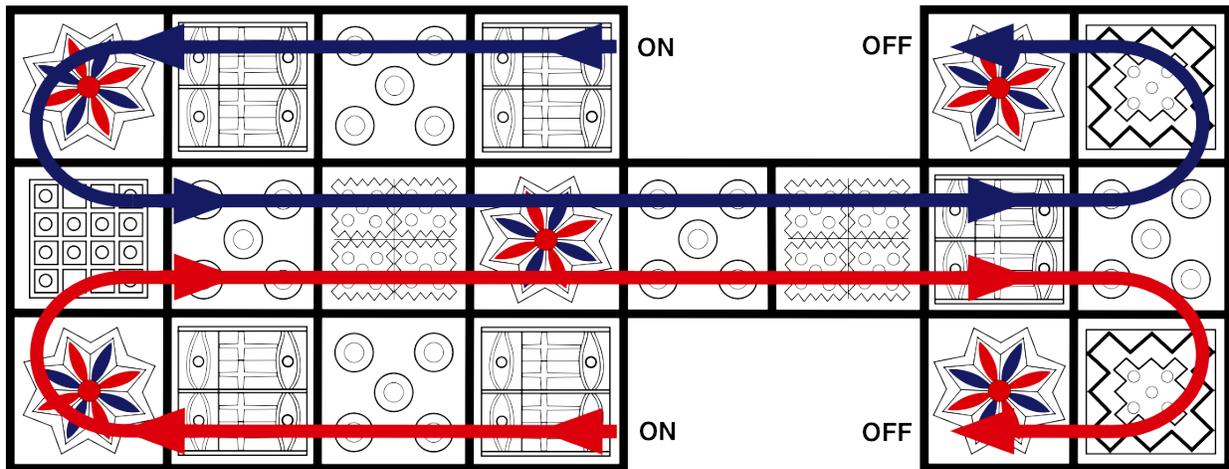


Rules for the Royal Game of Ur

Shamelessly ripped from <http://www.cynningstan.com/game/151/royal-game-of-ur>

Complete sets of rules were published by R. C. Bell in his book *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*, and by Irving Finkel in his game for the British Museum shop. This set of rules takes elements from these but includes ideas from H. J. R. Murray and David Parlett that make the game more logical and elegant. Al Biles then simplified the path to speed things up.



1. The Royal Game of Ur is played on a board of 20 squares, arranged in 3 rows of 8 with four squares cut away (as shown in the diagram). Five of the squares are marked with rosettes. The board can be thought of as in three distinctive sections: a large block, a small block, and the bridge between them.
2. Each player starts the game with seven pieces in hand, the board being empty.
3. Each player has three binary lots in the form of pyramidal dice with four corners; two corners are marked. When throwing the dice, the score is the number of marked corners pointing upwards, with none signifying a score of 4 instead of 0. Any form of binary lot may be used in place of tetrahedral dice. Coins are the most readily available substitute, counting heads as 1 and tails as 0, with three tails signifying 4 instead of 0.
4. The path of a player's pieces starts on his side of the board in the large block at the square nearest the bridge. The piece moves toward the corner with the rosette before moving to the adjacent square in the middle row and continuing until it crosses the bridge. Once across the bridge, it moves to the end of the board in the small block, then turns toward its own side and moves around that side of the small block until it reaches the rosette at the player's own side, from which it is borne off. The path is simpler than it sounds: see the diagram.

5. Players decide at random who begins.
6. In his turn a player first throws his dice.
7. If none of his pieces are in play, then he must enter a piece on the first, second, third or fourth square on the board, according to the score of the dice.
8. If he has pieces already on the board, he may instead move one of his pieces along its path by the number of squares indicated on the dice.
9. If a moved piece lands on a rosette, the player may roll and move again.
10. Only one piece may sit on a square at once; pieces cannot sit together on the same square.
11. If a move ends on an opponent's piece, that piece is removed from the board and must begin its journey again.
12. A piece sitting on a rosette square is safe; the opponent cannot land on it.
13. The first 4 squares and last 2 squares in a piece's path are also safe, as the opponent's pieces can never land there.
14. A piece must bear off by an exact throw. For example, if a player's piece sits on the final rosette of its path, a 1 is required to bear off; if on the adjacent square, a 2, and so on.
15. If the roll of the dice gives no valid move, then the turn is lost, and the opponent's turn begins.
16. The first player whose pieces are all borne off the board wins the game.
17. To make the game shorter, reduce the number of pieces for each player.