



**Playing Monopoly (or Fake Money Games) on  
Shabbos + Scrabble Regular/Deluxe Edition**

[#85]

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## Video Transcription

Today's question is regarding playing certain board games on Shabbos. We're in the summer months, where Shabbos day is longer, and people are trying to find ways to occupy themselves through the end of Shabbos. The question has come up of whether playing certain games are halachically permissible or not on Shabbos.

Mainly, we are speaking about the game of Monopoly, or other similar games, where people are using fake money. The question is, we know you're not allowed to do business on Shabbos, so are you allowed to play Monopoly, which mimics business transactions, with buying and selling houses and stuff like that, and fake money is transferred? Is that allowed on Shabbos?

As well, we are going to speak about another well-known and played board game, Scrabble, and Scrabble Deluxe edition, once we're on the topic of board games.

Before we bring the answer, there are two additional concerns with playing board games which must be addressed:

The first thing is that there's an aspect of *borer*, separating pieces, of which a person has to be very careful. Even for games which are permissible, a person must be aware that, when they start the game, they're allowed to take the pieces that they need, if they're going to play right away; however, when the game is over, you're not allowed to separate the pieces because that's not for immediate use. So, at the end of the game, a person has to just put all the pieces away and be done with it until after Shabbos.

The point that must be made, is that we're talking about games being played where there's no prizes awarded. If these games are attached to an actual prize of money, or food, or something like that, then it would be forbidden to be done on Shabbos (even if the actual game itself is permissible on its own [without the prizes]).

Getting to Monopoly, the halacha is, according to Rav Scheinberg, even though the game mimics business practices and business transactions, it is technically permitted and it would be allowed. He did add that it is not in the spirit of Shabbos to be playing Monopoly on Shabbos. The same was said by the Ohr Le'Tzion, Chacham Ben Zion Abba Shaul as well as Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen. They all say that it's allowed, though it's not in the spirit of Shabbos, and should therefore be limited, especially by adults. If children want to play these games, you should not force them to stop.

That is the halacha for Monopoly. Once we are already speaking about board games, there is another board game, Scrabble, which is also discussed by the Poskim if it is a problem of *kesiva*, writing on Shabbos. There are two parts to the question. One is about actually forming letters and words. There is also a separate problem of keeping track of scores, which may cause a person to write on Shabbos.

The halacha is as follows: Regarding the first issue of being considered that you are writing on Shabbos, the Poskim say that it's not applicable by Scrabble and is not considered writing on Shabbos. However, when it comes to the 2nd aspect above (that people may

come to write (their score) on Shabbos, some Poskim say that it is indeed a problem and therefore do not allow the play of Scrabble (all editions) on Shabbos.

The question about Scrabble regular edition, with a completely flat un-grooved board, was brought to Rav Scheinberg who said that even though there are those *Poskim* who say Scrabble is not allowed to be played, still, it is okay to play Scrabble on Shabbos. However, a person should be extra careful and vigilant to not come to write down anything on Shabbos.

Many people use a book with a napkin to keep track of their scores according to page number.

The question was also asked about the Deluxe Scrabble or “travel” Scrabble editions, where each piece is set in position by a border. Putting the pieces into these settings could be more of a problem of *kesiva*. Rav Yisroel Pinchos Bodner, the author of the *Sefer Halachos of Muktzah*, (who is also the author of *Halachos of Other People's Money* which we have quoted from in many other MoneyHalacha videos, actually showed a Deluxe Scrabble board to Rav Moshe Feinstein. Rav Moshe Feinstein said that the Deluxe edition of Scrabble would not be allowed to be played with on Shabbos because of the locking pieces.

In summary, Monopoly, would be allowed to be played on Shabbos but the Gedolim have noted that it's not in the spirit of Shabbos to be doing so, especially for those over Bar/Bat Mitzva. With regards to Scrabble, Rav Scheinberg said that the regular edition game (with flat board) may be played, but with regards to Deluxe Scrabble, or Travel Scrabble, where the pieces are set in place, R' Moshe Feinstein said that it would not be allowed to be played on Shabbos.\*\*\*

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\*\*\*Please note that these halachos are intended to inform and educate the reader/listener in general. For any specific questions which arise, it is recommended to speak over the exact case with a competent halachic authority in order to assess the halacha accordingly as any small change will greatly affect the final halacha. You can send your questions in to us as well by replying via WhatsApp to our halacha Q & A number on the group, sending an email to [Ask@MoneyHalacha.com](mailto:Ask@MoneyHalacha.com), or via our contact page at [MoneyHalacha.com/contact-us](http://MoneyHalacha.com/contact-us)

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