



## The dreidel – a simple game of chance

The dreidel (Yiddish) is a four-sided top used to play a simple game of chance. Each side of the top has a different Hebrew letter on it. Outside of Israel, dreidels have the letters nun, gimel, hay, shin.

These represent "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" which means "a great miracle happened there." The letters have a different meaning as well. They stand for the Yiddish words that tell the instructions of the game. The dreidel also represents the four kingdoms, Babylon, Persian, Greece and Rome spinning around the centre (the Jewish people).

Each player starts with ten or fifteen tokens (chocolate money, pennies, raisins, or any other small items you choose to use). Each player puts one token in the middle. They then take turns to spin the dreidel. If you do not wish to play the game with tokens, score can be kept with points instead. Each player acts according to the letter left facing upwards when the dreidel falls to the table.

**Nun** - Lose a turn, because "Nun" is "nisht" in Yiddish, which means "nothing".

**Gimel** - Gants means "whole." Player takes the whole pot.

**Hay** - Halb means "half". Player takes half the tokens.

**Shin** - Stands for shtel or "put in." The player adds to the pot the amount determined at the beginning of the game.

			
Nun: Player does nothing. They lose a turn.	Gimel: Player gets all the tokens in the pot.	Hay: Player gets half of the tokens in the pot.	Shin: Player must put one token into the pot.

A winner is declared when one player has all of the tokens