

Pipquest — Activity Book

A Spark & Anvil activity book — puzzles, questions, and fun from Pipquest.

Write in the book, circle your answers, and check the Answer Key at the back.

1. The Board & Setup

Circle the correct answer

1. How many points (triangles) are on a backgammon board?
(A) 20 (B) 12 (C) 24 (D) 30
2. How many checkers does each player have?
(A) 16 (B) 24 (C) 15 (D) 12
3. The board is divided into how many quadrants?
(A) Four (B) Three (C) Two (D) Six
4. Your 'home board' (inner board) is where you eventually —
(A) start every checker (B) keep the dice (C) roll first (D) bring all your checkers and then bear them off
5. Each player moves their checkers —
(A) in any direction (B) toward their own home board (C) sideways only (D) toward the opponent's home board
6. What is the goal of backgammon?
(A) To roll the highest number (B) To fill the board (C) To capture all enemy checkers (D) To bear off all your checkers before your opponent does

Write the answer

7. The points are usually numbered 1 to 24 from —
Answer: _____
8. A 'blot' is —
Answer: _____
9. A point with TWO or more of your checkers is —
Answer: _____

10. The raised bar in the middle of the board is where —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The standard starting setup places your checkers on — →
2. In the standard setup, how many checkers start on your 6-point? →
3. Which quadrant do you most want to control? →
4. Backgammon combines luck (the dice) with — →
5. Moving all your checkers 'home' means getting them into — →

- (A) Your home board (where you bear off and can trap the opponent)
 - (B) your home-board quadrant (points 1–6 for you)
 - (C) Five
 - (D) skill (how you choose to use the numbers you roll)
 - (E) specific points in a fixed, mirror-image arrangement
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2. The Dice & Basic Movement

Circle the correct answer

11. How many dice do you roll on your turn?

- (A) Three (B) Four (C) One (D) Two

12. Each die's number tells you —

- (A) how many checkers to remove (B) how many points (pips) to move a checker
(C) the score (D) who goes next

13. If you roll a 5 and a 3, you may move —

- (A) one checker 8 only (B) only the 5 (C) only doubles (D) one checker 5 and another 3 (or one checker 5 then 3, if the path is open)

14. What happens when you roll DOUBLES (like 4-4)?

- (A) You play the number FOUR times (B) You play it once (C) You lose a turn (D) You play it twice

15. Can you move a checker onto a point the opponent has MADE (2+ checkers)?

- (A) Yes, if it's a blot (B) Only with doubles (C) Yes, always (D) No — that point is blocked

16. Can you land on a point with a single ENEMY checker (a blot)?

- (A) Yes — and you HIT it, sending it to the bar (B) No, never (C) Only if you have 15 checkers (D) Only with doubles

Write the answer

17. If you can only play ONE of your two dice (the other is blocked), you must —

Answer: _____

18. If you CANNOT use either die, you —

Answer: _____

19. Checkers always move —

Answer: _____

20. To move one checker the TOTAL of both dice, the intermediate point must be —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Rolling 6-6 gives you — →

2. The dice make backgammon a game of — →

3. You should try to use — →

4. When you can play your dice in more than one order, you should — →

5. A 'pip' is — →

(A) probability — some rolls are likelier than others

(B) as many pips (both dice) as you legally can each turn

(C) four moves of 6

(D) one point of movement (the value shown on a die)

(E) choose the order/points that best fit your plan

3. Hitting & the Bar

Circle the correct answer

21. You 'hit' an opponent's checker by —

(A) landing on a point where they have a single checker (a blot) (B) landing on a made point (C) rolling doubles (D) bearing off

22. A hit checker goes to —

(A) the outer board (B) off the board (C) the bar (D) the home board

23. A player with a checker on the bar must FIRST —

(A) move any other checker (B) bear off (C) double the cube (D) re-enter it in the opponent's home board

24. You re-enter from the bar using —

(A) any number always (B) only doubles (C) a die number matching an open point in the opponent's home board (D) the doubling cube

25. If the opponent's home board points you'd enter on are all BLOCKED, you —

(A) enter anywhere (B) win (C) bear off (D) cannot enter and lose your turn

26. Being hit is costly because —

(A) your checker travels all the way from the bar back around the board (B) it's free
(C) it doesn't matter (D) it wins you the game

Write the answer

27. You should avoid leaving blots —

Answer: _____

28. Hitting the opponent is good when it —

Answer: _____

29. A 'closed board' (all six home-board points made) means an opponent on the bar —

Answer: _____

30. Making points in your HOME board is powerful because —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. If you hit an opponent AND you have a strong home board, you — →

2. A blot on YOUR side of the board is — →

3. The safest way to protect a checker is to — →

4. If you must leave a blot, put it where — →

5. Re-entering quickly matters because — →

(A) you can't do anything else until your bar checker is back in play

(B) may keep them stuck on the bar, gaining a big advantage

(C) the opponent has the FEWEST numbers that hit it

(D) still at risk if the opponent has checkers that can reach it

(E) make the point (bring a second checker to it)

