

PipQuest — Flashcards

A Spark & Anvil printable flashcard deck. Quiz yourself on the PipQuest cast's curriculum — one card at a time.

How to use these cards

Fold each sheet down the middle line so the answers are hidden. Read the **question** on the left, say your answer out loud, then **unfold** to check the right side. Testing yourself — then checking — is one of the most powerful ways to remember. Get one wrong? That's the best kind of practice: try it again tomorrow.

Want real flashcards? Cut along the fold line and the rows into cards — question on one side, answer on the other.

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How to use these cards

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1. The Board & Setup

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
In the standard setup, how many checkers start on your 6-point?	Five — The standard setup places five checkers on your 6-point — the largest starting stack.
A 'blot' is —	a point with just ONE of your checkers on it — A blot is a single, unprotected checker on a point — it can be hit by the opponent.
Backgammon combines luck (the dice) with —	skill (how you choose to use the numbers you roll) — The dice supply the numbers, but skill decides how to use them — that blend is what makes backgammon deep.
How many checkers does each player have?	15 — Each player controls 15 checkers of one color.
The raised bar in the middle of the board is where —	checkers go after being hit — The bar divides the board; a hit checker is placed on the bar and must re-enter before other moves.
Each player moves their checkers —	toward their own home board — Players move in opposite directions, each bringing their checkers around toward their own home board.
Which quadrant do you most want to control?	Your home board (where you bear off and can trap the opponent) — Controlling your home board lets you bear off and can trap an opponent trying to re-enter from the bar.
The points are usually numbered 1 to 24 from —	each player's own point of view (your 1-point is deepest in your home board) — Each player numbers points from their own perspective; your 1-point sits deepest in your home board.
The standard starting setup places your checkers on —	specific points in a fixed, mirror-image arrangement — Backgammon starts from a fixed, symmetric setup — both players' checkers mirror each other.
Two players' movement directions are —	opposite (each toward their own home) — The two players move in opposite directions around the board, each toward their own home board.
The 'outer board' is —	the quadrant next to your home board, on the way in — The outer board is the quadrant your checkers cross just before reaching your home board.
The starting position is symmetric, which makes the game —	fair for both players at the start — Both players start from a mirror-image setup, so the game begins fair and balanced.
The checkers you bear off are —	removed from the board entirely (they've finished the journey) — Borne-off checkers leave the board for good; the first player to bear off all 15 wins the game.
The board is divided into how many quadrants?	Four — The 24 points are split into four quadrants of six points each: two home boards and two outer boards.
A point with TWO or more of your checkers is —	a 'made' point (the opponent can't land there) — A point holding two or more of your checkers is 'made' — you own it and the opponent can't land there.
Your 'home board' (inner board) is where you eventually —	bring all your checkers and then bear them off — Your home board is the quadrant where you must gather all 15 checkers before you can bear them off.

A checker on the bar must —	re-enter the board in the opponent's home board before any other move — You can't make any other move while you have a checker on the bar — it must re-enter first, in the opponent's home board.
Each player's 15 checkers are —	all one color, different from the opponent's — Each player uses 15 checkers of a single color, distinct from the opponent's color.
Each point can hold —	any number of your OWN checkers, but the opponent can't share a made point — You may stack many of your own checkers on a point; the opponent cannot land on a point you've made (2+).
Moving all your checkers 'home' means getting them into —	your home-board quadrant (points 1–6 for you) — 'Home' is your home board — your points 1 through 6 — where all 15 must gather before you bear off.
Why is knowing the board layout the FIRST skill?	Movement, hitting, and bearing off all depend on the points and quadrants — Every rule — movement, hitting, bearing off — is defined in terms of the points and quadrants, so layout comes first.
What is the goal of backgammon?	To bear off all your checkers before your opponent does — You win by being the first to bring all 15 checkers home and bear them all off the board.
How many points (triangles) are on a backgammon board?	24 — A backgammon board has 24 narrow triangles called 'points,' arranged in four quadrants of six.
Captain Pip (the mentor) calls the board 'a voyage home.' This captures —	that each checker journeys around the board to your home to bear off — Each checker makes a voyage around the board to your home board, where it can finally bear off — the game's arc.
If you understand the board, you can plan to —	make key points and control quadrants — Board knowledge lets you plan which points to make and which quadrants to control — the basis of strategy.

2. The Dice & Basic Movement

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Checkers always move —	forward toward your home board (never backward) — Checkers only ever move forward toward your own home board — never backward.
What happens when you roll DOUBLES (like 4-4)?	You play the number FOUR times — Rolling doubles lets you make four moves of that number — 4-4 gives you four moves of 4 pips each.
If you roll a number that would only land you on blocked points, that number is —	unplayable (you can't use it) — A die you can't legally play (all landings blocked) is unplayable and is lost for that turn.
Managing your dice well over many turns is what turns luck into —	consistent winning results — Over many rolls, consistently good dice-use is what separates strong players from lucky ones.
If you CANNOT use either die, you —	forfeit the turn (no move) — If no legal move exists for either die, you forfeit that turn — this happens when you're badly blocked.
You use each die as —	a separate move (you don't have to move one checker the total) — Each die is its own move; you may move two different checkers, or one checker in two separate steps.
Doubles are valuable because —	they let you move a lot (four times the number) — Doubles give four moves of the same number — a large boost to your race or your point-making.
Each die's number tells you —	how many points (pips) to move a checker — Each die is a separate move: you move a checker that many points (pips) along the board.
If you roll 3-1 in the opening, a famously strong play is to —	make your 5-point (a key made point) — The opening roll 3-1 is prized because it makes your 5-point — one of the most valuable points to own.
A 'pip' is —	one point of movement (the value shown on a die) — A pip is one unit of movement; the numbers on the dice tell you how many pips to move.
Two checkers can move to the SAME point on one turn to —	make that point (2+ = a made point) — Playing both dice to land two checkers on the same open point 'makes' it — a key use of your roll.
You should try to use —	as many pips (both dice) as you legally can each turn — You're required to use as much of your roll as legally possible; wasting pips slows your race.
Movement in backgammon is best thought of as —	a race where the dice fuel your progress — Each roll fuels your race toward home; managing the dice well is how you win the race.
Can you move a checker onto a point the opponent has MADE (2+ checkers)?	No — that point is blocked — You cannot land on a point the opponent has made (2+ checkers); that point is blocked to you.
If you can only play ONE of your two dice (the other is blocked), you must —	play the one you can (and if you can play either but not both, play the higher) — You must use as many dice as legally possible; if only one can be played, you play it (the higher, if you must choose).
The dice make backgammon a game of —	probability — some rolls are likelier than others — Because two dice are random, backgammon is a probability game — good players think in odds, not certainties.

On your turn, you move BEFORE or AFTER rolling?	After rolling — the dice tell you your options — You roll first, then move; the dice determine what moves are available.
Rolling 6-6 gives you —	four moves of 6 — 6-6 is doubles, so you make four moves of 6 pips each — a big roll if you can use it all.
If you roll a 5 and a 3, you may move —	one checker 5 and another 3 (or one checker 5 then 3, if the path is open) — You use each die as a separate move — two different checkers, or one checker played 5 then 3 through an open point.
Captain Pip says 'the dice deal the wind; you steer the ship.' This means —	you can't control the roll, but you control how you use it — The dice (the wind) are out of your control, but how you steer — your move choices — is where skill wins games.
How many dice do you roll on your turn?	Two — You roll two dice each turn, giving you two numbers to move with.
When you can play your dice in more than one order, you should —	choose the order/points that best fit your plan — The order and choice of moves is where skill lives — pick the plays that best advance your strategy.
To move one checker the TOTAL of both dice, the intermediate point must be —	open (you must be able to legally land on it) — Playing one checker the sum of both dice requires the intermediate landing point to be legal (open or yours).
A skilled player treats a mediocre roll by —	finding the BEST legal use of it, not complaining about luck — Even a poor roll has a best play; strong players focus on optimizing what the dice give them.
Can you land on a point with a single ENEMY checker (a blot)?	Yes — and you HIT it, sending it to the bar — Landing on an enemy blot hits it: the enemy checker goes to the bar and must re-enter.

