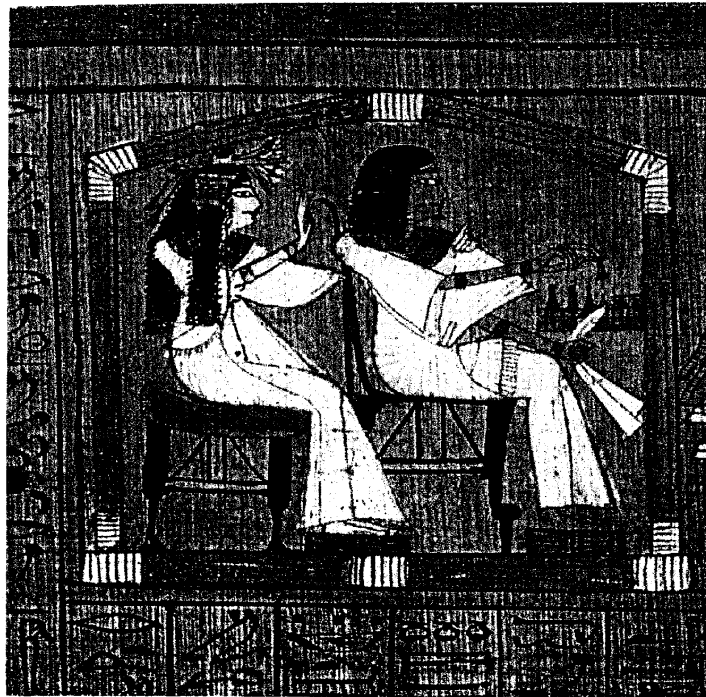


# SENET

## An Ancient Game of Egypt

Pharaohs and peasants alike played *Senet* in ancient Egypt. Beautiful wood and ivory gameboards were placed in tombs, including Tutankhamon's (King 'Tut', 1339 BC). They were also painted on tomb walls and doors, on coffins, and even carved in stones at building sites.



Egyptians believed that the deceased played *Senet* in the afterlife. A passage from the Book of the Dead, written about 1600 BC, describes this in the following way: "...going forth by day, assuming whatever form one will, playing senet..."

They also believed that *Senet* represented the journey of the soul into the afterlife. In some tomb paintings the deceased is shown playing *Senet* against Osiris, God of the Afterlife. The hieroglyph of a *Senet* gameboard with its pieces lined up across the top meant "to endure".

**Senet** is a race game and the goal is to be the first player to 'play off' all game pieces from the board. There are different versions of how the game might be played. In this version, each player has 5 game pieces. Traditionally these were in the shape of cones and spools, but you can use checkers or any set of different markers. There are also 4 two-sided "dice" in the form of throwing sticks. Each stick has a colored rounded side and a white flat side and traditionally one side is rounded. For this version you can use popsicle sticks with one side colored dark. Players move game pieces by the throw of the dice:

1 white side up - 1 square	4 white sides up - 4 squares
2 white sides up - 2 squares	4 black sides up - 5 squares
3 white sides up - 3 squares	

### Moving Game Pieces

Game pieces are moved going from left to right on the top track and then right to left on the second track and left to right again on the bottom track. Each track has 10 squares. The last 5 squares are marked, starting with the 5th square which has the *nefer* symbol, the 4th square with a water symbol, and the last 3 squares marked 3, 2, and 1.



### How to Play

At the start game pieces are lined up in the top track with, from left to right, spool, cone, spool, cone, etc. The first player to throw a 1 with the dice plays the cones and starts play by moving the cone on the farthest right of the top track (square 10) to the square just below it, square 11. This player then throws again. A player who throws a 1, 4, or 5 can move any piece that number of squares and throw again. A throw of 2 or 3 allows you to move a piece that many squares but ends your turn. If you cannot move forward with your throw, you must move a piece backwards. If you cannot move either way your turn ends.

(A more complex variation is to add up all of the scores from your throws in a single turn and then use those in any combination to move one or more pieces.)

## RULES

1. Two of your pieces cannot occupy the same square — if your only move would be to a square you already occupy then your turn ends.
2. You can attack an opponent's piece by landing on it, which sends it back to the square you left. You cannot land on either your own piece or an opponent's piece going backward. If this is the only move you can make then your turn ends with no move.
3. If you attack a piece, it goes back to the square you just vacated.
4. Two of the same game pieces on adjoining squares are protected and cannot be attacked. An opponent must 'jump' over them with a throw of 3 or more.
5. Three of the same game pieces in a row are a blockade which cannot be passed except by one of their own pieces.
6. You cannot attack any piece on a 'haven' square, i.e. any of the last 5 squares, from *nefer* to 1.

*Nefer* (  ) conveys goodness and beauty as well as the sense of happiness, good fortune, and youth. All of these relate to the sense of the game itself, just as the water symbol (  ) is perhaps the Nile, where crocodiles might devour one and thus deny eternal life.

## Winning

A player must move all of his pieces to the last row of the board. Only then can he begin to play them off the board. If one of his pieces is attacked and moves back, he cannot move any pieces off the board until all of his pieces are again on the last row.

A player wins by being the first to move all of their pieces to the *nefer* (♁) square on an exact throw, and then moving over the water square (☉) to one of the numbered squares. Finally you must land on the last square, square 1, with an exact throw. BUT - if you land on the water square your piece must go back to the beginning.

A losing player has 1 point counted against him for pieces on the last row and not on a haven square, 2 points pieces on the second row, and 3 points for pieces on the first row.

**GOOD LUCK!**

1									
11									
21					♁	☉			