4. Making Points & Primes

Circle the correct answer

31. You 'make' a point by —

(A) having one checker on it (B) having two or more of your checkers on it (C) bearing off (D) rolling doubles

32. A made point is valuable because it —

(A) does nothing (B) must be given up (C) helps the opponent (D) blocks the opponent and gives your checkers a safe home

33. A 'prime' is —

(A) a single made point (B) the doubling cube (C) several made points in a row that block enemy escape (D) a blot

34. How many consecutive points make a FULL prime that no checker can escape?

(A) Six (B) Four (C) Two (D) Ten

35. Why can't a checker jump a SIX-point prime?

(A) checkers can fly (B) primes don't block (C) it can jump anything (D) The largest single die is 6, so it can't leap six blocked points

36. Building points in your home board and outer board helps you —

(A) free the opponent (B) bear off faster only (C) lose the game (D) trap opponent checkers behind your wall

Write the answer

37. The most valuable points to make early are usually —

Answer: _____

38. A 'broken' prime (a gap in the wall) lets the opponent —

Answer: _____

39. Making points takes priority when you can —

Answer: _____

40. A prime works best when it is —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. As you race home, you may need to 'break' your prime, which is — →

2. A 4-point 'broken' blockade is still useful because — →

3. Two players both building primes creates — →

4. A made point in the OPPONENT'S home board (an 'anchor') is — →

5. Making the opponent's re-entry harder means making points in — →

- (A) it blocks SOME numbers, making escape harder
 - (B) unavoidable eventually — time it as late as possible
 - (C) your OWN home board
 - (D) a safe defensive base for your back checkers
 - (E) a race to trap the other's checkers first
-

5. The Pip Count

Circle the correct answer

41. The 'pip count' measures —

- (A) the dice total (B) how many checkers you have (C) the score (D) how many pips you need to bring all checkers home and bear them off

42. A LOWER pip count means you are —

- (A) ahead in the race (B) losing (C) on the bar (D) behind in the race

43. To find a checker's pip value, you count —

- (A) the number of its point (its distance from bearing off) (B) the dice (C) the score (D) the number of checkers

44. A checker on the bar counts as —

- (A) 25 pips (it must travel the farthest) (B) 1 pip (C) 0 pips (D) 6 pips

45. At the START of the game, each player's pip count is —

- (A) different (B) the same (167), because the setup is symmetric (C) zero (D) unknown

46. Comparing pip counts tells you —

- (A) the weather (B) nothing useful (C) who is ahead and by how much (D) the score

Write the answer

47. If you're well AHEAD in the pip count, a good plan is often to —

Answer: _____

48. If you're well BEHIND in the pip count, a good plan is often to —

Answer: _____

49. The pip count is most decisive in —

Answer: _____

50. A quick way to estimate the count is to —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Losing 10 pips from a hit means your pip count — →
2. The pip count helps you decide whether to — →
3. Two checkers, one on the 6-point and one on the 3-point, count as — →
4. A pip lead of just a few pips in a close race means — →
5. Why do strong players count pips regularly? →

- (A) 9 pips total
 - (B) race or play a contact/holding game
 - (C) goes UP by (roughly) the pips that checker must retravel
 - (D) the race is nearly even — small things (and luck) decide it
 - (E) It turns 'who feels ahead' into a precise number for decisions
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6. Probability & the Dice

Circle the correct answer

51. How many equally likely combinations are there when rolling two dice?
(A) 36 (B) 6 (C) 12 (D) 21
52. How many of the 36 combinations are DOUBLES?
(A) 12 (B) 3 (C) 1 (D) 6
53. In how many of the 36 rolls does at least one die show a specific number (say a 3)?
(A) 6 (B) 11 (C) 36 (D) 12
54. A blot exactly 6 pips away can be hit by how many of the 36 rolls (direct 6s only)?
(A) 17 (B) 1 (C) 6 (D) 11
55. Which is a MORE likely single-die number to be hit from: a blot 1–6 away (direct) or 7+ away (indirect)?
(A) They're equally likely (B) 1–6 away (a direct shot is more likely) (C) 7+ away (D) Neither can be hit
56. A blot 7 pips away (an indirect shot) is hit by combinations like —
(A) 6-1, 5-2, 4-3 (and their reverses), plus... fewer ways than a direct shot (B) all 36 rolls (C) no rolls (D) any roll with a 7

Write the answer

57. Why do backgammon players think in probabilities?

Answer: _____

58. Leaving a blot where only 6 of 36 rolls hit it is —

Answer: _____

59. The chance of rolling a specific double (like 5-5) is —

Answer: _____

60. Because doubles let you move four times, players sometimes 'play for' a double when —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Estimating hitting chances helps you decide — →

