



The Hudson Museum's **Games Day Book**

Beginning in 1991, the Hudson Museum offered an annual Games Day program. Hundreds of school children, some of whom returned year after year, played games from Native North America and around the world featured in this Games Day booklet. Each year we added some new games to our repertoire, while keeping others which appeared to be especially liked by the children. Some games were described in books or magazines. Others were taught to us by interested friends of the Museum. You will find their names included in the various game descriptions.

This booklet contains a selection of the games we played and enjoyed together. The work of Linda DiBiase, who helped us create game packets for several years, and Eljo Dassen, who learned our games and then described them back to us, is gratefully acknowledged.

We hope that you, too, will have fun playing these games.

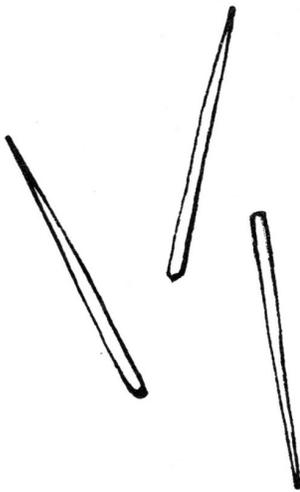
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This booklet was updated and digitized in
2021.

Two Games to Start a Game

Guessing the Number of Sticks:

Each player gets 3 small sticks (toothpicks, twigs). Holding the sticks in their right hands, they try to transfer some of the sticks to a back pocket or into their left hands without being seen. When this is done, the players bring their hands back into the middle of the group and each has to guess the total amount of sticks that are in all the hands together. The one that guesses the correct number is the one that begins the game. If nobody guesses correctly, players do it again.



“One, Two, Three - Hup!”

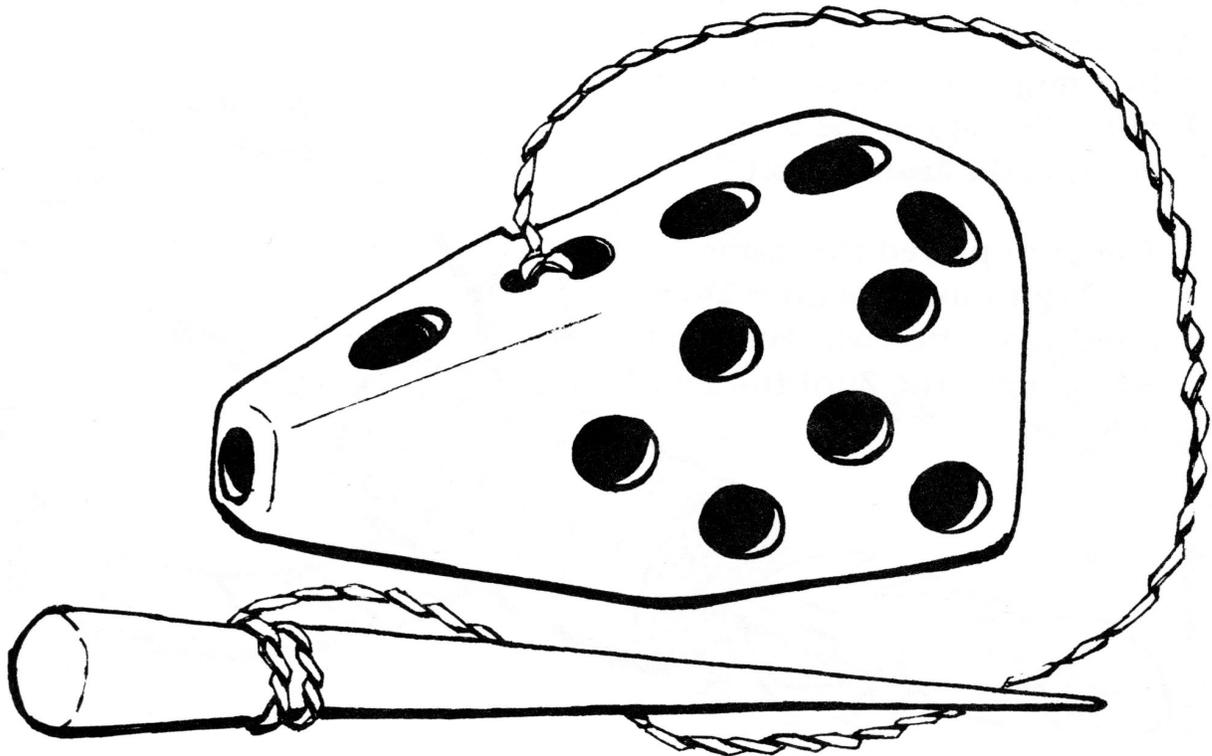
All players stand facing each other and place their right hands, palms down, on top of each other. They chant “One, two, three, - hup!” moving their hands up and down on each count. On “hup” they break their hands free from the pile and place them palm up or down on their knees. The player with the unmatched hand (palm up or down) is the winner. If there is no unmatched hand, the game is repeated.