3. Hitting & the Bar

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
A hit checker goes to —	the bar — A hit checker is placed on the bar and must re-enter the board before its owner can make any other move.
Hitting is both offense and defense because it —	sets the opponent back AND can protect your position — A hit both damages the opponent (offense) and can buy you time to organize (defense) — a versatile tool.
Re-entering quickly matters because —	you can't do anything else until your bar checker is back in play — A checker on the bar freezes the rest of your position, so re-entering promptly is important.
Getting hit late in a race (when you're almost home) is —	especially painful — you lose lots of hard-won progress — A late hit undoes a lot of progress, so guarding against blots is especially important near the end of a race.
You should avoid leaving blots —	where the opponent can easily hit them — Leaving a blot within the opponent's hitting range risks a costly hit; safety means minimizing easy shots.
If the opponent's home board points you'd enter on are all BLOCKED, you —	cannot enter and lose your turn — If every entry point is blocked, you can't re-enter ('dancing') and forfeit the turn — a big setback.
Captain Pip says 'a lone sailor is easily lost.' In backgammon this means —	a lone checker (blot) is vulnerable — protect or avoid it — A lone checker (blot) is exposed like a lone sailor; protect it by making the point or avoid leaving it when you can.
A player with a checker on the bar must FIRST —	re-enter it in the opponent's home board — While a checker is on the bar, you must re-enter it (in the opponent's home board) before making any other move.
A key skill is counting how many dice rolls can HIT a given blot, which uses —	probability (the 36 possible dice combinations) — Assessing a blot's danger means counting how many of the 36 dice combinations hit it — a probability skill.
Hitting an opponent is valuable mainly because it —	costs them time and pips (their checker restarts from the bar) — A hit sends the opponent's checker to the bar to restart its journey — costing them time and pips.
The safest way to protect a checker is to —	make the point (bring a second checker to it) — A point with two or more of your checkers is safe from hits — making the point protects your checkers.
You 'hit' an opponent's checker by —	landing on a point where they have a single checker (a blot) — Hitting means landing on an enemy blot (a lone checker); the hit checker goes to the bar.
Being hit is costly because —	your checker travels all the way from the bar back around the board — A hit checker must journey from the bar back around the whole board, losing many pips — a serious race setback.
Making points in your HOME board is powerful because —	it makes re-entry harder for a hit opponent — Home-board points block re-entry, so a strong home board can trap a hit opponent on the bar.
	hold points that can hit the opponent's blots later — When behind in the

A strong defensive idea when behind is to —	race, holding points that threaten to hit the opponent's checkers keeps your chances alive.
If you must leave a blot, put it where —	the opponent has the FEWEST numbers that hit it — When a blot is unavoidable, place it where the fewest dice combinations can hit it — minimize the shots.
A blot on YOUR side of the board is —	still at risk if the opponent has checkers that can reach it — A blot can be hit anywhere the opponent has checkers able to reach it — including on your own side.
If you hit an opponent AND you have a strong home board, you —	may keep them stuck on the bar, gaining a big advantage — Hitting when your home board is strong can leave the opponent dancing on the bar — a powerful combination.
Hitting the opponent is good when it —	gains you time (sends them back) and fits your plan — Hitting sends an opponent's checker to the bar, costing them pips and time — valuable when it fits your plan.
Two checkers on the bar means —	you must re-enter BOTH before making any other move — With multiple checkers on the bar, all of them must re-enter before you can make any other move.
You re-enter from the bar using —	a die number matching an open point in the opponent's home board — To re-enter, a die's number must correspond to an open (not made by the opponent) point in their home board.
You cannot make any move while you have a checker on the bar until —	that checker re-enters the board — A checker on the bar freezes the rest of your position — you must re-enter it before any other move.
Deciding whether to hit involves weighing —	the gain from hitting against the risk of being hit back — Whether to hit is a judgment: weigh the tempo you gain against the return-hit risk to your own blot.
The bar rule ensures that being hit —	actually slows you down, making hits meaningful — Because a hit checker must re-enter and travel back, the bar rule makes hitting a genuinely meaningful setback.
A 'closed board' (all six home-board points made) means an opponent on the bar —	cannot re-enter until you open a point — If all six of your home-board points are made, an opponent on the bar can't re-enter until you break a point.

4. Making Points & Primes

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
How many consecutive points make a FULL prime that no checker can escape?	Six — Six consecutive made points form a full prime — since a die's max is 6, no enemy checker can jump it.
A 4-point 'broken' blockade is still useful because —	it blocks SOME numbers, making escape harder — Even a partial prime blocks some dice numbers, reducing the opponent's escaping rolls — still valuable.
As you race home, you may need to 'break' your prime, which is —	unavoidable eventually — time it as late as possible — Eventually you must break the prime to move your own checkers home; the skill is holding it as long as possible.
Building points in your home board and outer board helps you —	trap opponent checkers behind your wall — A wall of points in front of enemy checkers traps them, buying you time to bring your own checkers home.
A 'blitz' is a strategy that —	attacks aggressively, hitting and building your home board to trap the opponent — A blitz hits the opponent and rapidly makes home-board points, aiming to close them out on the bar.
Why can't a checker jump a SIX-point prime?	The largest single die is 6, so it can't leap six blocked points — A die shows at most 6, so a checker can't move past six consecutive blocked points — it's completely trapped.
Deciding between making a point and racing depends on —	whether you're ahead (race) or behind/contact (build and block) — If you're ahead, racing may be best; if behind or in contact, making points and priming keeps your chances alive.
A single made point in front of an enemy checker blocks —	that one point (a full prime of six blocks completely) — One made point blocks a single landing spot; six consecutive made points form a full prime nothing can jump.
You 'make' a point by —	having two or more of your checkers on it — A point is 'made' when you place two or more checkers on it — the opponent can no longer land there.
Making the opponent's re-entry harder means making points in —	your OWN home board — Points in your home board block an opponent's re-entry from the bar, so building your home board is key to trapping.
The most valuable points to make early are usually —	your 5-point and bar-point (7-point) — strong blocking points — The 5-point and bar-point are prime real estate — strong blocking points that anchor a good position.
Primes and points reward the player who —	plans ahead and builds patiently rather than moving randomly — Priming and point-making reward patient, planful building over random moves — structure is a long game.
Making points takes priority when you can —	make a strong point instead of leaving loose blots — Given a choice, making a strong point usually beats scattering loose blots — it builds a safe, blocking structure.
A 'broken' prime (a gap in the wall) lets the opponent —	escape through the gap — A gap in your prime gives the trapped checkers an escape route, so priming means keeping the wall intact.

The 5-point is called the 'golden point' because —	it's one of the most valuable blocking points to own — The 5-point is so valuable for blocking and anchoring that it's nicknamed the 'golden point.'
The overall idea of points and primes is to —	control space and restrict the opponent while advancing your own checkers — Making points and primes is about controlling the board and restricting the opponent while you advance safely.
Captain Pip says 'a wall well built keeps the storm out.' This captures —	that a solid prime protects your position and traps the enemy — A well-built prime is like a sturdy wall — it traps the opponent and protects your own advance.
A strong structure of made points gives you —	flexibility and safety on future rolls — A solid structure of made points gives your future rolls safe landing spots and more good options.
A made point in the OPPONENT'S home board (an 'anchor') is —	a safe defensive base for your back checkers — An anchor is a made point in the opponent's home board — a safe base that also gives you chances to hit later.
A 'prime' is —	several made points in a row that block enemy escape — A prime is a row of consecutive made points forming a wall the opponent's checkers can't jump.
A made point is valuable because it —	blocks the opponent and gives your checkers a safe home — Made points both block enemy movement and provide safe resting spots for your checkers.
A prime works best when it is —	in FRONT of the opponent's trapped checkers — A prime traps enemy checkers only if it sits in front of them, blocking their path forward.
Two players both building primes creates —	a race to trap the other's checkers first — When both sides build primes, it becomes a battle to trap the opponent's checkers before yours are trapped.
If your prime traps the opponent AND you have time, you should —	bring your own checkers home safely while they stay stuck — With the opponent trapped behind your prime, calmly bring your checkers home while they can't move.
The reason a six-prime is 'unbeatable' (for those checkers) is purely —	mathematical: a die can't roll higher than 6 — It's simple math: a die's maximum is 6, so six consecutive blocked points can't be jumped — the checker is stuck.

