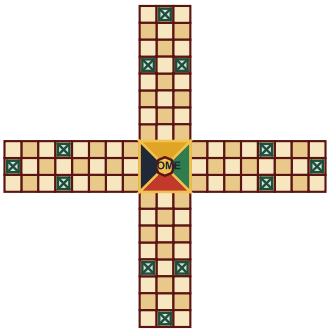
Pachisi

Name _____

Read about "the game of twenty-five," a race game from India.



A Pachisi board. Real boards are cloth, embroidered by hand.

Pachisi is a race game from India. Its name comes from the Hindi word for twenty-five, the biggest number you can throw. Nobody knows exactly how old the game is. The oldest clear records of it come from the 1500s, when the Mughal emperors ruled much of India.

The board is usually a cloth shaped like a cross, sewn or embroidered in bright colors, so it can be folded up and carried anywhere. Instead of dice, players throw six or seven cowrie shells, small shiny seashells, and count how many land with their opening facing up.

The Mughal emperor Akbar loved the game. At his palace city of Fatehpur Sikri, built in the 1570s, a giant board was laid out in the courtyard with red and white stone squares. Stories say Akbar and his friends played on it with real people standing on the squares as the pieces.

Travelers took the game to other countries, and new versions spread around the world. In England it became Ludo, and in the United States a version called Parcheesi has been sold since the 1800s. Many families play a game that comes from Pachisi without knowing it.

Questions

1. What does the name Pachisi mean?

2. What do Pachisi players throw instead of dice?

3. What was special about the board at Fatehpur Sikri?

4. Name a game played today that comes from Pachisi.