



GUYS AND DOLLS

ABOUT THE SHOW

When *Guys and Dolls* premiered on Broadway in 1950, some of the characters and storylines may have seemed familiar to audience members. That's because the show was based on the popular short stories of Damon Runyon.

Runyon wrote many short stories, most of which focused on gamblers in the world of 1940s New York and are notable for their blend of highly formal language and slang. Producers Cy Feuer and Ernie Martin were fans of Runyon's work and sought to turn his story "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown" into a musical. Frank Loesser was hired to write the music and lyrics, while Jo Swerling was selected to write the book. Swerling's work failed to capture the essence of Runyon's stories, and Abe Burrows was brought on to write a new story that incorporated all of Loesser's songs while staying true to the spirit of the source material.

The final product was a story that drew most of its plot elements from Runyon's stories "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown" and "Blood Pressure" but also included characters and scenes from others. It proved to be a hit with audiences and critics alike, running for 1,200 performances on Broadway and winning five Tony Awards.



ORIGINAL CAST OF GUYS AND DOLLS BY AL HIRSCHFELD, 1950.

In the years since its premiere, there have been four Broadway revivals of *Guys and Dolls*, a popular 1955 film adaptation starring Frank Sinatra, and numerous productions by schools and regional theatres. This production marks the eighth time that *Guys and Dolls* has been performed at Broadway At Music Circus since 1955. Nearly 70 years after it first debuted on Broadway, this classic work remains a prime example of musical comedy that continues to thrill audiences all over the world.

“LUCK BE A LADY”: GAMBLING AND PROBABILITY

When the gamblers in *Guys and Dolls* play craps, they are really playing a game of chance—there’s no way of guaranteeing a specific combo because each of the six numbers on a die has an equal chance of being rolled! Of course, there are certain sums that have a higher probability of occurring because there are more combinations that add up to it. Here is a breakdown of the different combos a craps shooter could roll, and their odds of rolling them:

TOTAL	COMBOS	PROBABILITY
2	1+1	1/36
3	1+2, 2+1	2/36
4	1+3, 2+2, 3+1	3/36
5	1+4, 2+3, 3+2, 4+1	4/36
6	1+5, 2+4, 3+3, 4+2, 5+1	5/36
7	1+6, 2+5, 3+4, 4+3, 5+2, 6+1	6/36
8	2+6, 3+5, 4+4, 5+3, 6+2	5/36
9	3+6, 4+5, 5+4, 6+3	4/36
10	4+6, 5+5, 6+4	3/36
11	5+6, 6+5	2/36
12	6+6	1/36

As you can see, there are certain sums that are more likely to be rolled, but there is never more than a 2/36 chance of getting two specific numbers together. Even if a number statistically is more likely to appear, there is no promise that it will appear more frequently. The only way the craps shooters can guarantee a combo is by using weighted dice, and that’s cheating!

THINK ABOUT IT...

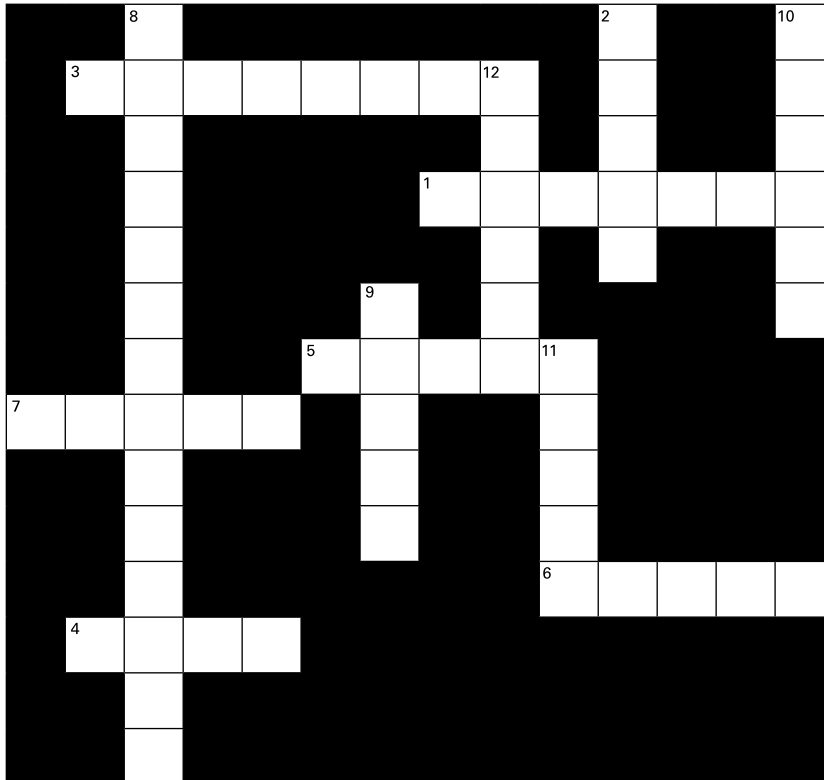
Take two dice and roll them 50 times. Make sure to record the combos and the totals.



