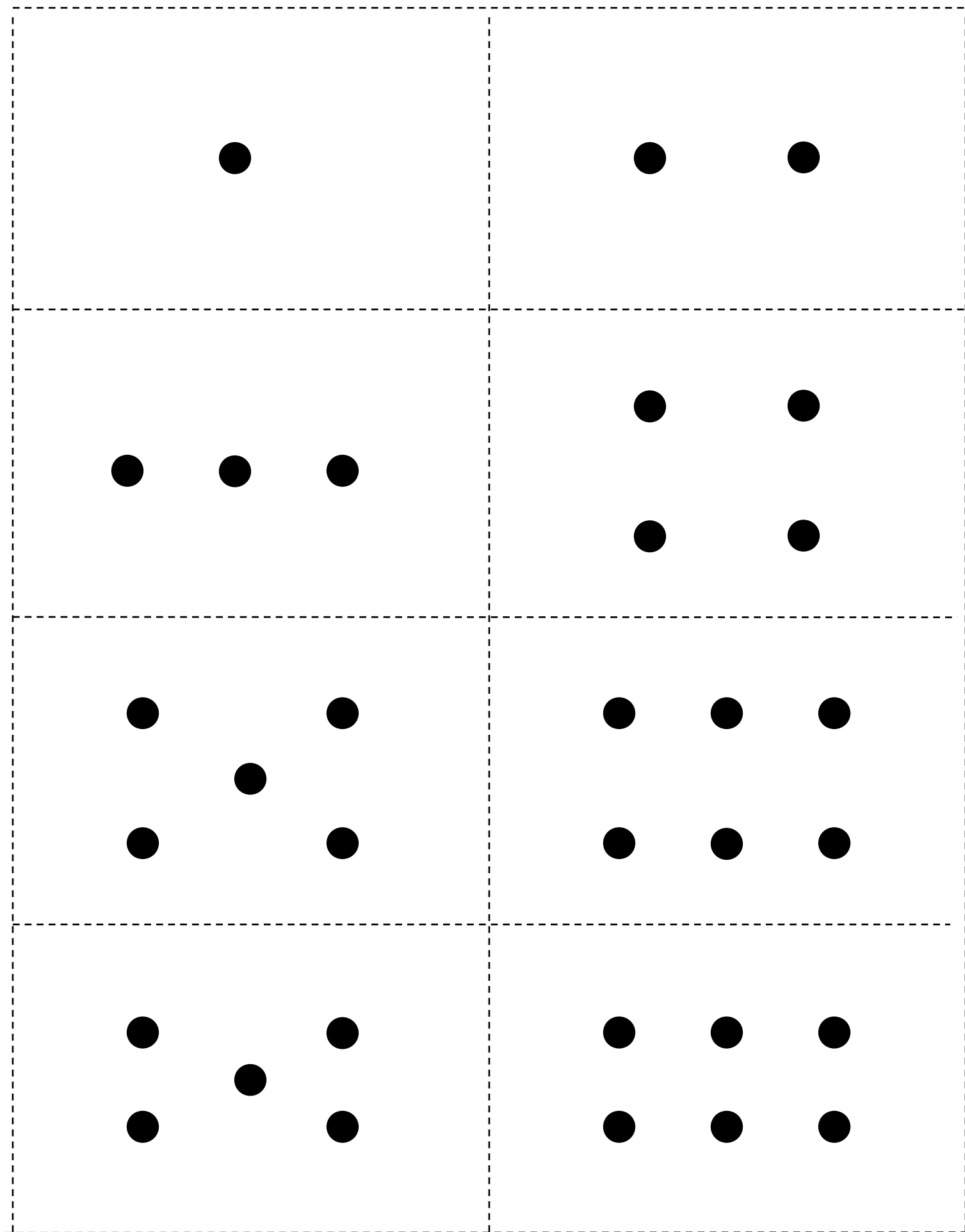


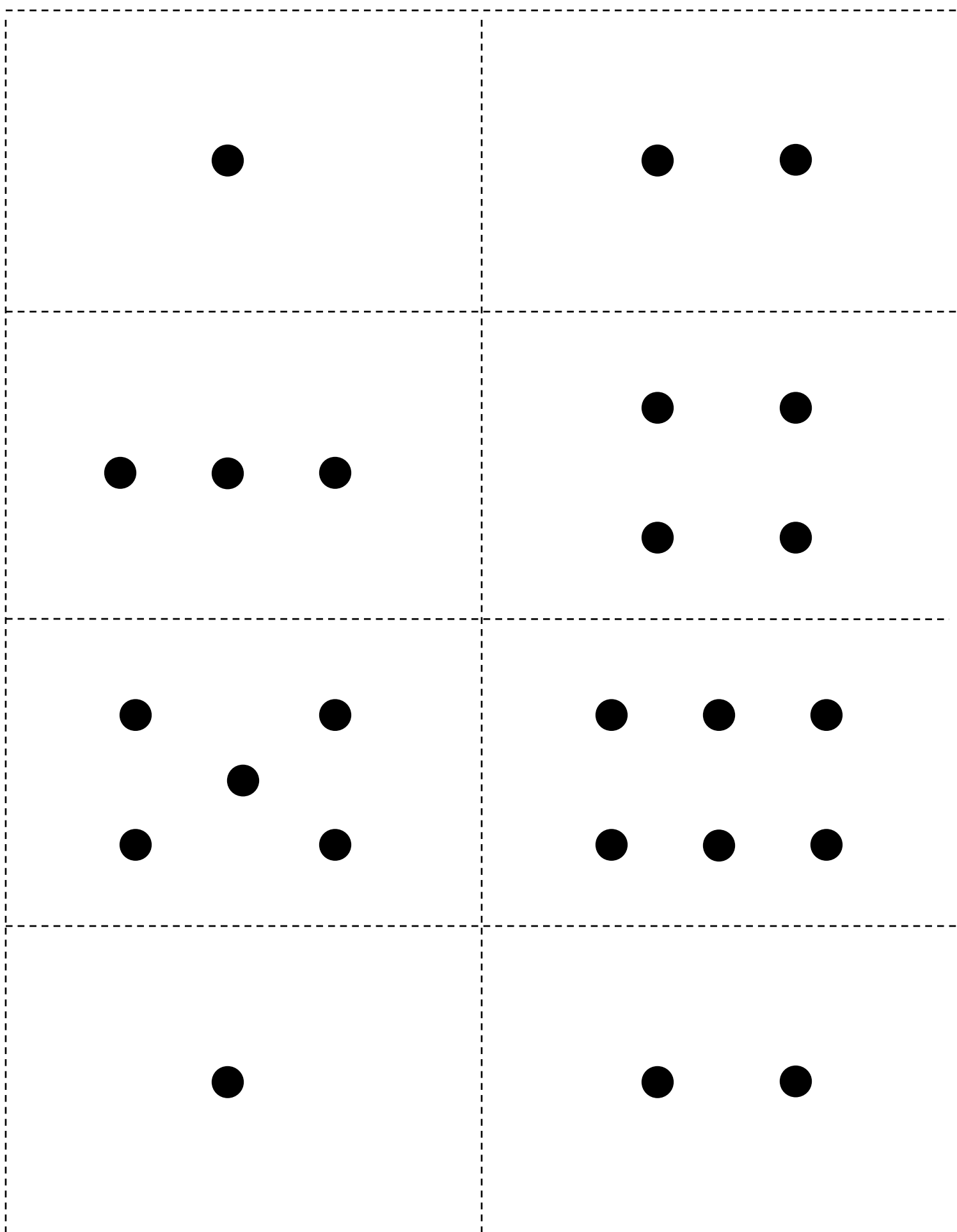