2. A blot that CANNOT be hit at all (behind a prime or out of range) is — →

3. The most likely SUM of two dice is — →

4. Knowing the 36 combinations lets you — →

5. If you're on the bar and the opponent has made 3 of their 6 home points, you enter on — →

(A) whether a play is too risky

(B) completely safe

(C) count exactly how many rolls hit, enter, or make a point

(D) the 3 open points (any die matching an open point enters)

(E) 7 (it has the most combinations)

7. Bearing Off

Circle the correct answer

61. You may begin bearing off only when —

(A) all 15 of your checkers are in your home board (B) the game starts (C) half your checkers are home (D) you roll doubles

62. To 'bear off' a checker means to —

(A) remove it from the board using a die roll (B) hit an opponent (C) move it to the bar (D) make a point

63. A roll of 4 bears off a checker from —

(A) the bar (B) your 4-point (or moves within the home board if no checker is on the 4-point) (C) any point (D) the 6-point only

- 64.** If you roll a number HIGHER than your highest occupied point, you —
(A) must move to the bar (B) may bear off from your highest point (C) lose the turn
(D) cannot bear off
- 65.** If you roll a number for a point where you have NO checker (and lower points are occupied), you —
(A) must make a legal move within the home board with that number (B) bear off anyway
(C) lose the turn (D) hit the opponent
- 66.** During bear-off, getting HIT is possible if —
(A) only on doubles (B) you leave a blot while the opponent still has a checker that can reach it
(C) never (D) always

Write the answer

- 67.** To bear off SAFELY when the opponent has a checker behind you, you should —
Answer: _____
- 68.** Efficient bearing off means —
Answer: _____
- 69.** Doubles during bear-off are great because —
Answer: _____
- 70.** If NO opponent checker is behind you (no contact), bear-off is —
Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Leaving your highest points occupied while lower ones empty risks — →
 2. You bear off from your home board, which is — →
 3. The winner is the first to — →
 4. A checker on the 1-point bears off with — →
 5. Should you always bear off the highest checker first? →
- (A) wasting pips or being forced to leave a blot later
(B) points 1 through 6 (your inner board)
(C) bear off all 15 checkers
(D) any roll of 1 or higher (a 1 bears it off; higher works as overage)
(E) Not always — sometimes filling gaps or safety matters more
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8. The Doubling Cube

Circle the correct answer

71. The doubling cube is used to —

- (A) roll for movement (B) count pips (C) propose doubling the stakes of the game
(D) bear off

72. What numbers are on the doubling cube?

- (A) 1–12 (B) 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 (C) 0–9 (D) 1–6

73. When you 'double,' your opponent must choose to —

- (A) roll the dice (B) TAKE (accept, play on for double stakes) or DROP (concede the current stake) (C) pass forever (D) bear off

74. If your opponent DROPS your double, you win —

- (A) nothing (B) the current stake (before the double) (C) double the new stake (D) the whole match

75. If your opponent TAKES your double, the game —

- (A) resets (B) is a draw (C) ends immediately (D) continues for DOUBLE the stakes, and they now own the cube

76. After you double and it's taken, who can double NEXT?

- (A) Only your opponent (they own the cube) (B) Only you (C) No one (D) Either player

Write the answer

77. At the start of the game, who can double?

Answer: _____

78. A good time to double is when you are —

Answer: _____

79. You should NOT double when you are —

Answer: _____

80. Deciding to TAKE a double depends on —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The doubling cube adds a layer of — →

2. A 'redouble' is — →

3. The cube makes it possible to WIN a game without playing it out because — →

4. Doubling when you are BEHIND is usually — →

5. The take/drop decision is really a — →

- (A) a mistake (the opponent should take, and you'll likely lose double)
 - (B) the opponent may drop rather than risk the higher stakes
 - (C) probability judgment about your winning chances vs the stakes
 - (D) doubling again after you took a previous double (you own the cube)
 - (E) strategy about WHEN to raise the stakes, not just how to move
-

9. Blots, Safety & Risk

Circle the correct answer

81. A blot is risky because —

- (A) it can't be hit (B) the opponent can hit it and send it to the bar (C) it wins the game (D) it's always safe

82. The safest way to remove a blot's risk is to —

- (A) double (B) leave it (C) send it to the bar (D) make the point (bring a second checker)

83. Sometimes you MUST leave a blot; then you should —

- (A) leave two blots (B) leave it where the fewest rolls hit it (C) leave it where the most rolls hit it (D) give up

84. Leaving a blot can be WORTH the risk when —

- (A) always (B) never (C) only when losing (D) the reward (like making a key point) outweighs the hitting chance

85. A blot deep in your OWN home board late in a race is dangerous only if —

- (A) you have doubles (B) always (C) never (D) the opponent still has a checker behind it

86. Two blots are worse than one because —

- (A) it's safer (B) it's the same (C) blots don't matter (D) the opponent has more numbers that hit something

