

When you create a board game you design a system. This project provides an ideal opportunity for system design, and at the same time exemplifies the 'classic' design process.

The whole game can be developed using squared paper, dice and a pencil. Mark out a square, perhaps 10 x 10 if you are using the snakes and ladders system, or 11 x 11 if you want a spiral track.

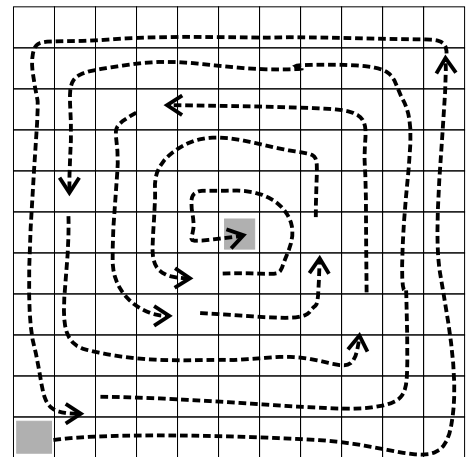
The aim of the game is to move a counter along the track until it reaches the goal. By using dice or a spinner to determine the amount of progress for each round, the counter may land on any one of three types of square. 1, a neutral square, 2, a reward square, or 3, a penalty square. The reward might be an extra throw or a bonus move. The penalty might be a missed throw or a move backwards. The nature and scale of the penalties and rewards must be decided by the game's designer.

Take care! Many children delight in making traps, disproportionate penalties such as 'miss 100 throws', or arranging a reward 'forward three squares', where the player finds himself on a 'back to the start' square! Avoid this temptation by setting a 'target winning time'. This target might be that the game should not last more than ten minutes. Achieving this will mean altering the number and proportion of rewards and penalties. The most successful approach is to have only one level of reward or penalty - extra-throw and miss-a-throw would be a good starting point.

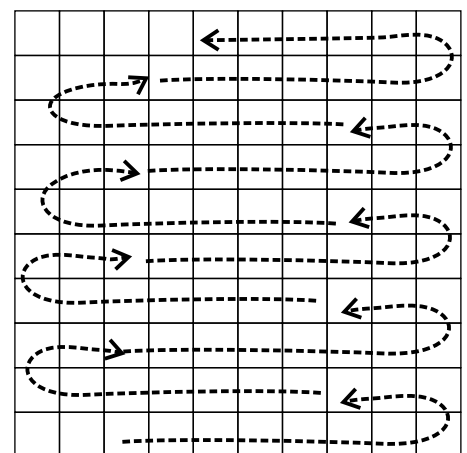
Test the game at each stage. All testing can be carried out on squared paper, there is no need to begin making a board at this stage; this is the great attraction of this project. Once the game has been refined the board can be made. Avoid having a lot of words, they will look untidy, and cut paper/card shapes might be preferable to paint or felt pens.

The game that is illustrated above works like this.

The track is a spiral, travelling from the black corner square to the centre square. Squares with a large arrow indicate that the track changes direction. Landing on any one of these means the player gets an extra go (spin). Landing on a square marked with a circle means that the player has to miss a turn.



The track could spiral towards the centre, like the one shown above, or it could weave from side to side, as shown below. This is the method used by 'snakes and ladders'.



### The SPINNER

Although a dice could be made from a wooden cube, an hexagonal spinner makes a better design challenge. The spinner is easy to make, but it is very difficult to make it behave in a fair manner. Almost certainly it will favour a particular number, and this shows that the spinner is not correctly balanced. The side with the favoured number will be a little heavier - reduce the weight by punching one or more holes in that side. Keep spinning, and recording the results, until the scores become more random.

*You will also need counters. Depending on the chosen theme of the game, these could be geometric shapes, little figures or animals, or boats/cars/planes, etc. Consider using self-hardening modelling material, especially if you are making figures. Remember, however, that the success of the game depends on how the game plays, rather than its appearance.*