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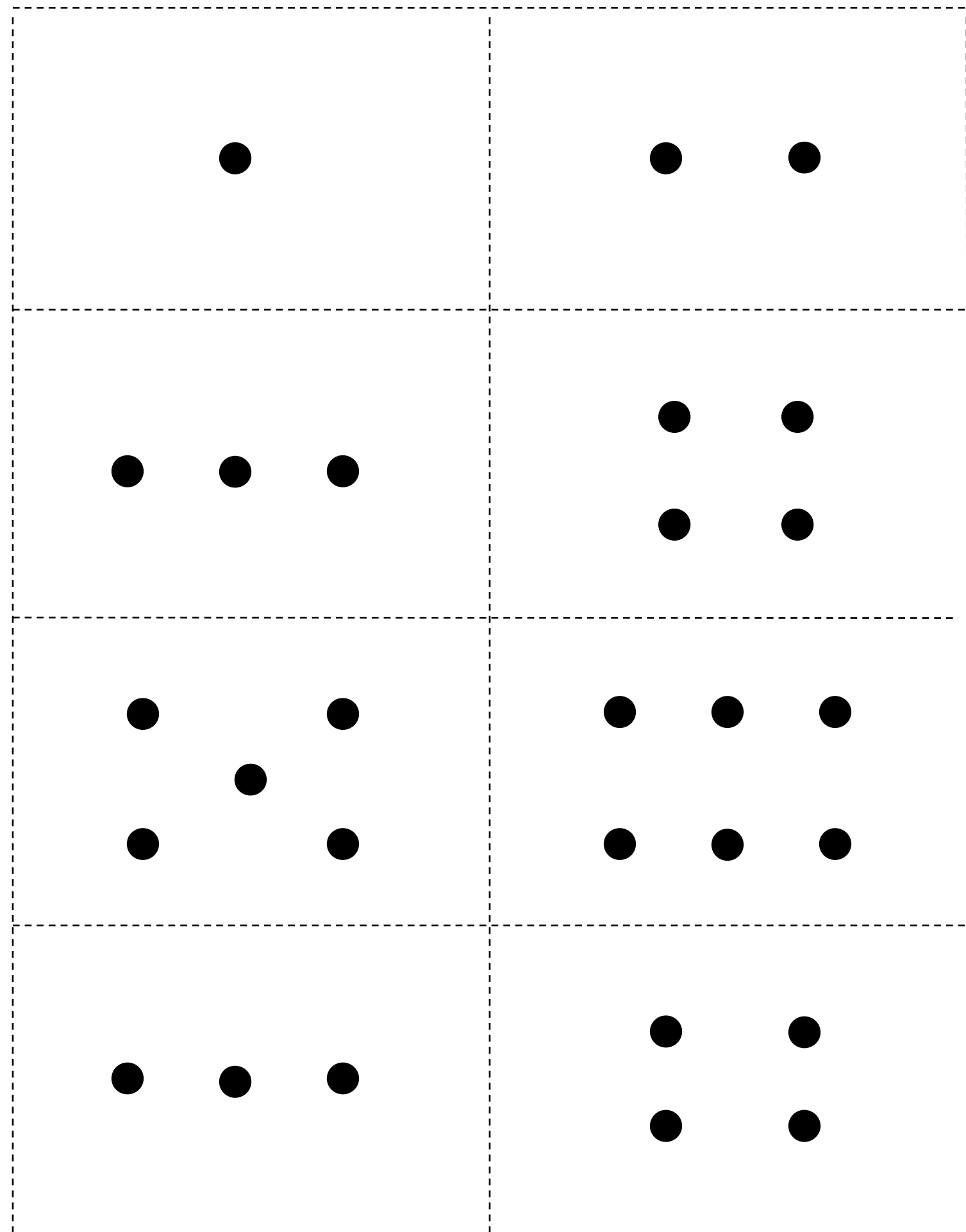


