Ludo Help Index

How to Play

Commands

How To Play

The following topics explain how to play Ludo:

Game Menu Commands

New Game
Begins a new game. You can issue this command at any time. If you choose it before completing a game, the current game is terminated and a new one is started.

Exit
Terminates the Ludo program.

Playing the Game

Ludo is a race game for two players: you and the computer. The winner is the first player to get all four pieces into the center square.

When you run Ludo, the program starts a new game. You can later begin a new game, even before completing the current one, by choosing the New Game command from the Game menu. You play using the yellow pieces; initially, all four of your pieces are on your home base, which is in the upper left corner of the board. The computer plays using the red pieces, which are initially positioned on the computer's home base in the lower right corner of the board.

At the beginning of a game, each player rolls the die to determine who takes the first turn. To proceed, click the Start button to signal the computer to roll the die. Next, click the Roll button to roll the die for yourself. The player rolling the highest number makes the first move; if both players roll the same number, you repeat this procedure.

If the computer rolls the higher number, simply click the OK button, and the computer will make its first move. If you roll the higher number, you will make the first move.

When it is your turn to make a move in Ludo, click the Roll button to roll the die, and proceed according to the following rules:

o   You can either move one of your pieces (if a move is possible), or you can click the Pass button to skip your turn without making a move. (If no move is possible, you must click Pass.) If you click Pass, the computer again takes a turn.

o   If a piece is located on your home base, you can move the piece only when you have rolled a *6*. If you roll a *6*, you must move the piece to the yellow starting square.

o   If a piece is *not* on your home base, you can move the piece forward the number of squares indicated by the roll of the die. For example, if you roll a *3*, you can move the piece three squares forward. The course that you follow, and the course that the computer follows, are both illustrated below.

o   You *cannot* move a piece onto a square that is already occupied by one of your own pieces.

o   You *can* move a piece onto a square already occupied by one of the computer's pieces. In this case, the computer's piece is restored (sent back) to its home base. (The same can happen to you if the computer moves one of its pieces onto a square occupied by one of your pieces!)

o   To move a piece onto the center square, you must roll a number that is the exact number of squares between the piece and the center square. If you roll a greater number, you are not permitted to move the piece "beyond" the center. For example, consider a piece that is three squares away from the center square. If you roll *1*, *2*, or *3*, you can move the piece (a 3 permitting you to move it onto the center); if you roll a number larger than three, however, you cannot move the piece.

o   Whenever you roll a *6*, you can take another turn. You can then move either the same piece or another piece. You can continue making moves -- without giving the computer a turn -- as long as you continue to roll *6*.

o   You cannot drop a piece onto an invalid position. If you try to do so, the piece is restored to the position it occupied before you moved it.

o   After you have moved a piece onto a valid square, click OK (or, alternatively, press Enter) to allow the computer to take its next turn. Note: After dropping a piece onto a valid square, you cannot

change your move.

The following is the course that you follow:
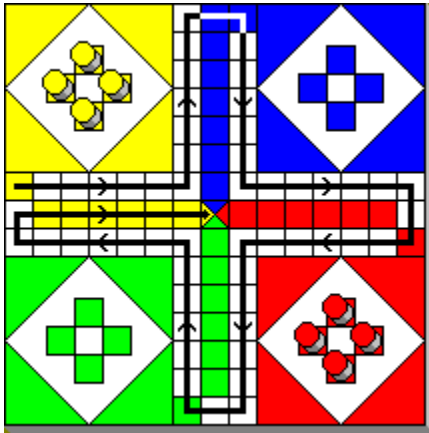
The following is the course that the computer follows:
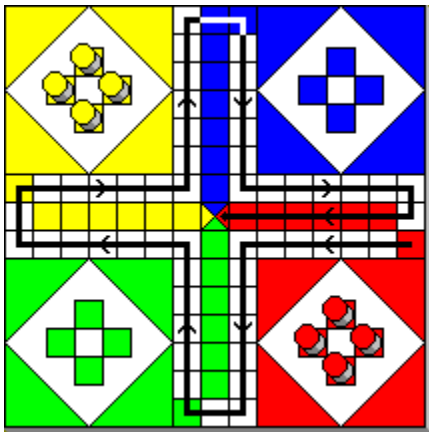
After you click Pass to skip your move or make a valid move and click OK, the computer makes its next move. When the computer has completed its move, the message *your move...* appears at the bottom of the window. You can now make your next move according to the rules.

When a piece is moved onto the center square, it is removed from the game. When either you have or the computer has moved all four pieces onto this square, the game is over and an announcement of the outcome is displayed at the bottom of the window. If you want to start a new game, choose the New Game command from the Game menu.

Strategy and Hints

Playing Ludo involves both luck and strategy. Luck plays an important role; no amount of strategy can substitute for rolling a series of sixes! The following guidelines, however, can help you make the most of each move. (As you will see, the computer follows a similar set of guidelines when calculating its own moves.) These guidelines are listed roughly in order of priority.

o   If you roll a *6*, always move any piece still on the home base, provided that the starting square is available. This will help you avoid stranding a piece on the home base while waiting to roll a *6*.

o   If one of your pieces is on the starting square, move it to make this square available to receive a piece still waiting on the home base.

o   If a piece is on one of the last six squares, do the following: If you roll the exact value needed to place it on the center square, move the piece. If you roll a smaller number, do not move the piece. (Moving it would not increase your chances of placing it on the finish; move one of your other pieces instead.) If you roll a number greater than the exact value needed, you cannot move the piece. (Move one of your other pieces instead.)

o   If possible, move a piece onto a square occupied by one of the computer's pieces, thereby sending the computer's piece back to its home base. If such a move is not possible, try to move a piece to a position six or fewer squares behind one of the computer's pieces so that you can later send it home if you roll the right number.

o   Conversely, avoid leaving a piece six or fewer squares *ahead* of a computer's piece, because the computer also tries to send your pieces back to your home base.

o   Favor a move that places a piece on one of the last six squares. You can then move the piece to the finish as soon as you roll the appropriate number. In the meantime, the piece is immune from capture because one player cannot move onto the last six squares of the other player's course.