Write the answer

87. A conservative (safe) style —

Answer: _____

88. An aggressive style —

Answer: _____

89. The right amount of risk depends on —

Answer: _____

90. A blot that gives a return-hit chance if hit is —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Safety in backgammon is about — →

2. If a safe play and a bold play are close, and you're AHEAD, prefer — →

3. If a safe play and a bold play are close, and you're BEHIND, prefer — →

4. Counting the shots against a blot is a — →

5. A blot on a point the opponent WANTS is sometimes okay because — →

(A) managing exposure so you're rarely hit at a bad time

(B) the bold play (you need a swing)

(C) probability skill (favorable rolls out of 36)

(D) even if hit, you've disrupted their plan (and may re-make it)

(E) the safe play (protect your lead)

10. Game Plans

Circle the correct answer

91. A 'racing game' means —

(A) both sides mostly race home with little contact (B) no movement (C) heavy hitting (D) trapping checkers

92. You should aim to RACE when you are —

(A) ahead in the pip count (B) never (C) behind in the pip count (D) always

93. A 'holding game' means —

(A) bearing off early (B) keeping an anchor and waiting for a shot to hit the opponent (C) priming (D) racing

94. A holding game is a good plan when you are —

(A) slightly behind but hold a good anchor (B) always (C) far ahead (D) far behind with no anchor

95. A 'priming game' means —

(A) building a wall (prime) to trap the opponent's back checkers (B) bearing off (C) doubling (D) racing

96. A priming game works when you can —

(A) never trap anyone (B) trap enemy checkers behind your wall while you bring yours home (C) only race (D) only defend

Write the answer

97. A 'back game' means —

Answer: _____

98. A back game is a plan for when you are —

Answer: _____

99. Choosing a game plan depends mostly on —

Answer: _____

100. A flexible player —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The biggest MISTAKE in choosing a plan is — →

2. A holding game's key asset is — →

3. A priming game requires you to — →

4. If your plan is racing and you're well ahead, you should — →

5. Game plans are essentially about — →

(A) matching your strategy to whether you're ahead or behind

(B) the anchor — a safe point that also threatens hits

(C) racing when behind (you'll just lose the race)

(D) avoid contact and play safely home

(E) keep the prime intact as long as possible

11. Opening Rolls & Early Play

Circle the correct answer

101. The best opening roll is generally considered —

(A) 6-5 (B) 3-1 (it makes your 5-point) (C) 1-1 (D) 2-1

102. The opening roll 6-1 is strong because it —

(A) hits nothing useful (B) makes your bar-point (7-point) (C) bears off (D) makes your 1-point

- 103.** The opening roll 6-5 is called 'lover's leap' because it —
(A) hits two blots (B) bears off (C) runs one back checker all the way to safety (D) makes a home point
- 104.** A general opening principle is to —
(A) leave blots everywhere (B) always run one checker (C) never make points (D) make strong points (like the 5-point) when you can
- 105.** When you can't make a point, a good opening idea is to —
(A) double the cube (B) skip the turn (C) play safely or make a constructive 'builder' move (D) leave a big blot
- 106.** A 'builder' is a checker positioned to —
(A) sit on the bar (B) hit immediately (C) bear off (D) help make a point on a future roll

Write the answer

- 107.** Early in the game you should generally —
Answer: _____
- 108.** Escaping your BACK checkers early can be important because —
Answer: _____
- 109.** Splitting your back checkers (to two points) can —
Answer: _____
- 110.** The opening is important because —
Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. A weak opening roll should be played by — →
 2. Making the 5-point early is so valuable because it — →
 3. Placing builders bears fruit when — →
 4. Early hitting is good when it — →
 5. A common early mistake is — →
- (A) blocks the opponent AND anchors your home board
(B) leaving too many loose blots that get hit
(C) your next roll uses them to make a valuable point
(D) gains tempo and fits your developing plan
(E) finding its most constructive use, not by complaining about luck
-

12. Cube Strategy & Equity

Circle the correct answer

111. A rough guideline: you can TAKE a double if your winning chances are at least about —

- (A) 5% (B) 25% (C) 50% (D) 90%

112. You should DOUBLE when you are —

(A) already certain to win (B) behind (C) barely ahead (D) clearly ahead but the opponent can still reasonably take

113. 'Equity' roughly means —

(A) your expected value in the game (how much you expect to win or lose on average) (B) the dice total (C) your pip count (D) the number of checkers

114. Doubling too EARLY (when barely ahead) is a mistake because —

(A) the opponent drops (B) it can't be a mistake (C) the opponent takes and you've raised stakes without enough advantage (D) it's always right

115. Doubling too LATE (when you're way ahead) can cost you because —

(A) the opponent simply drops and you miss playing on for a gammon (B) the opponent takes (C) it's always right (D) there's no cost

116. The 'doubling window' is —

(A) the range of advantage where doubling is correct (strong, but they can still take) (B) a physical window (C) the bar (D) the pip count

