



## Rollin' Bones The History of Dice



"Play is the highest form of research." – Albert Einstein. When you were kids did you ever play "bones"? Ever wonder why dice (and often dominoes, which are also called "tiles") are called "bones"? You guessed it! Because they were originally made from the ankle bones of animals. Early civilizations used bones, hooves and horns from animals like sheep. Carved into cubes, small circles were then inscribed on the bone dice to delineate the differing sides. Did you know that those small circles actually have a name? The dots on dice are called "Pips." Did you further know that on a 6-sided dice, opposite faces always add up to lucky number 7?!

Dice are some of the oldest gaming implements known to man, dating back at least 5,000 years! Some of the oldest known dice were discovered at an archaeologist site in the Middle East, as part of a Backgammon set. But the first dice throwers weren't gamers, they were religious figures who used them, as well as sticks, rocks, or even animal entrails, for fortune-telling. The journey from divination to gaming is unknown, but it seems that since the outcome of fortune-telling was complex and well, a gamble, it made sense for them to "roll" into the gaming scene.

Dice games eventually made their way into New Mexico, where pieces were crafted from bone or wood until manufactured dice were brought over during the latter part of the 19th century. Like marbles, quoits, pick-up sticks & more, dice have been a favorite pastime for generations! Make sure that amid your at-home learning you take some time to play!