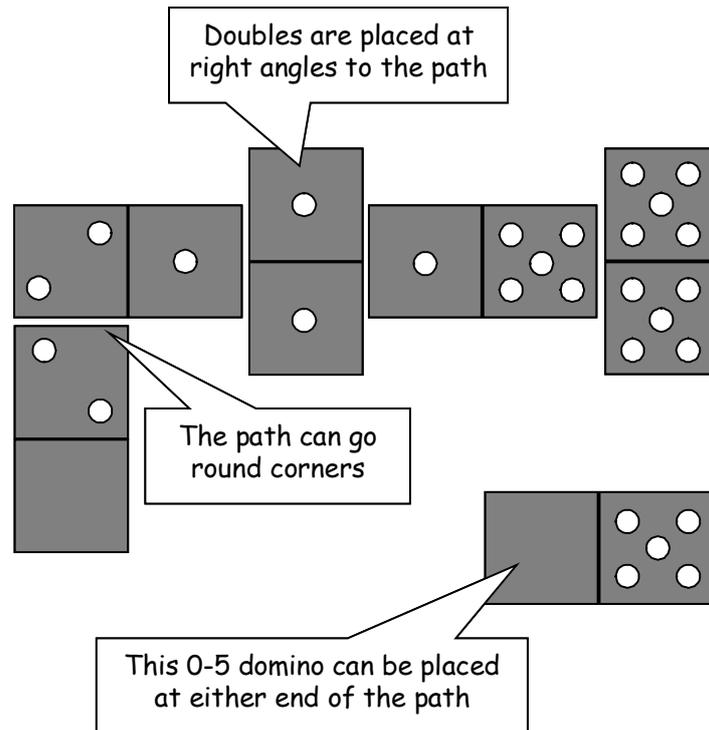


Domino Games

The domino tiles are like a pack of cards; many games can be built around them. All the games that we will describe follow the basic rule that players take turns to form a path of joining dominoes in which the number of dots match at the joins. There are a couple of features of a domino path that the following diagram illustrates.



At the start of a game, all the dominoes are placed face down and then shuffled. This is called the boneyard, since early dominoes¹ were made of bone.

Traditional Dominoes

Four players sit round a table and opposite players are partners. Each player draws 5 dominoes from the boneyard. These are placed on their side so that each player can see their own dominoes but not those of the other players

The player with the highest double (6-6, 5-5, and so on) places it on the table to start the path. If no-one has a double, then the player with the highest scoring domino starts. The player on that person's right continues to try making the path. If a player cannot place a domino on either end of the path, they have to take an extra domino from the boneyard and miss a turn, that is, they may not place that domino on the path, even if it would fit.

¹ To be accurate, dominoes is the name of a game played with the bones or tiles that form a domino set. However, we find that most people understand a domino to be a tile with dots on and have used the word *domino* to refer to the tile rather than the game that is played with a set of them.

The first player to place all their dominoes is the winner of a round. To score a round, the traditional game requires that the remaining players add the number of dots on their unplaced dominoes and the winner scores the total of their opponent's scores minus their partner's score. Rounds continue until a team reaches a score of 200 (or some agreed number) and so become the winning team.

Simplifications

An alternative to this scoring method would be for the winning player's team to score 1 for each domino still held by their opponents and -1 for each domino held by their partner. The first team to 20 would be the winning team.

If there are not 4 players, the game can still be played with 2 or 3 players, but the winner each round is the person to play the last domino or the person with the least number of dots on their remaining dominoes.

Some children will need to be encouraged to think mathematically and to use their highest dominoes first unless they know they can block an opponent with a domino with a lower total. In this way the lowest possible number of dots in hand at the end of the game can be arrived at.