Write the answer

117. Gammon chances (winning double) affect the cube because —

Answer: _____

118. If you own the cube and your position improves, you can —

Answer: _____

119. Cube decisions are fundamentally about —

Answer: _____

120. A 'market loser' is a roll after which —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The reason to double before you're overwhelming is to — →

2. Take/drop is a bet where dropping costs the current stake and taking risks — →
3. Gammon or backgammon RISK should make you — →
4. Match play changes cube strategy because — →
5. A strong cube player — →

- (A) the score affects how much each point is worth
(B) more cautious about taking a double (you could lose extra)
(C) doubles at the right moment and makes correct take/drop decisions
(D) avoid 'losing your market' (double while they'll still take)
(E) the doubled stake for a chance to win it
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13. Anchors & Back Games

Circle the correct answer

121. An 'anchor' is —

- (A) a blot (B) a checker on the bar (C) a made point in the opponent's home board
(D) the doubling cube

122. An anchor is valuable because it —

- (A) helps the opponent (B) is safe from being hit AND gives you hitting chances (C) is easily hit (D) does nothing

123. The best 'advanced' anchors are the opponent's —

- (A) 5-point or bar-point (good hitting range) (B) 1-point or 2-point (deep) (C) the outer board (D) the bar

124. A 'back game' uses —

- (A) TWO anchors in the opponent's home board (B) no anchors (C) one anchor (D) a prime only

125. A back game is a plan for when you are —

- (A) far ahead (B) far behind and need a big swing (C) slightly ahead (D) even

126. The hardest part of a back game is —

- (A) rolling the dice (B) TIMING — keeping the anchors until the opponent must leave a shot (C) counting pips (D) making the anchors

Write the answer

127. If a back game's timing is OFF (you're forced to break the anchors early), you —

Answer: _____

128. Even when far behind, holding an anchor keeps you in the game because —

Answer: _____

129. You should be reluctant to give up a good anchor because —

Answer: _____

130. From ahead, you should be aware the opponent's anchor means —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Against an anchor, a player who is ahead should — →

2. Anchors turn a losing race into — →

3. Holding two anchors (a back game) is powerful but — →

4. A key skill with anchors is knowing WHEN to — →

5. Anchors mostly matter when there is still — →

(A) try to bring checkers home while minimizing the shots they leave

(B) hard to time and risky if it fails

(C) CONTACT (the armies can still hit each other)

(D) abandon the anchor and race (if you get ahead) vs hold and wait

(E) a game of chances (waiting for a hit)

14. Match Play, Gammons & Scoring

Circle the correct answer

131. A 'gammon' is when the winner bears off all checkers while the loser has —

(A) borne off half (B) borne off NONE (C) won the cube (D) an anchor

132. A gammon is worth —

(A) double (2×) the game's value (B) half (C) triple (3×) (D) the same (1×)

133. A 'backgammon' (the rare big win) is when the loser has borne off none AND —

(A) won the cube (B) bore off one (C) still has a checker on the bar or in the winner's home board (D) has an anchor

134. A backgammon is worth —

(A) triple (3×) the game's value (B) double (C) quadruple (D) the same

135. Because gammons and backgammons multiply the score, players sometimes —

(A) play on for a bigger win instead of doubling (B) always drop (C) always double (D) never play on

136. In MATCH play, you play to —

(A) a time limit (B) a target number of points, not just one game (C) the highest pip count (D) a single game

Write the answer

137. The SCORE in a match affects strategy because —

Answer: _____

138. When you need only a FEW points to win the match, gammons matter —

Answer: _____

139. A player who is far BEHIND in a match should generally —

Answer: _____

140. A player who is far AHEAD in a match should generally —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. The doubling cube in match play is judged relative to — →

2. Gammons make DOUBLING more attractive because — →

3. Scoring in backgammon rewards — →

4. A 'crawford game' rule (in match play) briefly — →

5. Understanding scoring helps you decide — →

(A) not just winning, but winning BIG (gammons/backgammons) at the right times

(B) how hard to press for gammons and how to use the cube

(C) turns OFF the cube for one game when a player reaches match point

(D) the match score (each point's value changes)

(E) the potential win is larger, widening the doubling window

15. Common Mistakes & Good Habits

Circle the correct answer

141. A very common mistake is —

(A) holding an anchor when behind (B) counting pips (C) making the 5-point (D) racing when you're behind in the pip count

142. A good habit before a risky move is to —

(A) double the cube (B) count how many rolls hit you (C) move instantly (D) ignore the risk

143. A frequent cube mistake is —

(A) doubling when you're only slightly ahead (or when behind) (B) doubling when clearly ahead (C) never doubling (D) taking with 40% chances

144. A good habit is to regularly —

(A) ignore the count (B) count the pips to know where the race stands (C) avoid math (D) guess who's ahead

145. Leaving unnecessary blots is a mistake because —

(A) blots can't be hit (B) it gives the opponent free hitting chances (C) it's always fine (D) it helps you

146. A good habit when ahead is to —

(A) double from behind (B) take wild risks (C) play safely and protect your lead (D) leave blots

Write the answer

147. A good habit when behind is to —

Answer: _____

148. Failing to escape your back checkers in time can lead to —

Answer: _____

149. A good habit is to think about —

Answer: _____

150. Over many games, skill shows because —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. A mistake in bearing off is — →

2. A good habit is reviewing your games to — →

3. Treating a loss caused by bad luck the right way means — →

4. A good all-around habit is to ask each turn — →

5. A common OVER-aggressive mistake is — →

(A) 'am I ahead or behind, and what plan fits?'

