

Senet

Play an Ancient Egyptian Strategy Game

The name Senet means “*passing*” in Ancient Egyptian. It was played as a game of strategy by Egyptians over 3,000 years ago. This activity recreates this ancient two-player game.

Activity Challenge

Set up the board and test your Senet strategy. The first player to move all his or her pieces off the board wins.

Preparation

1. Review the Materials Needed list and print out, or make a copy, of the Senet Board (see below).
2. Identify or make two sets of five game pieces (10 total). Each set should be a different color.
3. Collect 4 strips colored on one side. These serve as dice and can be made by coloring 1 side of a popsicle (or craft) stick or a piece of cardboard. They should be about 4 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1 inch wide.

To Do

1. You play Senet by moving your pieces around the board, avoiding hazards, and trying get all your pieces off the game board. Whoever gets all their pieces of the game board first wins. It has similarities to Parcheesi and Sorry.
2. The 4 strips (used as dice) tell you what your moves are. Hold all the strips together and drop them at the same time. Move the pieces around the board in an “S” pattern, or in the direction of the arrows on the game board, and according to these rules:
 - a. If only 1 stick lands with the colored side up, you can move 1 of your pieces ahead one square and take another turn
 - b. If 2 sticks land with the colored side up, you can move 2 pieces 1 space each and then your turn is over.
 - c. If 3 sticks land with the colored side up, you can move 3 pieces 1 space each and then your turn is over.
 - d. If all 4 sticks land with the colored side up, you can move 4 pieces 1 space each and take another turn.
 - a. If none of the sticks land with the colored side up, you can move all 5 pieces 1 space each, and take another turn.

Materials Needed

- 10 Items total to make two sets of five playing pieces. (Examples of items to use are buttons, pennies and dimes, colored squares of paper)
- 4 strips that are colored on one side. Examples of items to use: a popsicle stick, craft stick or a piece of cardboard. Material needs to be 4" long and $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" wide).
- Two players

Grade Range

3-5
6-8

Topics/Skills

Social Studies: Traditions, Customs & Recreation;
Knowledge & Understanding of the past
Math: Problem solving & Reasoning

Learning Standards

CCSS Math: [Mathematical Practices](#)

Duration

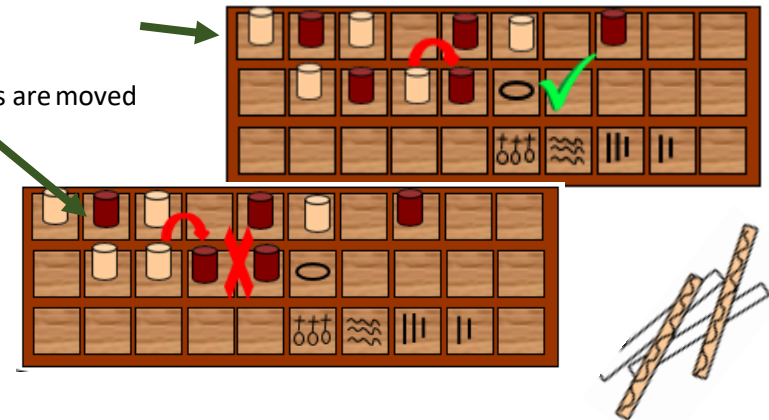
20 -45 mins

Preparation Time


15-20 minutes



3. Additional Rules

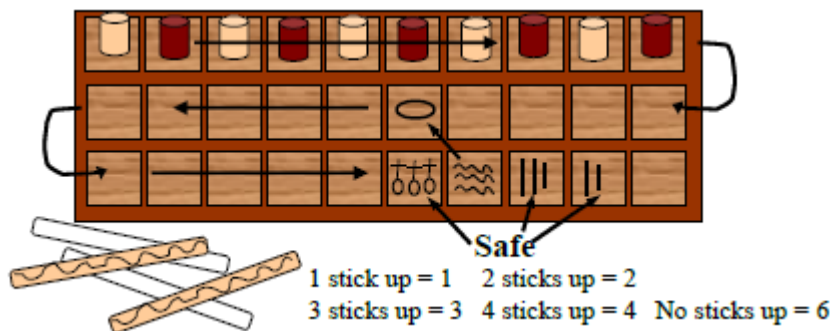
- If you land on a space with an opponent's piece, you switch the pieces, meaning you put the other person's piece on the square you were on.
- However, if a player has 2 or more pieces in a row, they are "safe", and you cannot move them.
- If your opponent has 3 or more pieces in a row, you may not pass the 3 pieces (series).
- If there is a possible move, you must take it.
- You cannot begin to move pieces off the board from the last square until all your pieces are moved beyond the first row.