5. The Pip Count

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
The starting pip count of 167 is the same for both players because —	the setup is a mirror image — The mirror-image starting setup gives both players an identical pip count of 167 — a perfectly even start.
A player behind in pips but with a strong anchor still has chances because —	they can hit the opponent and swing the race — Even behind in pips, a well-placed anchor gives hitting chances that can reverse the race in an instant.
A checker on the bar counts as —	25 pips (it must travel the farthest) — A checker on the bar has the longest journey, counting as 25 pips on a standard board.
A LOWER pip count means you are —	ahead in the race — The lower your pip count, the fewer pips you have left — so a lower count means you're ahead in the race.
Two checkers, one on the 6-point and one on the 3-point, count as —	9 pips total — Add the point values: a checker on the 6-point (6) plus one on the 3-point (3) equals 9 pips.
If your pip count is 120 and the opponent's is 140, you are —	ahead by 20 pips — A lower count is ahead; 120 vs 140 means you lead the race by 20 pips.
A pip lead of just a few pips in a close race means —	the race is nearly even — small things (and luck) decide it — A small pip lead means a near-even race where careful play (and some luck) will decide the outcome.
To find a checker's pip value, you count —	the number of its point (its distance from bearing off) — A checker's pip value equals its point number — a checker on your 8-point needs 8 pips to bear off.
The pip count helps you decide whether to —	race or play a contact/holding game — Your pip lead or deficit guides the whole plan: race when ahead, keep contact when behind.
The pip count is most decisive in —	a pure race (no contact left between the armies) — Once the armies have passed each other (no contact), the game is a pure race and the pip count is decisive.
A common counting trick is to count the DIFFERENCE by —	canceling equal checkers and counting only what differs — To find the lead quickly, cancel checkers that are mirror-images and count only the pips that differ.
The pip count is a tool for —	measuring the race precisely to guide strategy — The pip count is a measuring tool: it quantifies the race so you can choose the right strategy and cube action.
Captain Pip says 'know the distance before you sail.' This means —	count the pips so you know how the race stands before deciding your plan — Knowing the pip count (the 'distance') before acting lets you choose the right plan — race, hold, or double.
At the START of the game, each player's pip count is —	the same (167), because the setup is symmetric — The symmetric starting setup gives both players the same pip count (167) — a perfectly even race to begin.
If both players have no contact and you lead by many pips, you should —	expect to win the race and play safely — A big pip lead with no contact means you should win the race — just bring your checkers home cleanly.

A quick way to estimate the count is to —	count each checker's point value and add them up — Add up every checker's point value to get your pip count; players use grouping tricks to do it quickly.
The pip count is especially important for —	doubling-cube decisions (whether to double or take) — Your pip lead is a key input to doubling-cube decisions — being well ahead often supports a double.
If you're well BEHIND in the pip count, a good plan is often to —	play for contact — hold points and try to hit — When behind, racing loses; instead you keep contact — hold anchors and points to get a hitting chance.
The pip count changes every turn because —	each move reduces your remaining pips (and hits can increase them) — Every move lowers your pip count by the pips you play; being hit raises it — so it's always changing.
Losing 10 pips from a hit means your pip count —	goes UP by (roughly) the pips that checker must retravel — A hit sends a checker backward, increasing the pips it must travel — so your pip count goes up.
Comparing pip counts tells you —	who is ahead and by how much — Subtracting the two pip counts tells you who leads the race and by how many pips — vital for decisions.
Efficient bearing off can effectively lower your count by —	not wasting pips (using rolls fully as you bear off) — Skilled bear-off wastes as few pips as possible, effectively getting the most out of each roll in the race.
Why do strong players count pips regularly?	It turns 'who feels ahead' into a precise number for decisions — Counting replaces a vague feeling with a precise number, guiding race, contact, and doubling decisions.
If you're well AHEAD in the pip count, a good plan is often to —	race home and avoid contact (don't get hit) — With a big pip lead, racing safely (avoiding contact and hits) usually converts the lead into a win.
The 'pip count' measures —	how many pips you need to bring all checkers home and bear them off — Your pip count is the total number of pips required to bring every checker home and bear them all off.

6. Probability & the Dice

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
A play that risks an 11/36 hit but gains a strong point may still be correct because —	you weigh the reward against the risk, not risk alone — Good decisions weigh the reward (a strong point) against the risk (the hitting chance) — not risk in isolation.
A blot that CANNOT be hit at all (behind a prime or out of range) is —	completely safe — If no roll can reach a blot (it's out of range or blocked by a prime), it's completely safe for now.
Understanding dice odds turns backgammon from a guessing game into —	a game of calculated decisions — Knowing the odds lets you make calculated decisions rather than guesses — the heart of skilled backgammon.
Knowing the 36 combinations lets you —	count exactly how many rolls hit, enter, or make a point — With the 36-combination framework you can count precisely how many rolls achieve a goal — hitting, entering, or point-making.
The probability of rolling ANY double is —	6 in 36 (1 in 6) — There are six doubles among the 36 combinations, so any double occurs $6/36 = 1$ in 6.
Two blots the opponent could hit are worse than one because —	more hitting numbers threaten you (more of the 36 rolls hit) — Two exposed blots give the opponent more hitting numbers overall, raising the chance you get hit.
Because doubles let you move four times, players sometimes 'play for' a double when —	a big roll would rescue or advance their position — Since doubles (any double) come up 1 in 6, players sometimes set up so a double would give a big advance.
A blot exactly 6 pips away can be hit by how many of the 36 rolls (direct 6s only)?	11 — A blot 6 away is hit by any roll containing a 6 — that's 11 of the 36 combinations (about 30%).
Which is a MORE likely single-die number to be hit from: a blot 1-6 away (direct) or 7+ away (indirect)?	1-6 away (a direct shot is more likely) — A blot 1-6 away can be hit by a single die (direct shot), which is more likely than a 7+ away hit needing two dice combined.
The more home-board points an opponent makes, the —	harder it is for you to re-enter from the bar — Each made home-board point removes an entry number, lowering your probability of re-entering from the bar.
If you're on the bar and the opponent has made 3 of their 6 home points, you enter on —	the 3 open points (any die matching an open point enters) — You enter on the open points; with 3 of 6 open, more of your dice can bring you in — a better re-entry chance.
A blot 7 pips away (an indirect shot) is hit by combinations like —	6-1, 5-2, 4-3 (and their reverses), plus... fewer ways than a direct shot — Seven away is hit only by dice combining to 7 (6-1, 5-2, 4-3 and reverses) — six combinations, fewer than a direct shot.
Thinking in the 36 combinations lets you compare plays by —	which leaves fewer hitting rolls against you — The 36-combination framework lets you compare plays precisely by counting how many rolls hit you.
The chance of rolling a specific double (like 5-5) is —	1 in 36 — A specific double (5-5) is just one of the 36 combinations, so its probability is 1 in 36.

How many of the 36 combinations are DOUBLES?	6 — There are six doubles (1-1 through 6-6), so doubles occur 6 out of 36 times (1 in 6).
The probability of rolling NO 6 on either die is —	25 in 36 (since 11 of 36 contain a 6) — If 11 of 36 rolls contain a 6, then $36 - 11 = 25$ of 36 contain no 6 — the complement.
The most likely SUM of two dice is —	7 (it has the most combinations) — Seven is the most common sum (six combinations), while 2 and 12 have only one each.
How many equally likely combinations are there when rolling two dice?	36 — Two dice give $6 \times 6 = 36$ equally likely ordered combinations.
Leaving a blot where only 6 of 36 rolls hit it is —	safer than leaving it where 11 of 36 hit it — 6 of 36 hitting rolls is safer than 11 of 36 — when you must leave a blot, pick the fewer-shots spot.
Captain Pip says 'count the winds before you turn the sail.' In backgammon this means —	estimate the odds (count the rolls) before choosing a risky play — Before a risky play, count how many of the 36 rolls help or hurt you — measure the odds, then decide.
Probability in backgammon is 'actionable' because —	you can literally count the favorable rolls out of 36 — Backgammon odds are countable: with 36 equally likely rolls, you can compute exact chances and act on them.
In how many of the 36 rolls does at least one die show a specific number (say a 3)?	11 — A given number appears on at least one die in 11 of 36 rolls (6 on the first die + 6 on the second – the 3-3 counted twice).
Estimating hitting chances helps you decide —	whether a play is too risky — Counting how many rolls hit your blot tells you how risky a play is, guiding safer decisions.
Why do backgammon players think in probabilities?	Because the dice are random, the best play is the one with the best odds — Since rolls are random, skill means choosing the play with the best probability of a good outcome.
A blot 2 pips away is a DIRECT shot, hit by —	any roll containing a 2 (11 of 36) — A blot 2 away is hit by any roll containing a 2 — 11 of the 36 combinations, a direct shot.