(B) learn from mistakes without shame

(C) leaving a blot while the opponent still has a checker behind you

(D) recognizing you played well even if the dice didn't cooperate

(E) hitting when it exposes you to a costly return hit for little gain

16. Putting It Together

Circle the correct answer

151. The goal of backgammon is to —

(A) make the most points (B) capture all enemy checkers (C) roll the highest (D) bear off all 15 checkers before your opponent

152. Backgammon blends —

(A) pure luck (B) neither (C) luck (the dice) and skill (your decisions) (D) pure skill

153. The pip count tells you —

(A) who's ahead in the race, guiding whether to race or keep contact (B) the score (C) the cube value (D) who deals

154. Probability matters because —

(A) it's magic (B) luck is unknowable (C) you can count exactly how many of the 36 rolls help or hurt you (D) the dice can't be measured

155. The doubling cube adds —

(A) nothing (B) randomness (C) movement (D) a second strategic game about when to raise the stakes

156. Choosing a game plan means —

(A) always racing (B) always priming (C) racing when ahead, and holding/priming/back-gaming when behind (D) ignoring the position

Write the answer

157. Hitting and the bar make the game interactive because —

Answer: _____

158. Making points and primes lets you —

Answer: _____

159. Blot management is about —

Answer: _____

160. The single habit that most improves play is —

Answer: _____

Match each question to its answer

1. Skill shows over many games because — →

2. A great backgammon player — →

3. Backgammon rewards — →

4. Anchors and back games teach that — →

5. The dice give the numbers, but — →

(A) not just winning, but winning big (gammons) at the right times

(B) even a losing position can hold real chances

(C) reads the position, thinks in odds, and uses the cube well

(D) YOU choose how to use them — that's where skill lives

(E) good decisions compound and outweigh short-term dice luck

Riddle & Joke Break

Guess the answer, then check the key!

161. How many checkers does each player have in backgammon?

162. You roll a 5 and a 3. How many separate moves do you get?

163. You roll doubles -- two 4s. How many times do you get to play a 4?

164. A single checker sitting alone on a point is called what, and why is it risky?

165. Your checker gets hit and sent to the bar. What must you do before any other move?

166. When can you start "bearing off" your checkers?

167. How do you win a game of backgammon?

168. What makes a point "safe" from being hit?

169. Why did the backgammon checker feel so driven?

170. Why did the lonely checker feel exposed?

171. Why did the checker on the bar feel stuck?

172. Why did rolling doubles feel like a jackpot?

173. Why did the pip count keep everyone honest?

174. Why did the doubling cube make players nervous?

Fun Facts

- Did you know? Backgammon is one of the oldest known board games, with versions played over 5,000 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia and Persia. People

have been rolling dice for a very long time!

- Did you know? With two dice, a total of 7 is the most likely roll -- there are six ways to make it -- while 2 and 12 are the rarest, with only one way each. Knowing the odds is real backgammon skill!
 - Did you know? The "pip count" -- the total distance all your checkers must travel to bear off -- lets you know exactly who's ahead in a race. Skilled players count pips to decide whether to double!
 - Did you know? The doubling cube was added to backgammon in the 1920s in New York, and it transformed the game -- deciding WHEN to double or accept is one of the deepest skills in modern backgammon!
 - Did you know? A "prime" of six points in a row is an unbreakable wall -- a trapped checker literally cannot roll any number to escape it. Building a prime is a powerful winning plan!
 - Did you know? Backgammon mixes luck and skill perfectly. The dice add surprise, but over many games, the better strategist wins far more often -- which is why it's played in serious tournaments!
 - Did you know? Rolling doubles is a bonus -- you get to play that number FOUR times. A lucky double-six can move a checker a huge distance and change the whole game in one turn!
 - Did you know? Top backgammon computer programs, using "neural networks," became so strong in the 1990s that they taught human champions brand-new strategies the pros had never considered!
-

Answer Key

1. C — 24
2. C — 15
3. A — Four
4. D — bring all your checkers and then bear them off
5. B — toward their own home board
6. D — To bear off all your checkers before your opponent does
7. each player's own point of view (your 1-point is deepest in your home board)
8. a point with just ONE of your checkers on it
9. a 'made' point (the opponent can't land there)

