

SENET



Senet was an immensely popular game in ancient Egypt. Senet was played both by nobility, such as the Pharaohs, and also by commoners. Senet was one of young King Tutankhamun's favorite games. Senet eventually took on ritual or symbolic significance.

The game was played on a board marked with 30 squares. The main object of the game was to get one's pieces around the board and finally off the other end while stopping your opponent from doing the same. The game is played by using two-sided casting sticks. Casting sticks were used much like dice are used today. Eventually knuckle bones were used, we know of this game through ancient Egyptian boards that have survived to this day

Ibau, which means dancers in Egyptian, was the name of the playing pieces. These pieces came in many shapes. Most often each player used five playing pieces shaped like either cones and pyramids, or cone and barrels.

Senet was created as a two player game. During the New Kingdom period Senet was often depicted as a one-player game. In these depictions the opponent was a spirit from the afterlife. Here's your chance to play "The Game of the Pharaohs"!

Materials Needed

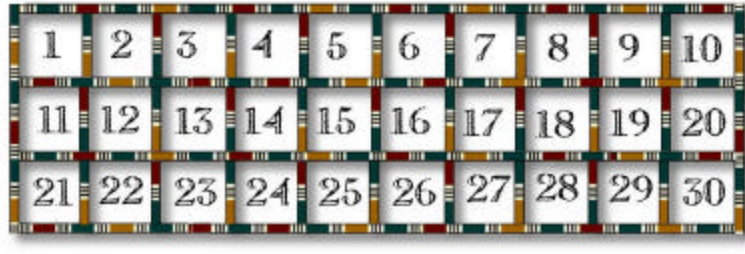
Printed Senet Game Board

4 Casting Sticks - craft sticks painted red on one side, white on the other.

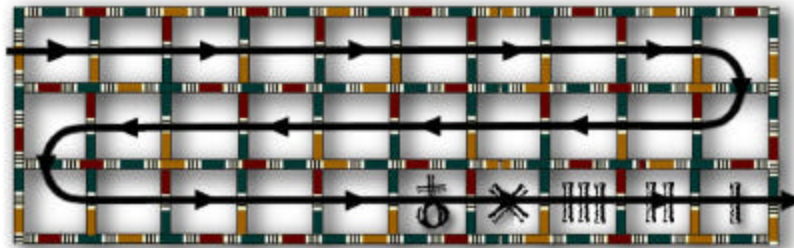
2 Sets of 5 Playing Pieces - playing pieces can be made from Sculpey or other found objects.

How to Play

First the two players sit with the board between them. The game board is composed of 30 squares: 3 rows of 10 squares each. One player at each narrow end of the board. The five squares with hieroglyphics are the end spaces of the game. The 26th square is marked with a symbol which stood for "exit". The "x" has no apparent meaning, while the others signify the last moves off the board. The game begins in the opposite corner of the board as the exit squares.



Game play moves in an "S" pattern. First travel down the first row from 1 to 10, then the opposite direction down the center row, 20 to 11, and then down the final row 21-30.



1- Each player throws the dice or casting sticks onto the table or floor. The player with the highest score will place his or her pieces alternately down the first row, starting in square 1 and ending in square 9. The second player places his pieces starting in square 2 and alternately down the row to square 10.

2- Now that the pieces are arranged the first player begins game play by casting his sticks once again. The moves are as follow:

- 1 white side - 1**
- 2 white sides - 2**
- 3 white sides - 3**
- 4 white sides - 4**
- 0 white sides - 5**

Pieces are moved according to the number thrown. A player can move a piece to an empty square or to a square occupied by one of the opponent's game pieces. A player can not land in a square that is already occupied by one of their own pieces. An example would be that if a player first throws a two, he or she would only be able to move their game piece that is furthest down the playing path. If a player cannot move without landing on their own pieces or is unable to exit the gameboard their turn is missed.

When a player lands on an opponents game piece it is captured and removed from the board. Players can only retrieve their pieces in exchange for a piece that they have captured and removed from the board. In order to bring pieces back onto the board the player must cast a zero (all red sides). They must return their piece to the first square they occupied at the start of the game. Square one for the first player, square two for the second player.

With skill and strategy move through the board capturing as many of your opponents pieces as possible. The objective is to capture as many of your opponents pieces as possible while getting all of your pieces off the board at the finish.

The marked squares at the end of the board are where your pieces can exit. Each of these marked squares carries it's own rules.

If a piece lands in square 26 the player must exit this piece as soon as possible. If a player casts a five on his next turn the gamepiece on square 26 exits the board. If a lower score is tossed the player moves to that marked square. If a player lands on the "X" square it can remain there for as long as the player wants. A player can move from this square and exit by casting a four, or a lower number to move to another marked square. If a player lands on a numbered square with 1, 2, or 3 lines then that piece can only be moved if the number on the square is cast. The pieces can not be moved from one numbered square to another.

The winner of the game of Senet is the player who exits all of his pieces from the game board first.