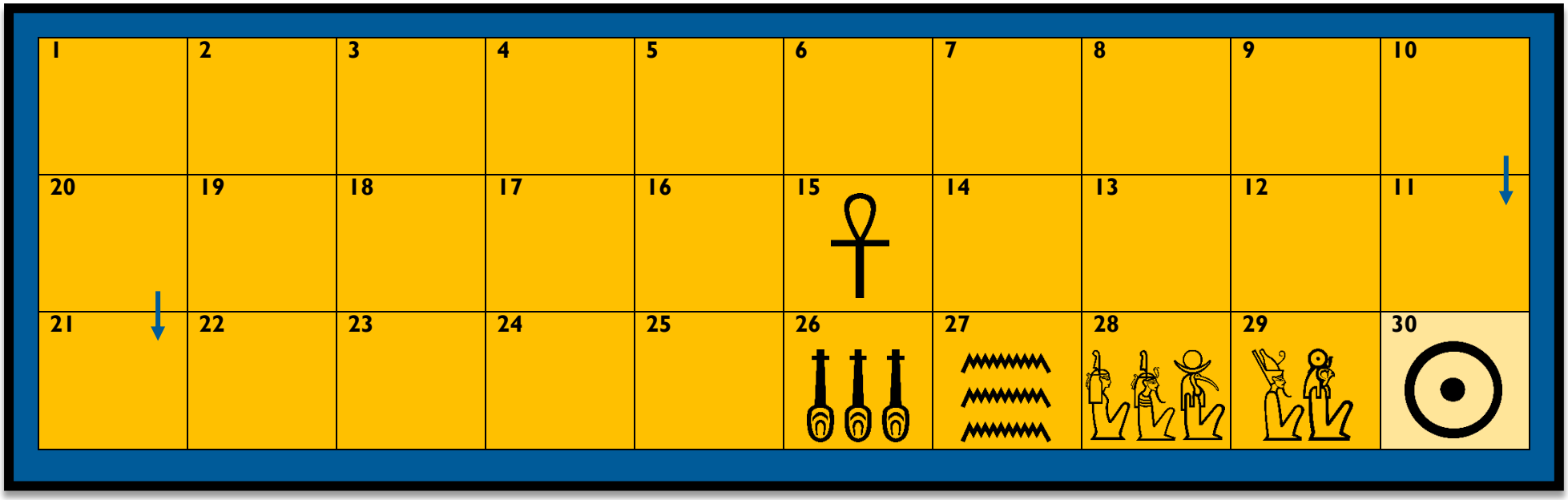
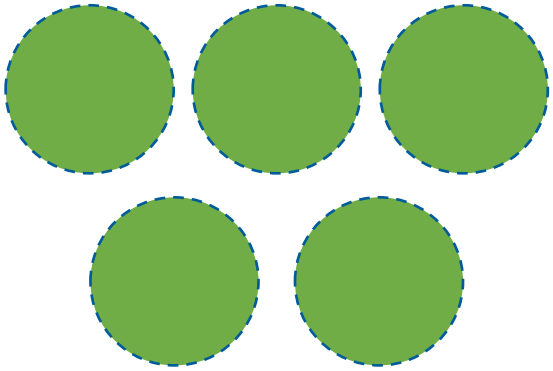
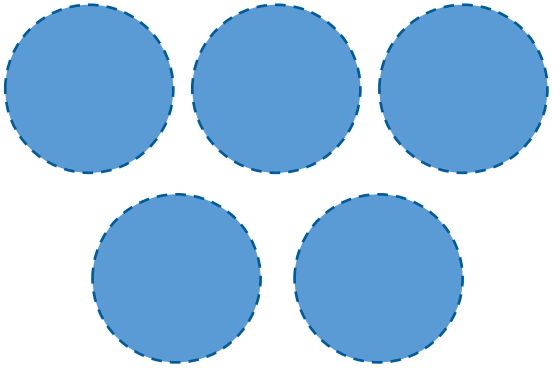
EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY
FOUNDED IN 1882

Games & Activities: Senet

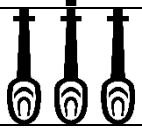






A senet box in the British Museum, London (EA35922)

What is Senet?
Senet was the most popular game played in Ancient Egypt and was played as early as the Third Dynasty over 4600 years ago! But it was not just a game for the ancient Egyptians. It symbolised their personal quest for immortality in the afterlife. The board here is based on examples from the New Kingdom almost 3500 years ago and includes some special squares to make the game more exciting:

Symbol	Square	Meaning
	15	**The House of Rebirth** If your counter drowns in the waters of chaos (square 27) or is landed on by your opponent, then it is reborn here.
	26	**The House of Beauty** Landing on this square gives the player a free turn – congratulations!
	27	**Waters of Chaos** Unlucky! Landing here means that your counter drowns in the water of chaos and must be reborn at the House of Rebirth (square 15).
	28	**Three** Your path to eternity will now be judged by deities. Here three gods judge your worth and decide if you should succeed. You must throw a three to succeed, otherwise you do not move.
	29	**Two** Here two gods judge your worth and decide if you should succeed. You must throw a two to succeed, otherwise you do not move.
	30	**One** Congratulations! You have made it to the afterlife and have passed all of the judges. Get all of your counters past this square first in order to win.

You will need:
Scissors
Six flat sticks
Felt-tip pens

Making your Senet game:
Carefully cut out the counters below the Senet board
Using the felt-tip pens, colour in one side of each stick

How to play:
1. Each player has five counters, either green or blue.
2. Each player throws the sticks and counts how many coloured sticks are showing. The player with the highest number of coloured sticks showing goes first.
3. The first player throws the sticks again and moves any counter the number of places shown by the coloured sticks.
4. Continue taking turns until all of your counters have completed the board. You can choose which counter to move during any turn but if you land on an opponent's counter then they must return to the House of Rebirth if they have passed that point.
5. If your counter lands on one of the special squares then you should follow the instructions above.
6. The winner is the person whose counters all pass to the afterlife first.
7. Good luck!