10. checkers go after being hit
Matching (The Board & Setup): 1→E, 2→C, 3→A, 4→D, 5→B
11. D — Two
12. B — how many points (pips) to move a checker
13. D — one checker 5 and another 3 (or one checker 5 then 3, if the path is open)
14. A — You play the number FOUR times
15. D — No — that point is blocked
16. A — Yes — and you HIT it, sending it to the bar
17. play the one you can (and if you can play either but not both, play the higher)
18. forfeit the turn (no move)
19. forward toward your home board (never backward)
20. open (you must be able to legally land on it)
Matching (The Dice & Basic Movement): 1→C, 2→A, 3→B, 4→E, 5→D
21. A — landing on a point where they have a single checker (a blot)
22. C — the bar
23. D — re-enter it in the opponent's home board
24. C — a die number matching an open point in the opponent's home board
25. D — cannot enter and lose your turn
26. A — your checker travels all the way from the bar back around the board
27. where the opponent can easily hit them
28. gains you time (sends them back) and fits your plan
29. cannot re-enter until you open a point
30. it makes re-entry harder for a hit opponent
Matching (Hitting & the Bar): 1→B, 2→D, 3→E, 4→C, 5→A
31. B — having two or more of your checkers on it
32. D — blocks the opponent and gives your checkers a safe home
33. C — several made points in a row that block enemy escape
34. A — Six

35. D — The largest single die is 6, so it can't leap six blocked points
36. D — trap opponent checkers behind your wall
37. your 5-point and bar-point (7-point) — strong blocking points
38. escape through the gap
39. make a strong point instead of leaving loose blots
40. in FRONT of the opponent's trapped checkers
Matching (Making Points & Primes): 1→B, 2→A, 3→E, 4→D, 5→C
41. D — how many pips you need to bring all checkers home and bear them off
42. A — ahead in the race
43. A — the number of its point (its distance from bearing off)
44. A — 25 pips (it must travel the farthest)
45. B — the same (167), because the setup is symmetric
46. C — who is ahead and by how much
47. race home and avoid contact (don't get hit)
48. play for contact — hold points and try to hit
49. a pure race (no contact left between the armies)
50. count each checker's point value and add them up
Matching (The Pip Count): 1→C, 2→B, 3→A, 4→D, 5→E
51. A — 36
52. D — 6
53. B — 11
54. D — 11
55. B — 1-6 away (a direct shot is more likely)
56. A — 6-1, 5-2, 4-3 (and their reverses), plus... fewer ways than a direct shot
57. Because the dice are random, the best play is the one with the best odds
58. safer than leaving it where 11 of 36 hit it
59. 1 in 36
60. a big roll would rescue or advance their position

Matching (Probability & the Dice): 1→A, 2→B, 3→E, 4→C, 5→D

- 61. A — all 15 of your checkers are in your home board
- 62. A — remove it from the board using a die roll
- 63. B — your 4-point (or moves within the home board if no checker is on the 4-point)
- 64. B — may bear off from your highest point
- 65. A — must make a legal move within the home board with that number
- 66. B — you leave a blot while the opponent still has a checker that can reach it
- 67. avoid leaving blots (keep points even)
- 68. wasting as few pips as possible (using rolls fully)
- 69. you bear off up to four checkers at once
- 70. a pure race — just take checkers off efficiently

Matching (Bearing Off): 1→A, 2→B, 3→C, 4→D, 5→E

- 71. C — propose doubling the stakes of the game
- 72. B — 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64
- 73. B — TAKE (accept, play on for double stakes) or DROP (concede the current stake)
- 74. B — the current stake (before the double)
- 75. D — continues for DOUBLE the stakes, and they now own the cube
- 76. A — Only your opponent (they own the cube)
- 77. Either player (the cube starts in the middle, owned by neither)
- 78. clearly ahead but the game isn't over
- 79. too far ahead (they'll just drop) or behind
- 80. whether you have enough winning chances to justify the doubled stakes

Matching (The Doubling Cube): 1→E, 2→D, 3→B, 4→A, 5→C

- 81. B — the opponent can hit it and send it to the bar
- 82. D — make the point (bring a second checker)
- 83. B — leave it where the fewest rolls hit it
- 84. D — the reward (like making a key point) outweighs the hitting chance

85. D — the opponent still has a checker behind it
86. D — the opponent has more numbers that hit something
87. avoids blots and plays for the race when ahead
88. accepts more blot risk to hit and build quickly
89. whether you're ahead (play safe) or behind (take chances)
90. less risky, because you can hit back
Matching (Blots, Safety & Risk): 1→A, 2→E, 3→B, 4→C, 5→D
91. A — both sides mostly race home with little contact
92. A — ahead in the pip count
93. B — keeping an anchor and waiting for a shot to hit the opponent
94. A — slightly behind but hold a good anchor
95. A — building a wall (prime) to trap the opponent's back checkers
96. B — trap enemy checkers behind your wall while you bring yours home
97. holding two anchors in the opponent's home board, playing for a late hit
98. far behind and need a big swing to win
99. the pip count and the position (who's ahead, what points you hold)
100. switches plans as the position changes
Matching (Game Plans): 1→C, 2→B, 3→E, 4→D, 5→A
101. B — 3-1 (it makes your 5-point)
102. B — makes your bar-point (7-point)
103. C — runs one back checker all the way to safety
104. D — make strong points (like the 5-point) when you can
105. C — play safely or make a constructive 'builder' move
106. D — help make a point on a future roll
107. develop your position (make points, place builders), not just race
108. trapped back checkers can cost you the game
109. create anchor chances and diversify your position
110. it sets up the structure the rest of the game builds on