Ajegaung Inuit

Ring-and-pin games are played by peoples throughout the world. The game involves spearing a target with a pin attached to it by a length of twine or leather. This particular variation was played by the Inuit using natural materials found in their environment for the game equipment - small animal skulls or drilled pieces of ivory for the target, pieces of bone or antler for the pin.

To play: Holding onto the pin, toss the target into the air and try to catch it on the pin. Inuit players played to put the pin in the target 10 times in a row. After that, they player put the pin in the target in a particular order of holes. A player's turn was over after two misses.



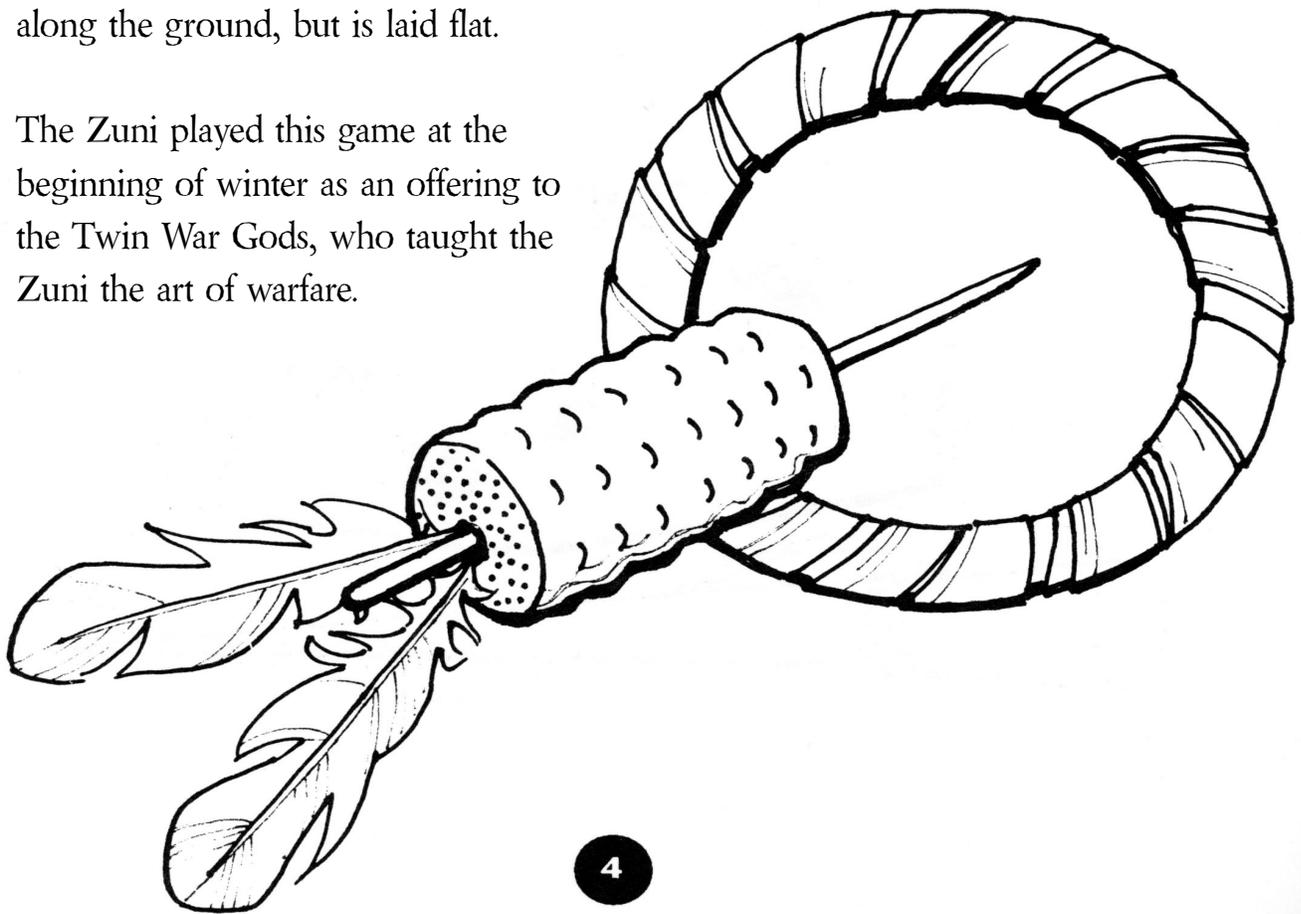
Corncob Darts

Zuni

Games played by Native Americans provided not only fun, but often used skills essential for hunting or warfare. Games like this offered a chance to practice and improve these skills. A very popular game was one where the player attempted to throw an arrow or spear through a rolling hoop target. Equipment was made from natural materials as in this game which uses feather-tipped corncobs for darts and targets made of cornhusks or yucca leaves. The ring target in corncob darts is not rolled along the ground, but is laid flat.

