THE ROYAL GAME OF UR

The Royal Game of Ur, a speed and strategy game, is one of the oldest and longest-lived board games ever discovered. This template is based on a 4,600-year-old board from the city of Ur in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Although first excavated in a royal cemetery, this game was not only played by the elite—it was popular with all levels of society. It fits within a category of games played on varied configurations of 20 squares. After about 1,000 years the game evolved into a more complex version, whose rules are partly explained in a cuneiform tablet in the British Museum deciphered by Irving Finkel. Working backward, he designed this simple version of the game. You will have to play this game a few times to understand it. Remember its remarkable age and popularity and settle in to learn winning strategies.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 players
- A game of Ur board (download and print ours, or draw your own)
- 7 game pieces for each player, such as light and dark pebbles or coins (heads and tails). You can also cut out our gaming pieces and glue them to pennies or circles of cardboard
- We recommend a 6-sided die. (The ancient players might use tetrahedrons, 2-sided dice, 4-sided dice/knucklebones, or throwing sticks)

RULES

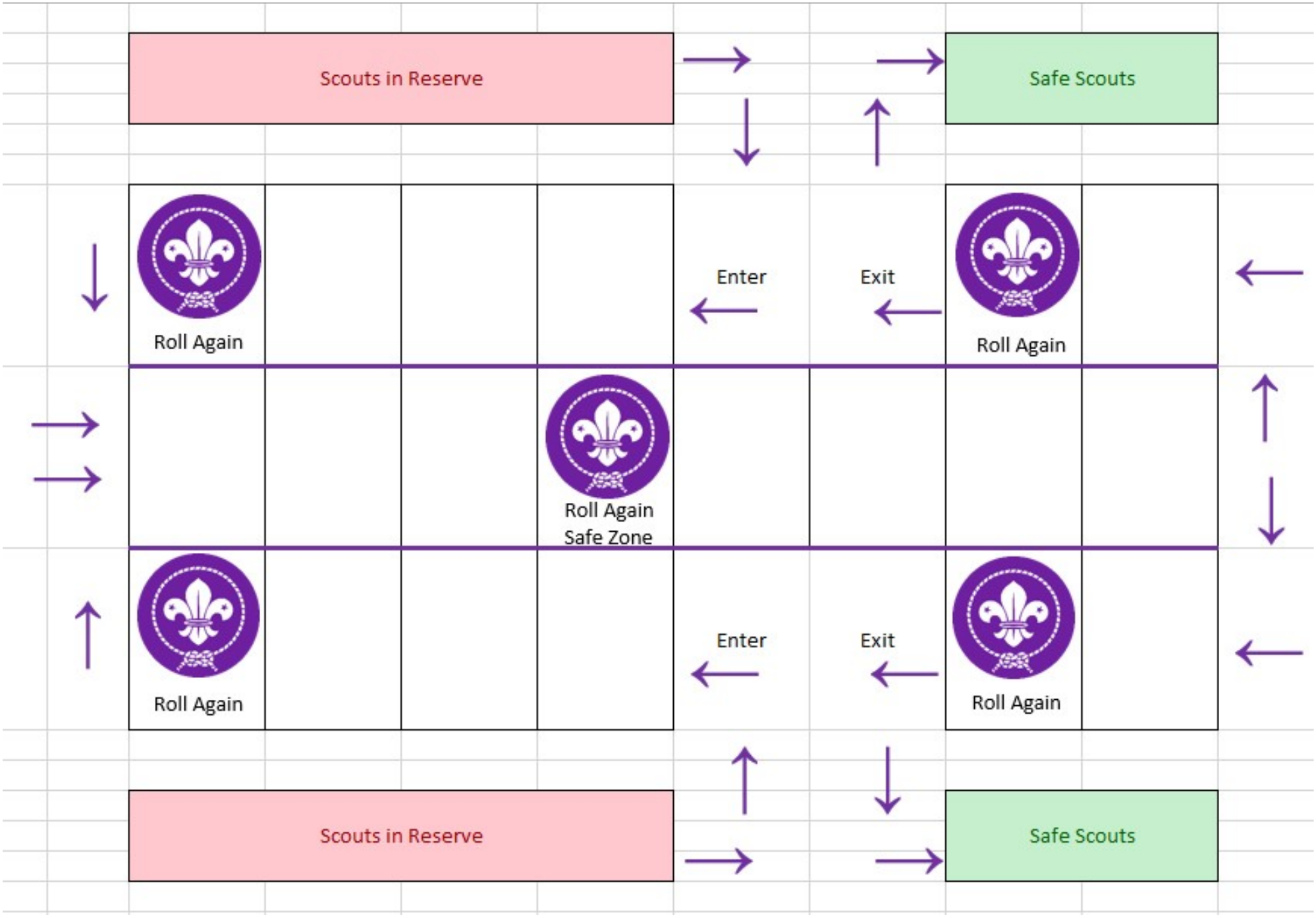
Goal: The first player to move all playing pieces off the board wins

- The first player is selected by the roll of a die (the higher number plays first)
- Players begin on opposite sides (see diagram)
- Moves are determined by a throw of the die; only 1, 2, 3, and 4 count
- If you throw a 5 or 6, try again until you throw 1–4
- A number may not be split to move multiple pieces
- New pieces may enter on any throw
- A player must always move if possible
- An opponent can land on and capture a solitary piece in the central long "bridge" (except on the coloured square); this knocks it off the board to start over
- Pieces are also safe from capture in the outside squares on each player's side of the board and on the coloured squares
- Landing on a coloured square gives the player another throw
- Exiting requires an exact throw (so to exit from the final square requires throwing a 1)

Need help?

Irving Finkel Teaches the Game of Ur:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZskjLq040I

Deciphering the World's Oldest Rule Book:
https://youtu.be/wHjznvH54Cw


Scouts in Reserve
Safe Scouts
Roll Again
Enter
Exit
Roll Again
Roll Again
Safe Zone
Roll Again
Enter
Exit
Roll Again
Scouts in Reserve
Safe Scouts

Scouts in Reserve

Safe Scouts



Roll Again

Enter

Exit



Roll Again



Roll Again
Safe Zone



Roll Again

Enter

Exit



Roll Again

Scouts in Reserve

Safe Scouts