

# How to Play Ludo

Two Methods: ■ Preparing the Game ■ Playing Ludo

Ludo is a popular board game derived from an ancient Indian game called Pachisi. It is a fun, family-friendly board game played with 2-4 people. It is easy to understand, but has some complex rules. The goal of the game is to get all your pawns inside the home pocket, which is located in the middle of the board.

## Method 1

### Preparing the Game

- 1 Get a Ludo set.** You should be able to find a Ludo board game at any children's store or bookstore that sells board games. It is more popular in Indian and Bangladeshi cultures, but there are Western versions available.
  - A popular Western adaptation of Ludo is the board game "Sorry!"
- 2 Understand Ludo terminology.** There are several terms specific to Ludo and other similar games. Each player picks a color and is control of the four pieces, or pawns. Instead of using a pair of dice, Ludo only requires one die. The game begins by setting up each pawn in their corresponding pockets. Pockets are the big, color-coated squares in each corner. The home pocket is the center square that has one space of each color.
  - Most of the game play occurs on the track. The track consists of 52 spaces.
  - The home run is made of four sets of five spaces. This stretch leads into the home pocket. You can only be on the home run if your pawn's color matches the color of the home run.<sup>[1]</sup>
- 3 Get a group together.** Ludo can be played with 2 to 4 players. Players should be over four years old or have the attention span to count and take turns. Each player chooses one of the four colors represented on the board and on the pawns.<sup>[2]</sup>
- 4 Prepare the board.** After each player chooses a color, take all of the pawns of that color and place them in the pockets of the same color.
  - When played with 2 people, play as the opposing colors across from each other, or in opposite corners. This would mean yellow vs red or green vs blue. Place the pawns inside the pockets that match the color of your pawns.
- 5 Decide who goes first.** Determine who goes first by luck of the die. Let each player roll the die. Whoever rolls the highest number goes first. The order of play will proceed clockwise from the player who goes first.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Method 2

### Playing Ludo

- 1 Start the game.** Whoever rolled the highest initial throw has the first attempt to begin the game. To start moving across the board, a player must roll a six to activate a pawn "into play." If the starting person doesn't roll a six, then the player clockwise to them rolls. The initial six allows a pawn to leave the pocket.
  - Everyone gets one chance to roll a six, and if they don't get a six, it becomes the next player's turn.
- 2 Follow the roll.** After a player rolls an initial six to activate a pawn into play, that player will roll the die a second time to move the pawn. You must follow the number that is thrown. To land in the "home" section, you need to move the exact number rolled. You can't capture home pockets if you roll a higher number than required.<sup>[4]</sup>
  - If there is not a legal move you can make, you have to pass your turn.<sup>[5]</sup>
- 3 Understand the rule of sixes.** When the player rolls a six they can get a single pawn out off a pocket. Then you roll again and move that pawn the number of spaces corresponding to the second roll.

- If the player rolls a six on the second roll, then the player can choose to place another pawn out of a pocket or move the first pawn. If you moved a second pawn out of your pocket, roll a third time and proceed to move a pawn.
- If a player rolls a six on their third roll, they cannot place any pawns out of their pocket. The third six ends a player's turn.<sup>[6]</sup>

**4 Capture an opponent's pawn.** You can capture an opponent's pawn anytime you land on top of one of their pawns. The pawn that is captured goes back to the corresponding player's pocket. That player then has to roll a six in order to get their pawn out.<sup>[7]</sup>

- If an opponent's pawn is blocking your pathway and you cannot capture the pawn, you cannot move that pawn.

**5 Play with blobs.** A blob forms when one or more pawns of the same color are on the same space. Blobs act as barriers for all pawns, including yours, on the board. When you have two pawns of the same color and an opponent's pawn lands on the space, it is called a mixed blob.<sup>[8]</sup> When a mixed blob occurs, all pawns on the space are returned to their respective pockets.

- If there is blob three spaces away from your pawn and you roll a four, you cannot move your pawn towards the blob and must pass your turn. If you roll a four, you can capture your opponent's pawns, but your pawn will also be sent back to your pocket.
- Blobs act as barriers to your pawns as well. The only way to pass your own blob is to first land on it with an exact roll. Then on your next roll, you can move your pawn forward.
- You can choose to instead play with "pairs" instead of blobs.

