

# How to Play Dreidel



Dreidel is a popular game played every year for the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. Hanukkah celebrates two miracles: the miracle of the small Maccabee army successfully revolting against the Greeks and the miracle that the small amount of oil that the Maccabees had to rededicate their Jewish temple lasted for 8 nights. The letters *nun*, *gimmel*, *hey*, *shin*, which appear on the dreidel, stand for *nes gadol haya sham*—“a great miracle happened there,” while in Israel the dreidel says *nun*, *gimmel*, *hey*, *pey*, which means “a great miracle happened here.”

## Materials:

Dreidel

Small objects (coins, buttons, nuts, etc.), enough for 10-12 per player

## Procedure:

- 1) Divide the small objects equally among the players and decide on a playing order.
- 2) Have each player place one of their objects in the center (“pot”). This is their “ante,” and each player must do it after every turn in order to stay in the game.
- 3) Begin playing. Each player gets one spin on their turn, and depending on what the dreidel lands on, they either take from or put into the pot.
  - a) If נ (nun) is facing up, the player does nothing. The person to the left spins.
    - i) Note: nun and gimel look similar, but gimel has a tail and nun does not!
  - b) If א (gimel) is facing up, you get to take the whole pot!
    - i) Since the pot is now empty, everyone, including the spinner, puts another ante unit into the pot and the next person spins
  - c) If ה (hey) is facing up, the player gets half the pieces in the pot
    - i) If there are an odd number of pieces, the player takes ½ rounded up
  - d) If ש (shin) is facing up, the player has to put one of their objects in the pot
- 4) A player is “out” if they can no longer make their ante or if they roll a shin and have nothing to put in the center
- 5) Keep playing until there is one player left standing! (or you get bored :))