1. What total occurred the most? _____
2. The least? _____
3. How did your results compare to the table above?
4. After comparing your results to the table, do you think it is really possible to accurately predict what someone will roll?
5. Do you think the gamblers in *Guys and Dolls* are foolish to bet money on something so unpredictable? Why or why not?
6. What other games could you play using probability and dice?

SLANG WORDS

Damon Runyon utilized many slang words from the world of 1940s gamblers and even created a few now-common phrases when he was writing his original short stories. When Abe Burrows was hired to re-write the book for *Guys and Dolls*, he set out to emulate Runyon's unique blend of formal language and slang in his dialogue. Pay attention to context clues as you watch the show, and see if you can solve this crossword puzzle made up of terms used in the show!



1. Police
2. Dice game
3. Dollars (or spuds!)
4. Police are watching (temperature!)
5. A thousand dollars
6. Someone who watches for police
7. Money (or bread!)
8. Fooling around (like an animal!)
9. Die (like a frog!)
10. Mouth
11. Fists
12. Easy winner

THINK ABOUT IT...

- What terms on this list do you recognize or use?
- Which ones seem outdated?
- What are some slang terms that you might use now?



1. COPPERS 2. GRAPS 3. POTATOES 4. HEAT 5. GRAND 6. SCOUT 7. DOUGH
8. MONKEY BUSINESS 9. CROAK 10. KISSER 11. DUKES 12. SHOO-IN

TIMES SQUARE

Much of the action of *Guys and Dolls* takes place in, around, and below the bright lights and big crowds of Times Square in New York City. While the fantastical version in the show may not seem too different from the busy cultural hub that we know it to be today, Times Square has undergone some drastic transformations over the years.

In the late 1800s, the area was known as Longacre Square, a rather unremarkable open space known mostly for being the center of the horse carriage industry. As lower Manhattan became more industrialized, theatres moved towards Midtown and filled the space with the bright lights of marquees and the buzz of excited crowds. In 1904 the *New York Times* built their new headquarters at 42nd Street and Longacre Square, and the area was renamed "Times Square" as a result.

As public transportation and the performing arts industry both grew during the early to mid-1900s, Times Square became a popular destination. Unfortunately, this also brought an increase in gambling and other illegal activities. Following the Great Depression, the area fell into decline and became a hotspot for crime and "adult" entertainment. Even as Broadway musicals entered the "Golden Age" of the 60s and saw renewed popularity in the 80s, the area around the theatres was known mostly for how dirty and unsafe it had become.

In the mid-90s, Mayor Rudy Giuliani led a movement to clean up Times Square that brought in more big-name businesses, restored old theatres, and increased the number of bright LED signs. In 2009, roads along Broadway between 42nd and 47th Streets closed to make way for a pedestrian plaza. Now, the dazzling billboards and hustle and bustle of Times Square and Broadway are one of the most iconic elements of New York City, attracting over 300,000 people each day. *Guys and Dolls* gets it right—there is something exciting about this place!



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