4. Rules for Specially Marked Squares

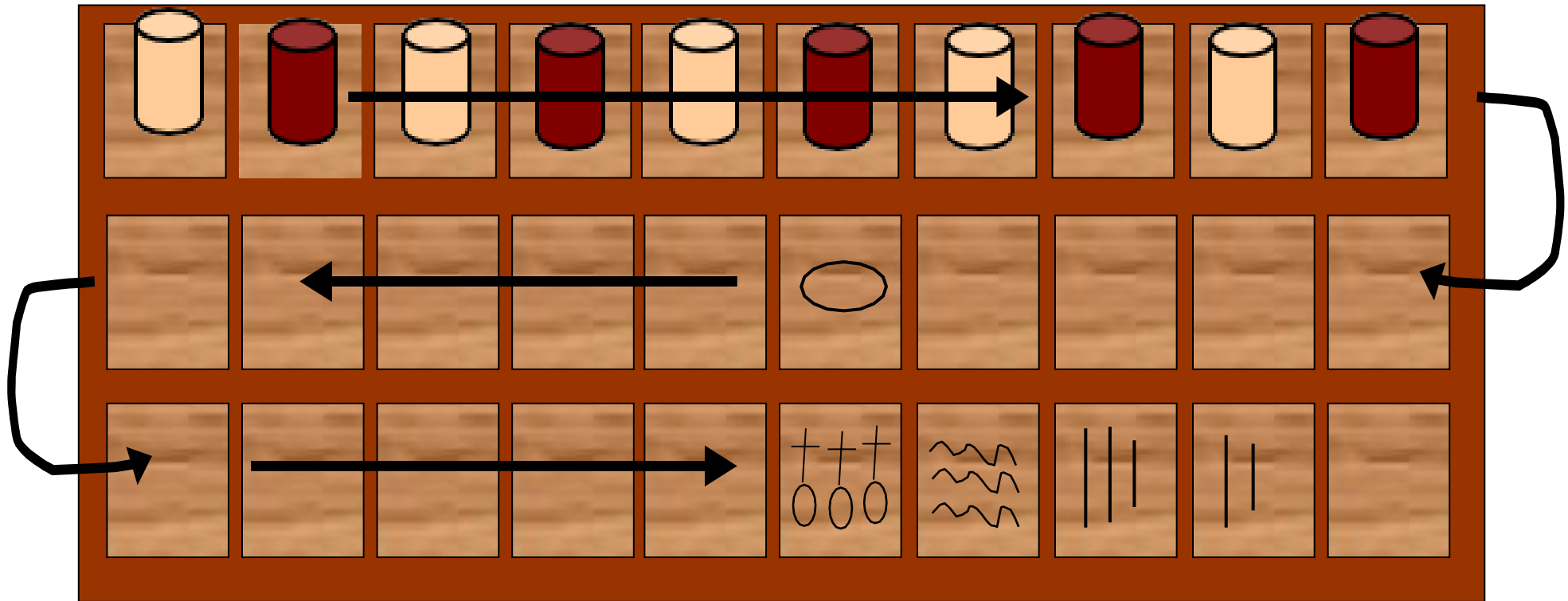
- a.  are **SAFE** squares. You cannot switch with an opponent's piece if it is on a safe square.

- b. Pieces landing on the water space  get bumped back to the square with the (oval) in the 2nd row. 



Senet Playing Board

The arrows show the direction that your pieces should be moved around the board.
 The dark and light pieces show where to put the playing pieces to start the game.
 The light-colored pieces go first.



Rules for Moving Senet Playing Pieces

	0	1	2	3	4
Number of colored side of strips showing (facing up)					
Number of pieces that can be moved 1 space	6	1	2	3	4
Take another turn or turn over	Take another turn	Take another turn	Turn over	Turn over	Take another turn


 These are the SAFE spaces. You can't land on these when someone is there.
 
 Land here (water) and you must move here (oval)
 