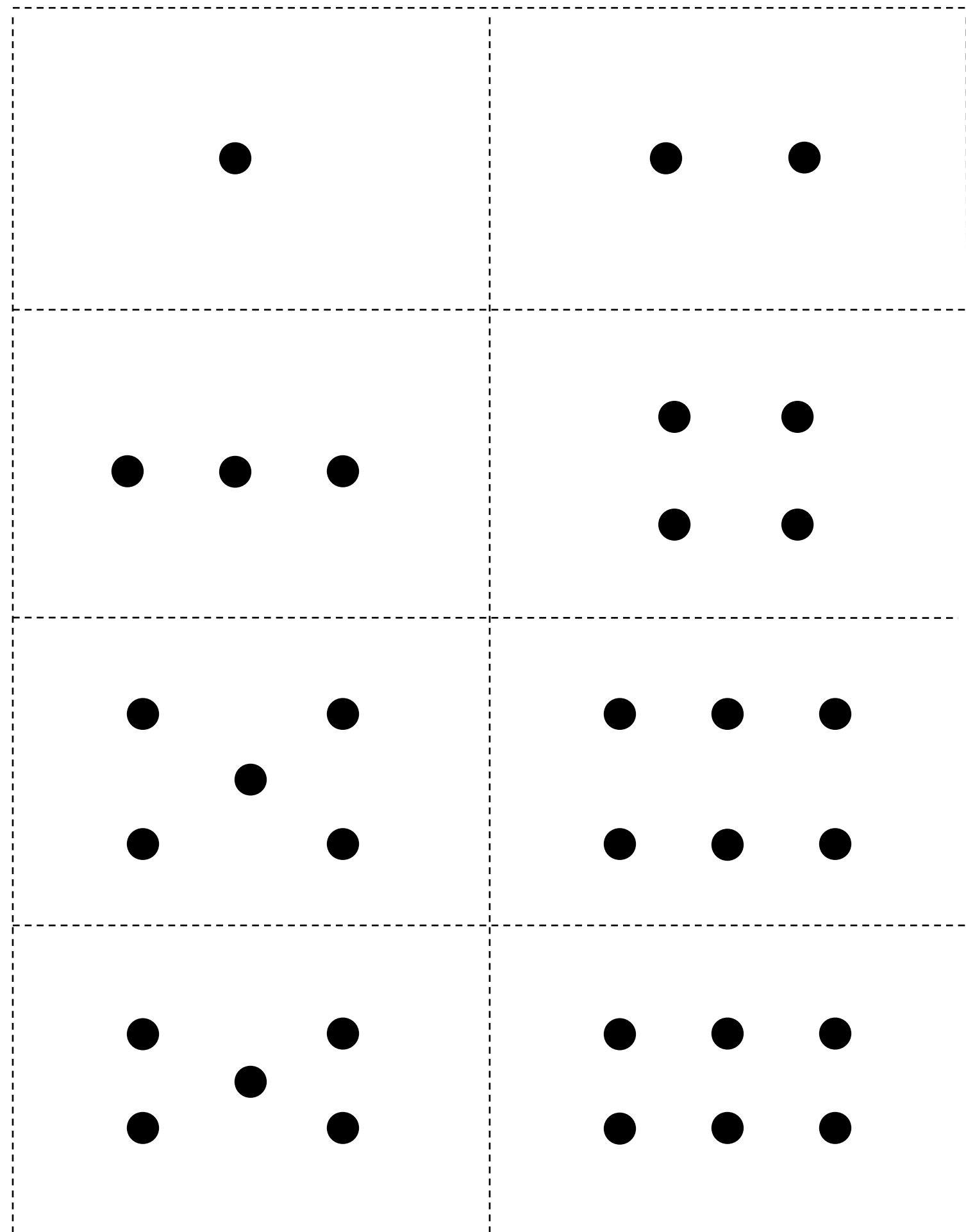












  
**Traveling cards**  
  


  
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