**6 Pair your pawns.** This is a double edged sword that can either win you the game or lose you the game. You can pair pawns by simply landing one pawn on top of another with an exact number. When pawns are paired, you cannot separate them until you reach the home pocket or get captured back into your pocket. As long as you are paired and not in a pocket, the opponent cannot pass you or take you out, unless they also have a pair and land on top of your pawns.

- If an opponent's pair lands on top of your pair, you lose both of your pawns.
- You can instead play with the rule of blobs, or create a hybrid by using both options.

**7 Reach the home run.** In order to place your pawns into the home run, you'll need to make a lap around the track of the board. Each pawn starts by going to the right. Once you've made a complete lap you can file your pawns into the home run.<sup>[9]</sup>

**8 Win the game.** To win the game, you need to get all your pawns inside the home pocket before your opponent can.<sup>[10]</sup> You cannot jump pawns in Ludo. If you have an empty space in your homerun, you're required to move the closest pawn into that space. You must move the pawn according to the number you roll on the die.

- If you have one space to move and you roll a three or a two, you cannot move that pawn one space.

## Community Q&A

### How do I attack another pawn?



wikiHow Contributor

You attack another pawn by getting an exact number that lands on top of that pawn.

Not Helpful

2

Helpful

16

### When an opponent's pawn is at my starting position, can he capture me?



wikiHow Contributor

No, that position is a safe zone for both you and your opponent.

Not Helpful

3

Helpful

10

### If I have two pawns and I get the same number to attack my opponent pawn as I can move the other pawn, do I have to attack?



Tannakhan

You don't have to attack. However, it usually gives you better results, as you delay your opponent from winning.

Not Helpful

2

Helpful

6

**Will you have won the game if you move one of the four pawns before your opponent gets any pawns out of the start circle?**



Tannakhan

You cannot win the game if the opponent does not get any pieces out, as you have to take out one of the opponent's pieces in order to go to the home pocket.

Not Helpful

4

Helpful

8

**What do we do if a piece lands on a pair and it is of the same color?**



wikiHow Contributor

When this happens, it means you made some sort of "wall" and your opponent can't pass unless you want to move one of the two pieces (it's a rule of the game, it's not cheating).

Not Helpful

3

Helpful

6

**Can I attack if there are two pawns on one space?**



wikiHow Contributor

If there are two counters in one space, they are called doubles. To capture your opponent's doubles, you have to attack with doubles, or triples. Otherwise, you cannot capture them, or even go ahead.

Not Helpful

3

Helpful

5

**Can I move into home run without attacking the opposition's pawn?**



wikiHow Contributor

In some games, you can. In others, you might not be able to. Check the rules of your Ludo set or agree to your own set of rules before beginning the game.

Not Helpful

3

Helpful

4

**If you throw a six and cannot move, can you throw again?**

Holly Dounson

No, you have to stay where you are.

Not Helpful

0

Helpful

1

**I have one pawn and standing on six position of finishing point and it comes 6. Does this mean I win or get another turn?**



Tannakhan

You do not win, as you have another turn. if you have 2 pieces however, you can break the rolls between the two. For example, with the six you can put inside the pocket, and with the second roll you can move the second piece.

Not Helpful

2

Helpful

2

**Last pawn and only six is required, and player rolls 6 - can he move the pawn because he can't move 6 chance?**

Holly Dounson

Yes, he can. It is the same when all the pawns are out and you roll a six. Choose the player that you want to move ahead six.

Not Helpful

0

Helpful

0

## Things You'll Need

- ☐ 1 six sided die
- ☐ 1 Ludo board
- ☐ 16 pawns: 4 of each kind (four different colors, four types of coins, etc.).

## Tips

- There are several varieties of Ludo. The version you know may not be the same as your opponents version. Discuss the rules as you know them before starting the game.

## Sources and Citations

1. <https://github.com/sudiptachatterjee/ludo/wiki/Rules-of-the-game-of-Ludo>
2. <http://www.ymimports.com/pages/how-to-play-Ludo#.VtXb9lUrLnA>
3. <http://www.ymimports.com/pages/how-to-play-Ludo#.VtXb9lUrLnA>

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