

Senet rules

Senet was a game played by the ancient Egyptians. No one knows exactly how the ancient Egyptians played Senet, and the rules here are based on reconstructions by several different Egyptologists. This version of Senet is designed for relatively fast play (approx. 20 minutes), and is suitable for ages 8 and up.

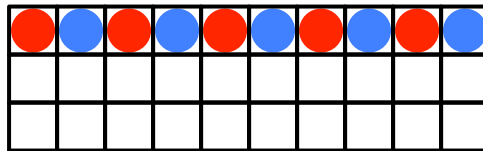
Overview of the game: Your soul, or *ba*, has entered the realm of the dead through the grand entrance in the Western Desert. You must journey through the realm of the dead and reach the god Osiris, who will let you live forever. But the forces of evil — represented by your opponent's playing pieces — block your way. Will you reach Osiris, or will the forces of evil defeat you?

The object of the game: Be the first to move all your playing pieces off the board.

Equipment: 5 red playing pieces and 5 blue playing pieces (or two different colors of your choice)
4 throwing sticks (can be made from popsicle sticks)
1 game board

To start: Arrange the red playing pieces on odd-numbered spaces 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. Arrange the blue playing pieces on even-numbered spaces 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10.

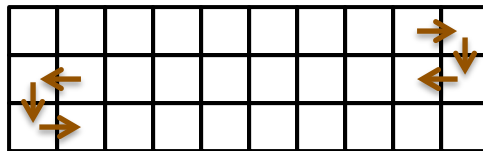
Both players throw the throwing sticks. The player who throws the lowest takes the blue playing pieces, and goes first.



How to use the throwing sticks: The throwing sticks have one marked side and one unmarked side.

- 1 marked side up, move one square
- 2 marked sides up, move two squares
- 3 marked sides up, move three squares
- 4 marked sides up, move four squares
- NO marked sides up, move five squares

Basic play: Throw the throwing sticks and move one of your playing pieces the number of squares indicated. Move from lower numbered squares up to higher numbered squares (see the diagram below).



If you land on a square that is already occupied, you must send that playing piece back to the square where you started (even if it's your own playing piece!).

If you cannot move any of your pieces forward, you must move one of your pieces backwards.

If you can't move any piece forwards or backwards, you lose your turn.

Special squares: Squares 26, 28, 29, and 30 are “safe” squares. If there is another playing piece on one of those squares, you cannot move your piece there.

Square 27 is a “bad” square. If you land on this square, go back to square 15, and if there is another playing piece already there send it backwards to the next open square.

Moving your playing pieces off the board:

You must move each playing piece off the board by exact count.

Optional additional rule: Square 26 has the Egyptian symbol *nefer*, meaning “beautiful” or “good.” Before proceeding to the final four squares, you must first land each piece on square 26 by exact count. (If you play with this rule, the game will take longer.)