7. Bearing Off

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
The danger of leaving a blot on the very last rolls is —	getting hit and having to travel all the way back — often losing — A blot hit on the final rolls sends a checker all the way back — usually turning a near-win into a loss.
The winner is the first to —	bear off all 15 checkers — Whoever bears off all 15 checkers first wins the game.
The key mindset for bearing off is —	efficient if racing, safe if there's still contact — Bear-off strategy splits two ways: pure race → be efficient; contact remaining → be safe from hits.
Efficient bearing off means —	wasting as few pips as possible (using rolls fully) — Efficient bear-off uses each roll fully — filling gaps and avoiding wasted pips — to finish faster.
You may begin bearing off only when —	all 15 of your checkers are in your home board — You can start bearing off only after all 15 checkers have reached your home board.
You bear off from your home board, which is —	points 1 through 6 (your inner board) — You bear off from your home board — your points 1 through 6.
A checker on the 1-point bears off with —	any roll of 1 or higher (a 1 bears it off; higher works as overage) — A checker on the 1-point bears off with a 1, and (if it's your highest) with any higher number as overage.
Leaving your highest points occupied while lower ones empty risks —	wasting pips or being forced to leave a blot later — Uneven stacks can force wasted pips or an awkward blot later; balancing your home-board points bears off smoothly.
Should you always bear off the highest checker first?	Not always — sometimes filling gaps or safety matters more — Bear-off has real choices: clearing high points helps overages, but filling gaps or staying safe can matter more.
If NO opponent checker is behind you (no contact), bear-off is —	a pure race — just take checkers off efficiently — Without contact, no hit is possible, so bear-off is a pure race — efficiency is all that matters.
If contact remains during bear-off, your priority is —	avoiding blots so you can't be hit — With an enemy checker still behind you, bear off safely (no blots) even if it's slightly slower.
A roll of 4 bears off a checker from —	your 4-point (or moves within the home board if no checker is on the 4-point) — A 4 bears off a checker on your 4-point; if none is there, you may move a checker 4 pips within the home board.
If you roll a number for a point where you have NO checker (and lower points are occupied), you —	must make a legal move within the home board with that number — If the exact point is empty but higher points are occupied, you must play the number as a move within the home board.
Captain Pip says 'the last mile is where voyages are won or lost.' This captures —	that careful, safe bearing off decides close games — The bear-off ('last mile') often decides close games — careful, efficient, safe play wins the voyage.
If you roll a number HIGHER than your highest occupied point, you —	may bear off from your highest point — If your die is larger than your highest occupied point, you bear a checker off from that highest point.
Doubles during bear-off are great	you bear off up to four checkers at once — Doubles let you bear off up to

because —	four checkers in one turn — a huge boost when finishing.
During bear-off, getting HIT is possible if —	you leave a blot while the opponent still has a checker that can reach it — If contact remains (an opponent checker behind you), a blot during bear-off can be hit — a disaster so close to winning.
To 'bear off' a checker means to —	remove it from the board using a die roll — Bearing off removes a checker from the board; the first player to bear off all 15 wins.
You may bear off from a point only if —	all your checkers are already in the home board — Bearing off is legal only once all 15 checkers have reached the home board.
Doubles during a pure-race bear-off are great because —	you can remove up to four checkers in one turn — In a pure race, doubles let you bear off up to four checkers at once — a big finishing boost.
If you can bear off OR move within the home board, choose based on —	what leaves the smoothest, safest position for future rolls — Choosing between bearing off and moving within the board should set up the smoothest, safest future rolls.
When bearing off in a pure race, you should —	maximize checkers off each turn (efficiency, not safety) — With no contact, no hit can happen, so bear off as many checkers as possible each turn — pure speed.
To bear off SAFELY when the opponent has a checker behind you, you should —	avoid leaving blots (keep points even) — With an enemy checker behind you, bear off in a way that avoids leaving blots, even if it's slightly slower.
Bearing off is the FINAL phase because —	it's the last step of the voyage — the checker leaves the board for good — Bearing off is the last phase of a checker's voyage — once off, it's out of the game for good.
A wasted pip during bear-off is —	a small inefficiency that can add up and cost the race — Wasted pips are small inefficiencies, but over a bear-off they add up and can cost a close race.

8. The Doubling Cube

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A good time to double is when you are —	clearly ahead but the game isn't over — Double when you're clearly ahead (so the opponent should worry) but the game still has enough left to matter.
Deciding to TAKE a double depends on —	whether you have enough winning chances to justify the doubled stakes — Take a double if you still have enough winning chances (a common rule of thumb is about 25%+) to justify playing on.
The cube adds skill because —	deciding WHEN to raise the stakes is its own strategic game — Judging when to double, take, or drop is a strategic game layered on the checker play — real added skill.
The take/drop decision is really a —	probability judgment about your winning chances vs the stakes — Whether to take or drop is a probability judgment: estimate your winning chances against the doubled risk.
Captain Pip says 'raise the sail when the wind favors you.' In backgammon this means —	double when you're ahead and the moment is right — not too early, not too late — Offer a double when the game favors you and the timing is right — like raising the sail when the wind is with you.
Dropping is the right choice when —	your winning chances are too low to justify the doubled stakes — Drop when your chances are too slim to justify playing on for doubled stakes — cut the loss at the current stake.
If your opponent TAKES your double, the game —	continues for DOUBLE the stakes, and they now own the cube — A take means play continues at doubled stakes; the cube moves to the taker, who alone can double next.
The cube makes it possible to WIN a game without playing it out because —	the opponent may drop rather than risk the higher stakes — If your double is dropped, you win the current stake without finishing the game — a key strategic tool.
A rough take guideline is to take if your winning chances are at least about —	25% — A common rule of thumb: take a double with roughly 25% or better winning chances.
The doubling cube turns backgammon into —	a game of managing both the checkers AND the stakes — The cube adds stakes-management to checker play, making backgammon a richer two-part strategic game.
The doubling cube is used to —	propose doubling the stakes of the game — The doubling cube isn't for movement; it's used to propose doubling the value of the game.
You should NOT double when you are —	too far ahead (they'll just drop) or behind — If you're so far ahead they'll simply drop, you may play on for a gammon; if behind, doubling is a gift.
Doubling when you are BEHIND is usually —	a mistake (the opponent should take, and you'll likely lose double) — Doubling when behind hands the opponent an easy take and risks losing double the stake — usually a mistake.
At the start of the game, who can double?	Either player (the cube starts in the middle, owned by neither) — The cube begins centered (owned by neither), so either player may make the first double.
	TAKE (accept, play on for double stakes) or DROP (concede the current

When you 'double,' your opponent must choose to —	stake) — Facing a double, the opponent either takes (accepts the higher stakes) or drops (concedes the current stake and ends the game).
The cube rewards players who —	accurately judge their winning chances — Good cube play comes from accurately judging your winning chances and acting at the right moment.
If your opponent DROPS your double, you win —	the current stake (before the double) — If the opponent drops, the game ends and you win the current (pre-double) stake.
What numbers are on the doubling cube?	2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 — The cube shows 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 — each face doubles the previous stake.
Taking a double means you —	accept, play on for double stakes, and take ownership of the cube — Taking accepts the doubled stakes and gives you the cube, so only you can offer the next double.
After you double and it's taken, who can double NEXT?	Only your opponent (they own the cube) — The cube belongs to whoever last took a double; only they can offer the next double ('redouble').
If you take a double and later pull ahead, you can —	redouble to raise the stakes further — Owning the cube after a take lets you redouble if you later gain the advantage — a powerful swing.
Before anyone doubles, the cube sits —	in the middle, owned by neither player — At the start the cube is centered — owned by neither player — so either may make the first double.
A player far ahead who wants a GAMMON (double win) might —	NOT double, playing on for the bigger win — If you're winning big and might score a gammon, you may hold the cube and play on for the larger win.
A 'redouble' is —	doubling again after you took a previous double (you own the cube) — A redouble is a later double offered by the cube owner, raising the stakes to the next power of two.
The doubling cube adds a layer of —	strategy about WHEN to raise the stakes, not just how to move — The cube adds a whole strategic layer — judging when to raise the stakes — on top of the checker play.

