Do you know the idiom ‘back to square one’?
Do you know what ‘back to square one’ means?

When we say ‘back to square one’ we mean back to the beginning to start again. We normally use this phrase to refer to starting again when our previous attempt has failed.

Another phrase that means the same thing is: ‘back to the drawing board’.
Origins: the story

There is some uncertainty about the origin of this phase, but one of the earliest references to it links it to the game of snakes and ladders, where if you land on a square with a snake on it you go backwards.

Some people believe the phase originated from games of hopscotch, however, where there is a clear first square that is returned to.

Others believe that it originates from radio commentaries of football matches. Early commentaries divided the field into eight rectangles that were called squares so that they could clearly describe which of the ‘squares’ the ball was in for the listeners.
Examples

1. If we cannot reach an agreement today, I fear we’ll be back to square one.

2. The council had spent a year repairing roads and fences, but the most recent storm took them back to square one.
Consider

• When have you had to go back to square one?

• Why did you go back to square one?
• How did you feel about going back to square one?

• When might it be useful to go back to square one?
• Are there any times that we should avoid going ‘back to square one’?