Matching (Opening Rolls & Early Play): 1→E, 2→A, 3→C, 4→D, 5→B

- 111. B — 25%
- 112. D — clearly ahead but the opponent can still reasonably take
- 113. A — your expected value in the game (how much you expect to win or lose on average)
- 114. C — the opponent takes and you've raised stakes without enough advantage
- 115. A — the opponent simply drops and you miss playing on for a gammon
- 116. A — the range of advantage where doubling is correct (strong, but they can still take)
- 117. they make doubling MORE attractive (bigger upside)
- 118. redouble to increase the stakes
- 119. estimating winning chances and acting accordingly

- 120. your opponent would no longer take a double (you doubled too late)

Matching (Cube Strategy & Equity): 1→D, 2→E, 3→B, 4→A, 5→C

- 121. C — a made point in the opponent's home board
- 122. B — is safe from being hit AND gives you hitting chances
- 123. A — 5-point or bar-point (good hitting range)
- 124. A — TWO anchors in the opponent's home board
- 125. B — far behind and need a big swing
- 126. B — TIMING — keeping the anchors until the opponent must leave a shot
- 127. often lose, and possibly by a gammon
- 128. a single hit can swing the race dramatically
- 129. it's your main source of safety and hitting chances

- 130. you may have to leave a shot as you come home

Matching (Anchors & Back Games): 1→A, 2→E, 3→B, 4→D, 5→C

- 131. B — borne off NONE
- 132. A — double (2×) the game's value
- 133. C — still has a checker on the bar or in the winner's home board

- 134. A — triple (3×) the game's value
- 135. A — play on for a bigger win instead of doubling
- 136. B — a target number of points, not just one game
- 137. how many points you need changes how you value risk and the cube
- 138. less if a single game already wins it
- 139. take more risks and use the cube aggressively to catch up
- 140. play a bit more safely to protect the lead
Matching (Match Play, Gammons & Scoring): 1→D, 2→E, 3→A, 4→C, 5→B
- 141. D — racing when you're behind in the pip count
- 142. B — count how many rolls hit you
- 143. A — doubling when you're only slightly ahead (or when behind)
- 144. B — count the pips to know where the race stands
- 145. B — it gives the opponent free hitting chances
- 146. C — play safely and protect your lead
- 147. take reasonable risks and keep contact for hitting chances
- 148. getting them trapped behind a prime
- 149. your PLAN (race/hold/prime), not just the current roll
- 150. good decisions compound and outweigh short-term luck
Matching (Common Mistakes & Good Habits): 1→C, 2→B, 3→D, 4→A, 5→E
- 151. D — bear off all 15 checkers before your opponent
- 152. C — luck (the dice) and skill (your decisions)
- 153. A — who's ahead in the race, guiding whether to race or keep contact
- 154. C — you can count exactly how many of the 36 rolls help or hurt you
- 155. D — a second strategic game about when to raise the stakes
- 156. C — racing when ahead, and holding/priming/back-gaming when behind
- 157. you can set the opponent back, not just race in parallel
- 158. control space and trap the opponent
- 159. balancing the reward of a play against the chance and cost of being hit

160. pausing to count and plan before each move
Matching (Putting It Together): 1→E, 2→C, 3→A, 4→B, 5→D
161. 15! Each side moves 15 checkers around the board toward home.
162. Two! You move one checker 5 and another 3, or one checker 5 then 3 (if both steps are legal).
163. Four times! Doubles let you play that number four times in one turn.
164. A "blot"! If the opponent lands on it, the checker is hit and sent to the bar to start over.
165. Re-enter it into the opponent's home board! You can't make other moves until your checker is back on the board.
166. Once ALL 15 of your checkers are in your home board (your final six points)! Only then can you remove them from the board.
167. By bearing off all 15 of your checkers before your opponent does! It's a race to get everyone home and off.
168. Two or more of your checkers on it! A point with 2+ checkers can't be landed on by the opponent, so it's secure.
169. Because its whole life goal is to make it home and bear off!
170. Because a single checker on a point -- a "blot" -- can be hit!
171. Because it has to re-enter the board before doing anything else!
172. Because you get to play that number four times!
173. Because it measures exactly how far each side has to go!
174. Because saying "double" raises the whole stakes of the game!

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