9. Blots, Safety & Risk

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
When behind and two plays are close, prefer —	the bolder play (you need a swing) — When behind, prefer the bolder of two close plays — safe play just loses slowly.
A blot deep in your OWN home board late in a race is dangerous only if —	the opponent still has a checker behind it — A blot is only hittable if the opponent has a checker positioned to reach it; with no contact, it's safe.
Two blots are worse than one because —	the opponent has more numbers that hit something — Two exposed blots give the opponent more hitting numbers overall — a higher chance of getting hit.
Ultimately, safety and risk are —	two sides of the same decision, judged by the position — Safety and risk aren't opposites to pick blindly — they're one decision judged by whether you're ahead or behind.
When ahead and two plays are close, prefer —	the safer play (protect the lead) — When ahead, prefer the safer of two close plays — don't risk away a winning position.
The cost of being hit is measured in —	pips lost (how far the checker must retravel) — A hit's cost is the pips the checker must retravel from the bar — the deeper it was, the bigger the loss.
A blot that gives a return shot if hit is —	less risky, since you can hit back — If being hit leaves you a return shot, the blot is less risky — you get a chance to hit back and recover.
The cost of a hit is measured in —	pips the checker must retravel from the bar — A hit's cost is the pips the hit checker must retravel from the bar — the deeper it was, the bigger the loss.
The right amount of risk depends on —	whether you're ahead (play safe) or behind (take chances) — Match your risk to the position: play safely when ahead, take chances when behind and needing a swing.
If a safe play and a bold play are close, and you're AHEAD, prefer —	the safe play (protect your lead) — When ahead, prefer the safer of two close plays — you don't want to risk away a winning position.
A blot is risky because —	the opponent can hit it and send it to the bar — A blot is a single checker that the opponent can hit, sending it to the bar — a costly setback.
If a safe play and a bold play are close, and you're BEHIND, prefer —	the bold play (you need a swing) — When behind, prefer the bolder of two close plays — safe play just loses slowly; you need a swing.
A conservative (safe) style —	avoids blots and plays for the race when ahead — A safe style minimizes blots and races when ahead — sensible when you're winning the race.
An aggressive style —	accepts more blot risk to hit and build quickly — An aggressive style accepts blot risk to hit the opponent and build points quickly — good when behind or blitzing.
Leaving a blot to make a strong PRIME point is often —	worth the risk, because the prime is so valuable — The value of extending a prime frequently justifies leaving a blot to make the point — a common good risk.
The safest way to remove a blot's risk is to —	make the point (bring a second checker) — Covering a blot by making the point (a second checker) removes the risk entirely.

A blot that gives a return-hit chance if hit is —	less risky, because you can hit back — If being hit leaves you a return shot, the blot is less risky — you have a chance to hit back and recover.
Counting the shots against a blot is a —	probability skill (favorable rolls out of 36) — Assessing a blot means counting how many of the 36 rolls hit it — a concrete probability skill.
Leaving a blot can be WORTH the risk when —	the reward (like making a key point) outweighs the hitting chance — A blot is worth leaving when the reward — say, a shot at a golden point — outweighs the chance of being hit.
Captain Pip says 'a wise sailor knows which storms to brave.' This means —	take risks when they're worth it, and play safe when they're not — Wise play means choosing which risks to take — braving the worthwhile storms and avoiding the pointless ones.
Good blot management balances —	the reward of a play against the chance and cost of being hit — Skilled play weighs a move's reward against both the chance of a hit and how costly that hit would be.
Safety in backgammon is about —	managing exposure so you're rarely hit at a bad time — Safety means managing when and where you leave blots so you're rarely hit when it would hurt most.
A blot on a point the opponent WANTS is sometimes okay because —	even if hit, you've disrupted their plan (and may re-make it) — Placing a blot on a point the opponent wants contests it — even if hit, you've fought for key real estate.
A key habit is to ask before each risky move —	'how many rolls hit me, and how bad is it if they do?' — Before a risky play, ask how many rolls hit you and how costly the hit is — then weigh it against the reward.
Sometimes you MUST leave a blot; then you should —	leave it where the fewest rolls hit it — When a blot is unavoidable, place it where the fewest of the 36 rolls can hit it — minimize the shots.

10. Game Plans

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A priming game requires you to —	keep the prime intact as long as possible — A priming game depends on keeping the wall intact — a gap lets the trapped checkers escape.
The worst common plan-choice error is —	racing when you're behind in the pip count — Racing when behind almost always loses; from behind you keep contact (hold, prime, or back-game).
A 'back game' means —	holding two anchors in the opponent's home board, playing for a late hit — A back game holds two anchors deep in the opponent's home board, gambling on a late hit to win from far behind.
A flexible player —	switches plans as the position changes — Strong players don't lock into one plan; they switch (race → hold → prime) as the position evolves.
A holding game is a good plan when you are —	slightly behind but hold a good anchor — When slightly behind with a solid anchor, a holding game gives you hitting chances to swing the race.
A 'holding game' means —	keeping an anchor and waiting for a shot to hit the opponent — A holding game keeps a made point (anchor) and waits for a chance to hit the opponent as they come home.
A back game is a plan for when you are —	far behind and need a big swing to win — A back game is a last resort when far behind — risky and hard to time, but a real chance at a big swing.
Captain Pip says 'chart your course to the waters you're in.' This means —	pick the game plan that fits your actual position — Choose the plan that fits the waters you're in — race when ahead, hold or prime or back-game when behind.
A priming game requires —	keeping the wall intact as long as possible — A priming game depends on keeping the prime intact — a gap lets the trapped checkers escape.
A player who reads the position well can —	pick the plan with the best winning chances — Reading the position (count, points, contact) lets you choose the plan with the best chances to win.
A 'blitz' plan aims to —	hit the opponent and slam your home board shut, trapping them on the bar — A blitz hits the opponent and rapidly makes home-board points, aiming to close them out on the bar.
A 'priming game' means —	building a wall (prime) to trap the opponent's back checkers — A priming game builds consecutive points (a prime) to trap the opponent's checkers behind the wall.
If your plan is racing and you're well ahead, you should —	avoid contact and play safely home — Executing a race when ahead means avoiding contact and bringing checkers home safely — don't risk a hit.
Choosing a game plan depends mostly on —	the pip count and the position (who's ahead, what points you hold) — Your plan flows from the pip count and position: race if ahead, hold/prime/back-game as you fall behind.
A priming game works when you can —	trap enemy checkers behind your wall while you bring yours home — Priming succeeds when you trap the opponent behind your wall and calmly bring your own checkers home.
You should aim to RACE when	ahead in the pip count — A pip lead favors racing — avoid contact and convert

you are —	your lead by getting home first.
A holding game's key asset is —	the anchor — a safe point that also threatens hits — The anchor is the holding game's key: it's safe from hits and threatens to hit the opponent as they pass.
The doubling cube interacts with game plans because —	a strong plan going well may be the time to double — When your plan is clearly succeeding, it may be the right moment to double — game plans and the cube work together.
Switching from a priming game to a race happens when —	the opponent's trapped checkers escape or you gain a big lead — If the trapped checkers escape (or you build a big lead), you switch from priming to simply racing home.
The mark of a strong backgammon player is —	choosing and adapting the right plan for each position — Strong players read each position and choose (and adapt) the plan with the best winning chances.
A good holding-game anchor is often the opponent's —	5-point or bar-point (advanced anchors with good hitting chances) — Advanced anchors (the opponent's 5-point or bar-point) give the best hitting chances while staying safe.
The biggest MISTAKE in choosing a plan is —	racing when behind (you'll just lose the race) — Racing when behind almost always loses; from behind you should keep contact (hold, prime, or back-game).
Game plans are essentially about —	matching your strategy to whether you're ahead or behind — The whole idea of game plans is choosing the strategy that fits your position — ahead you race, behind you contest.
A 'racing game' means —	both sides mostly race home with little contact — In a racing game the armies have little contact, so it's mainly about racing your checkers home efficiently.
When your current plan stops fitting the position, you should —	switch to the plan that now fits (race, hold, or prime) — If the position shifts (you fall behind or pull ahead), switch to the plan that now fits rather than clinging to the old one.

11. Opening Rolls & Early Play

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Even with the same opening roll, the BEST play can depend on —	your overall plan and (in match play) the score — The best opening play can shift with your plan and (in matches) the score — context can change the ideal move.
The best opening roll is generally considered —	3-1 (it makes your 5-point) — 3-1 is the best opening because it makes your 5-point — one of the most valuable points on the board.
A general opening principle is to —	make strong points (like the 5-point) when you can — A core opening idea is to make strong points — especially the 5-point and bar-point — when the roll allows.
Knowing the standard best replies to opening rolls helps you —	start every game on solid footing — Learning the standard best opening plays gives you a reliable, strong start in every game.
Early hitting is good when it —	gains tempo and fits your developing plan — An early hit that sets the opponent back and fits your plan is valuable — it gains tempo.
A 'builder' is a checker positioned to —	help make a point on a future roll — A builder is a well-placed spare checker that helps you make a new point on an upcoming roll.
The opening roll 4-2 is a strong point-maker because it —	makes your 4-point — The opening 4-2 makes your 4-point — a solid home-board point that strengthens your position.
Splitting your back checkers (to two points) can —	create anchor chances and diversify your position — Splitting the back checkers can set up anchors and give more flexibility, at the cost of some blot risk.
The opening flows into the middlegame, where —	you execute your game plan (race, hold, prime) — The opening sets up the middlegame, where you carry out the game plan your position calls for.
Captain Pip says 'a good launch makes for a smooth voyage.' This means —	a sound opening sets up the whole game — A sound opening ('good launch') sets up a smoother game — build well early and the middlegame flows.
Placing builders bears fruit when —	your next roll uses them to make a valuable point — Builders pay off when a following roll uses them to make a new valuable point — setup, then payoff.
A common early mistake is —	leaving too many loose blots that get hit — Beginners often scatter blots that get hit; balance development with keeping your position reasonably safe.
The opening is important because —	it sets up the structure the rest of the game builds on — A sound opening builds the structure your middlegame relies on — a good start makes everything easier.
A weak opening roll should be played by —	finding its most constructive use, not by complaining about luck — Even a weak opening roll has a best play — find its most constructive use rather than lamenting the dice.
Escaping your BACK checkers early can be important because —	trapped back checkers can cost you the game — Back checkers left too long can get trapped behind a prime; escaping them at the right time avoids disaster.
	blocks the opponent AND anchors your home board — The 5-point blocks the

Making the 5-point early is so valuable because it —	opponent's escape and strengthens your home board — hence its 'golden point' status.
The opening roll 6-1 is strong because it —	makes your bar-point (7-point) — 6-1 makes the bar-point (7-point), a strong blocking point next to your 6-point.
Escaping your back checkers matters because —	trapped back checkers can lose you the game — Back checkers left too long can get trapped behind a prime; timely escape avoids disaster.
The opening roll 3-1 is prized because it —	makes the 5-point (the golden point) — 3-1 makes the 5-point — the golden point — which is why it's considered the best opening roll.
Good early play balances —	developing your position with keeping reasonable safety — Early play balances building structure (points, builders, escaping) with not leaving yourself too exposed.
Early in the game you should generally —	develop your position (make points, place builders), not just race — The early game is about developing structure — making points and placing builders — to set up the middlegame.
The overall goal of the opening is to —	build a strong, flexible position for the battle ahead — The opening aims to build a strong, flexible position that gives you good chances in the middlegame battle.
The opening roll 6-5 is called 'lover's leap' because it —	runs one back checker all the way to safety — 6-5 (the 'lover's leap') runs a back checker to safety on the far midpoint — a clean escaping play.
A 'builder' is a spare checker positioned to —	help make a point on a future roll — A builder is a well-placed spare that helps you make a new point on an upcoming roll.
When you can't make a point, a good opening idea is to —	play safely or make a constructive 'builder' move — If no point can be made, place 'builders' that help make points next turn, or play safely.

12. Cube Strategy & Equity

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Cube decisions are fundamentally about —	estimating winning chances and acting accordingly — Every cube decision comes down to estimating your winning chances and choosing double, take, or drop accordingly.
Doubling too LATE (when you're way ahead) can cost you because —	the opponent simply drops and you miss playing on for a gammon — If you wait until you're overwhelming, the opponent just drops; you may have done better playing on for a gammon.
Mastering the cube roughly DOUBLES the skill in backgammon because —	it's a second strategic game layered on the checkers — The cube is a second strategic game on top of the checkers — mastering it is a huge part of overall skill.
You should DOUBLE when you are —	clearly ahead but the opponent can still reasonably take — Double when you're clearly ahead but the game still has enough left that the opponent has a real (barely) take.
Gammon chances make doubling —	more attractive (a bigger potential win) — With gammon chances your potential win is larger, which widens the doubling window and favors doubling sooner.
'Losing your market' means —	you waited so long to double that the opponent would now just drop — Losing your market means your position got so strong the opponent would now drop — you should have doubled earlier.
A redouble can be offered only by —	the player who currently owns the cube — Only the current cube owner (the last taker) may offer a redouble; ownership alternates as doubles are taken.
A rough guideline: you can TAKE a double if your winning chances are at least about —	25% — A common rule of thumb: take a double if you have roughly 25% or better winning chances (the 'take point').
The reason to double before you're overwhelming is to —	avoid 'losing your market' (double while they'll still take) — Doubling while the opponent will still take captures value; waiting risks a position so strong they just drop.
The core cube questions are —	'should I double?' and 'should I take?' — Cube strategy boils down to two estimates: should I double, and (facing a double) should I take?
A 'market loser' is a roll after which —	your opponent would no longer take a double (you doubled too late) — If a roll makes you so strong the opponent would now drop, you 'lost your market' — a sign you should have doubled earlier.
The doubling cube can make backgammon results swing a lot because —	stakes multiply, so cube errors are very costly — Because the cube multiplies stakes, cube errors are among the most costly mistakes — its leverage is huge.
The 'doubling window' is —	the range of advantage where doubling is correct (strong, but they can still take) — The doubling window is the band of advantage where a double is correct — you're strong, but the opponent can still take.
Gammon chances (winning double) affect the cube because	they make doubling MORE attractive (bigger upside) — When you have gammon chances, doubling is more attractive because your potential win is

—	larger.
Estimating winning chances gets easier with —	experience and knowing reference positions — Cube judgment improves with experience and learning reference positions that anchor your estimates.
Gammon or backgammon RISK should make you —	more cautious about taking a double (you could lose extra) — If you might lose a gammon, taking is riskier (you could lose double or triple), so you need higher chances to take.
If you own the cube and your position improves, you can —	redouble to increase the stakes — Owning the cube lets you redouble when your position improves — a powerful way to press an advantage.
Captain Pip says 'wager boldly, but only when the tide is with you.' This captures —	double when you're genuinely ahead, and take only with real chances — Bold cube play is correct only when the position (the tide) supports it — double when ahead, take with genuine chances.
A strong cube player —	doubles at the right moment and makes correct take/drop decisions — Good cube play means doubling at the right time AND making correct take/drop decisions — both add up over many games.
'Equity' roughly means —	your expected value in the game (how much you expect to win or lose on average) — Equity is your expected average result in a position — the value that cube and checker decisions try to maximize.
Doubling too EARLY (when barely ahead) is a mistake because —	the opponent takes and you've raised stakes without enough advantage — Doubling with only a small edge lets the opponent take profitably — you've raised the stakes without enough advantage.
Match play changes cube strategy because —	the score affects how much each point is worth — In match play the score changes each point's value, so the same position can call for different cube action.
A position where you're a big favorite but with no gammon chances is often —	a 'too good to double? no — double and take-or-drop' — usually a clear double — When you're a clear favorite (and gammons aren't a big factor), doubling is usually right — they'll take or drop.
Cube errors are costly because —	the cube multiplies the stakes — Because the cube multiplies stakes, cube mistakes are among the most expensive errors in the game.
Take/drop is a bet where dropping costs the current stake and taking risks —	the doubled stake for a chance to win it — Taking risks the doubled stake for the chance to win it; you take when your winning chances justify that bet (~25%+).

13. Anchors & Back Games

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
The best 'advanced' anchors are the opponent's —	5-point or bar-point (good hitting range) — Advanced anchors (the opponent's 5-point or bar-point) offer the best hitting chances while staying safe.
A key skill with anchors is knowing WHEN to —	abandon the anchor and race (if you get ahead) vs hold and wait — The skill is judging when to keep waiting on the anchor versus break it and race — driven by the pip count.
Back games and anchors show that in backgammon —	even a losing position can hold real chances — Anchors and back games prove that even a losing position can keep real chances — good players never give up early.
Captain Pip says 'drop anchor and the storm may still turn.' This captures —	that holding an anchor keeps your chances alive even in a losing game — Holding an anchor keeps hope alive — like dropping anchor in a storm, the game can still turn your way.
Even when far behind, holding an anchor keeps you in the game because —	a single hit can swing the race dramatically — An anchor means one lucky hit can flip the race — so it keeps you alive even when far behind.
The main risk of a back game is —	losing a gammon or backgammon if the hit never comes — If the back game's hit never materializes, you can lose a gammon or backgammon — its high-variance downside.
An 'anchor' is —	a made point in the opponent's home board — An anchor is a point you've made in the opponent's home board — a safe base that also threatens to hit.
Even far behind, an anchor keeps you alive because —	one hit can swing the whole race — An anchor means a single hit can flip the race, so it keeps a behind player alive.
An anchor is valuable because it —	is safe from being hit AND gives you hitting chances — An anchor can't be hit (it's a made point) and threatens the opponent's checkers as they come home.
Anchors turn a losing race into —	a game of chances (waiting for a hit) — An anchor converts a hopeless race into a game of chances — you wait for the shot that can turn it around.
A defensive anchor gives even a losing player —	hope and a real path to victory — A defensive anchor gives a behind player a genuine path to win — a reason to keep fighting.
A back game uses —	two anchors in the opponent's home board — A back game holds two anchors deep in the opponent's home board, playing for a late hit from far behind.
You should give up a good anchor to race only when —	you've clearly moved AHEAD in the pip count — Break a good anchor to race only once you're clearly ahead; otherwise the anchor's hitting chances are worth keeping.
If a back game's timing is OFF (you're forced to break the anchors early), you —	often lose, and possibly by a gammon — A back game with bad timing collapses — you break the anchors before the shot comes, often losing badly.
Anchors mostly matter when there is still —	CONTACT (the armies can still hit each other) — An anchor only helps while there's contact — it's precisely the contact that gives the hitting chances.

Against an anchor, a player who is ahead should —	try to bring checkers home while minimizing the shots they leave — Ahead against an anchor, you clear your points to leave the fewest possible shots — safe navigation home.
From ahead, you should be aware the opponent's anchor means —	you may have to leave a shot as you come home — When the opponent holds an anchor, bringing your checkers home may force you to leave a shot — clear carefully.
When ahead, the SAFEST way to deal with the opponent's anchor is often to —	avoid leaving shots even at the cost of some efficiency — Ahead against an anchor, prioritize not leaving shots — a hit could throw away your lead, so safety beats speed.
A 'back game' uses —	TWO anchors in the opponent's home board — A back game holds two anchors in the opponent's home board, playing for a late hit from far behind.
The best advanced anchors are the opponent's —	5-point or bar-point — Advanced anchors (the opponent's 5-point or bar-point) give the best hitting chances while staying safe.
You should be reluctant to give up a good anchor because —	it's your main source of safety and hitting chances — A good anchor is your safety and your hitting chance; give it up only when racing is clearly better.
A back game is a plan for when you are —	far behind and need a big swing — Back games are for when you're far behind — a risky last resort that can still win with a well-timed hit.
The hardest part of a back game is —	TIMING — keeping the anchors until the opponent must leave a shot — Timing is the back game's challenge: you must hold your anchors until the opponent is forced to leave a shot.
An anchor is —	a made point in the opponent's home board — An anchor is a point you own in the opponent's home board — safe from hits and threatening to hit.
Holding two anchors (a back game) is powerful but —	hard to time and risky if it fails — A back game has real winning chances but is hard to time — if it fails, you can lose big (even a gammon).

14. Match Play, Gammons & Scoring

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
A 'backgammon' (the rare big win) is when the loser has borne off none AND —	still has a checker on the bar or in the winner's home board — A backgammon is a win where the loser bore off none and still has a checker on the bar or in the winner's home board — worth triple.
Gammons make DOUBLING more attractive because —	the potential win is larger, widening the doubling window — With gammon chances, your potential win grows, which makes doubling more attractive (a wider doubling window).
In match play you play to —	a target number of points, over many games — A match is first-to-N points; each game (× cube × gammon/backgammon) contributes to your total.
Captain Pip says 'a great voyage is measured in more than one safe return.' This captures —	that matches (and big wins) reward sustained, score-aware skill — Real mastery shows over a match — winning big at the right times and playing to the score, not just one game.
A player who is far BEHIND in a match should generally —	take more risks and use the cube aggressively to catch up — Trailing in a match, you often take more risk and use the cube aggressively — you need swings to catch up.
A 'crawford game' rule (in match play) briefly —	turns OFF the cube for one game when a player reaches match point — The Crawford rule disables the doubling cube for one game after a player first reaches match point — a standard match rule.
The Crawford rule turns the doubling cube OFF —	for one game, right after a player first reaches match point — The Crawford rule disables the cube for exactly one game after a player first reaches match point — a standard match rule.
The scoring system makes backgammon a game of —	not just who wins, but by how much and when — Backgammon's scoring rewards the margin and timing of wins — not just who wins, but by how much and when.
The doubling cube in match play is judged relative to —	the match score (each point's value changes) — In match play the cube is judged by match equity — each point's value depends on the current score.
A backgammon is worth —	triple (3×) the game's value — A backgammon scores triple the game value — the largest single-game result.
A 'gammon' is when the winner bears off all checkers while the loser has —	borne off NONE — A gammon is a win where the loser has borne off no checkers — it's worth double the game's value.
A gammon is worth —	double (2×) the game's value — A gammon scores double the current game value (multiplied by the cube).
When you need only a FEW points to win the match, gammons matter —	less if a single game already wins it — If one plain win already reaches your target, extra gammon points are wasted — so gammons matter less then.
A gammon or backgammon can swing a match because —	it scores multiple points at once (× the cube) — A gammon (2×) or backgammon (3×), multiplied by the cube, can swing a match by many points in a single game.
Behind in a match, you should	take more risks and use the cube aggressively — Trailing in a match, you

generally —	take more risk and use the cube aggressively — you need swings to catch up.
Ahead in a match, you should generally —	play a bit safer to protect the lead — Leading a match, you reduce variance — play a little safer to protect your lead.
Because gammons and backgammons multiply the score, players sometimes —	play on for a bigger win instead of doubling — When a gammon or backgammon is likely, a player may forgo doubling and play on for the larger multiplied win.
In MATCH play, you play to —	a target number of points, not just one game — A match is played to a set number of points; each game (× cube × gammon/backgammon) adds to your total.
Scoring in backgammon rewards —	not just winning, but winning BIG (gammons/backgammons) at the right times — The scoring rewards winning big — gammons and backgammons multiply your result, so pressing for them can matter.
The reason match play is deeper than single games is —	the score adds a strategic layer to every risk and cube decision — Match play layers the score onto every decision, making risk and cube choices richer than in a single game.
The SCORE in a match affects strategy because —	how many points you need changes how you value risk and the cube — Your points-to-go changes the value of each outcome, so match strategy adapts risk-taking and cube action to the score.
A player who is far AHEAD in a match should generally —	play a bit more safely to protect the lead — Leading a match, you often reduce variance — play a little safer to protect your lead.
Understanding scoring helps you decide —	how hard to press for gammons and how to use the cube — Knowing how scoring works guides whether to press for a gammon and how aggressively to use the cube.
Playing to the SCORE means —	adjusting your risk and cube use to how many points you still need — Playing to the score means tailoring your risk-taking and cube decisions to your points-to-go in the match.
Playing 'to the score' means —	adjusting your risk and cube use to the points you still need — Playing to the score means tailoring your risk-taking and cube decisions to your points-to-go in the match.

15. Common Mistakes & Good Habits

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
Leaving unnecessary blots is a mistake because —	it gives the opponent free hitting chances — Leaving blots you didn't have to leave hands the opponent free chances to hit — avoid needless exposure.
Escaping your back checkers too late risks —	getting them trapped behind the opponent's prime — Back checkers left too long can be trapped behind a prime — a frequent, game-losing mistake.
Improving at backgammon is mostly about —	reducing your mistakes, not just hoping for good dice — You improve by reducing your own mistakes — good dice come and go, but fewer errors wins over time.
Handling a well-played loss means —	judging your decisions, not just the unlucky result — Backgammon has variance; judge your decisions, not just results — a well-played loss is still good play.
A good habit is to think about —	your PLAN (race/hold/prime), not just the current roll — Strong players think about the overall plan, not just the immediate roll — each move should serve the plan.
A too-passive error is —	playing safe when behind (safe play just loses slowly) — Playing safe when behind is too passive — from behind you must take reasonable chances to create a swing.
A good habit before a risky move is to —	count how many rolls hit you — Counting the hitting rolls (out of 36) before a risky move is a habit that steadily improves your decisions.
Good habits ultimately come down to —	matching your play to the position and thinking in probabilities — The best habits are reading the position (ahead/behind) and thinking in probabilities — then choosing accordingly.
A good habit is reviewing your games to —	learn from mistakes without shame — Reviewing your games (especially close ones) to learn from mistakes — without shame — is how you improve.
Treating a loss caused by bad luck the right way means —	recognizing you played well even if the dice didn't cooperate — Backgammon has variance; a good habit is to judge your decisions, not just results — a well-played loss is still good play.
A frequent cube mistake is —	doubling when you're only slightly ahead (or when behind) — Doubling with only a small edge (or from behind) is a common, costly cube error — double with a genuine advantage.
Failing to escape your back checkers in time can lead to —	getting them trapped behind a prime — Leaving back checkers too long risks a prime trapping them — a frequent, game-losing mistake.
A common OVER-aggressive mistake is —	hitting when it exposes you to a costly return hit for little gain — Hitting isn't always right; hitting when it exposes you to a bad return hit for little gain is an over-aggressive error.
A good habit is to regularly —	count the pips to know where the race stands — Regularly counting pips replaces guesswork with knowledge and guides your race/contact/cube decisions.
A mistake in bearing off is —	leaving a blot while the opponent still has a checker behind you — Leaving a blot during bear-off while contact remains can get you hit at the worst time — a costly late mistake.
A very common mistake is	racing when you're behind in the pip count — Racing when behind almost always

—	loses; a good habit is to keep contact (hold/prime) when you're behind.
Captain Pip says 'a steady hand beats a lucky gust.' This means —	consistent good decisions beat relying on lucky rolls — A steady, thoughtful approach (good habits) beats hoping for lucky rolls — consistency wins the long voyage.
A good all-around habit is to ask each turn —	'am I ahead or behind, and what plan fits?' — Asking 'am I ahead or behind, and what plan fits?' each turn keeps your play aligned with the position.
Over many games, skill shows because —	good decisions compound and outweigh short-term luck — Luck swings single games, but consistently good decisions win out over many games — that's where skill shows.
A common TOO-passive mistake is —	playing safe when behind (you need to take chances) — Playing safe when behind is too passive — you slowly lose; from behind you must take reasonable chances.
An over-aggressive error is —	hitting when it exposes you to a costly return hit for little gain — Hitting when it exposes you to a bad return hit for little gain is an over-aggressive error — weigh the return shot.
The single best habit is —	pausing to think (count, assess the plan) before each move — Pausing to count and assess the plan before each move is the habit that most improves your results.
Reviewing your CLOSE games especially helps because —	that's where small decisions decide the result — Close games hinge on small decisions, so reviewing them is where you learn the most about improving your play.
A good habit when ahead is to —	play safely and protect your lead — When ahead, a good habit is to reduce risk and protect the lead rather than gambling it away.
A good habit when behind is to —	take reasonable risks and keep contact for hitting chances — Behind, a good habit is to keep contact and take sensible risks — safe play just loses slowly.

16. Putting It Together

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
In a PURE race with no contact left, the winner is decided by —	the pip count and efficient bearing off — Once there's no contact, no hit can happen — the pure race is decided by the pip count and efficient bear-off.
Making points and primes lets you —	control space and trap the opponent — Made points and primes control the board and can trap the opponent — the backbone of positional play.
The dice give the numbers, but —	YOU choose how to use them — that's where skill lives — The dice supply the numbers; your choices about how to use them are where all the skill lives.
The pip count tells you —	who's ahead in the race, guiding whether to race or keep contact — The pip count measures the race; it guides the central choice of racing (ahead) or keeping contact (behind).
Blot management is about —	balancing the reward of a play against the chance and cost of being hit — Managing blots means weighing a move's reward against the probability and cost of getting hit.
The deepest lesson of PipQuest is that —	backgammon turns luck into a game of skill through good decisions — PipQuest's core lesson: backgammon transforms the luck of the dice into a game of skill through consistently good decisions.
The cube adds —	a strategic game about when to raise the stakes — The cube layers stakes-management onto the checkers — deciding when to double, take, or drop.
The best way to keep improving is to —	review your games and learn from mistakes without shame — Reviewing games and learning from mistakes — without shame — is the reliable path to steady improvement.
Backgammon rewards —	not just winning, but winning big (gammons) at the right times — The scoring rewards winning big (gammons/backgammons) at the right moments — margin and timing matter.
A checker on the bar counting as 25 pips reminds us that —	being hit is a major setback in the race — A bar checker's 25-pip value shows how far a hit checker must travel back — being hit is a major race setback.
A checker's voyage ends when it —	bears off (leaves the board for good) — A checker's journey ends when it bears off — removed from the board for good; the first to bear off all 15 wins.
A great backgammon player —	reads the position, thinks in odds, and uses the cube well — Complete backgammon skill combines reading the position, thinking in probabilities, and using the cube well.
Anchors and back games teach that —	even a losing position can hold real chances — Anchors and back games show that even when behind, real winning chances remain — don't give up early.
The goal of backgammon is to —	bear off all 15 checkers before your opponent — Everything serves one goal: bring all 15 checkers home and bear them off before your opponent does.
The single habit that most	pausing to count and plan before each move — Across race, contact, and cube decisions, pausing to count and plan before moving is what most

improves play is —	improves results.
Backgammon blends —	luck (the dice) and skill (your decisions) — Backgammon combines the luck of the dice with the skill of your decisions — skill shapes what the dice give you.
Hitting and the bar make the game interactive because —	you can set the opponent back, not just race in parallel — Hitting sends opponents to the bar, making backgammon an interactive contest — not just two parallel races.
Skill shows over many games because —	good decisions compound and outweigh short-term dice luck — Single games swing on luck, but consistently good decisions win over many games — that's where skill shows.
Captain Pip's final teaching: 'The sea gives the winds; the sailor makes the voyage.' This means —	you can't control the dice, but skillful choices carry you home — The dice (the winds) are beyond your control, but skillful choices — the sailor's craft — carry you home to victory.
Probability matters because —	you can count exactly how many of the 36 rolls help or hurt you — With 36 equally likely rolls, you can count precisely how many help or hurt — turning luck into calculated decisions.
Putting it all together, you win by —	reading the race, playing the odds, using the cube, and steering the dice you're given — You win by reading the race (pips), playing the odds, using the cube well, and steering whatever the dice give you.
The doubling cube adds —	a second strategic game about when to raise the stakes — The cube layers a stakes-management game onto the checkers — deciding when to double, take, or drop.
The pip count guides the central choice of —	racing (ahead) vs keeping contact (behind) — The pip count measures the race and guides whether to race (ahead) or keep contact (behind).
Choosing a game plan means —	racing when ahead, and holding/priming/back-gaming when behind — Your plan flows from the position: race when ahead; hold, prime, or back-game as you fall behind.
Every part of backgammon ultimately serves —	the race to bear off all 15 checkers first — Hitting, points, primes, the cube — everything ultimately serves the one goal: bearing off all 15 first.

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