The Zuni played this game at the beginning of winter as an offering to the Twin War Gods, who taught the Zuni the art of warfare.

To play: Make a pit of sand, soft dirt, or grass. Place the target - a ball of leaves or a ring made from braided cornhusks - in the pit. Mark a line on the ground which is 10 feet from the pit. The player stands behind this line and throws the corncob dart at the target. If the dart sticks in the ball or lands inside the ring, you score one point. However, if the other player also hits, neither one scores. The first person that gets 25 points wins the game.



Ring Toss

England

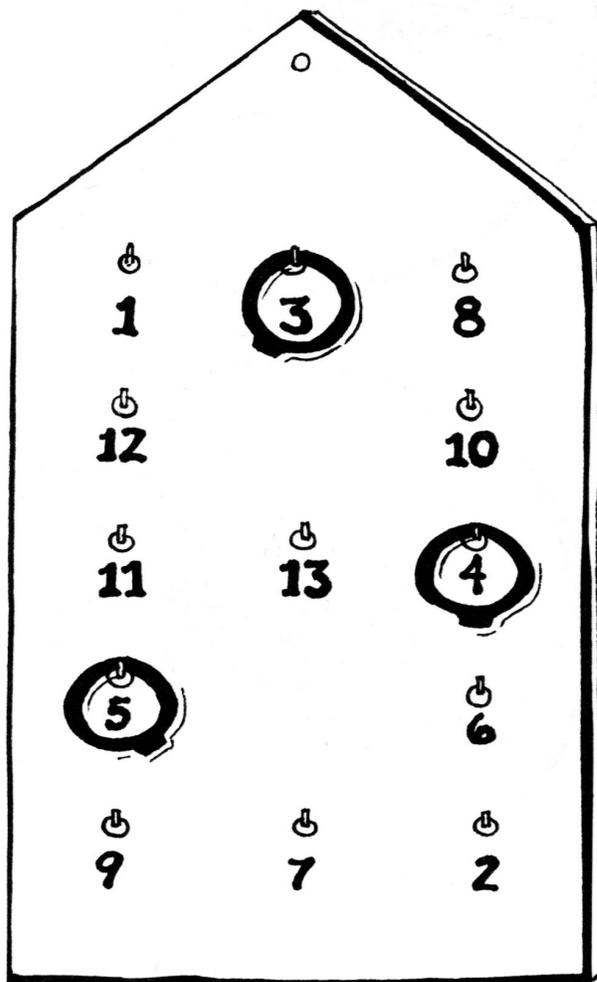
In times past, especially in small villages and rural settings, a pub (short for public house) was a gathering place, often for whole families. Hot meals could be purchased and good times were had with friends and neighbors talking, singing, and playing games. Ring toss was the primary pub game in England until dart boards became popular.

Game equipment consists of a board with 13 hooks, similar to the one shown here, and 13 rings. Rubber canning jar rings work well.

This version of ring toss comes from Lancashire, England, and is called Twice 'Round the Board. The goal is to ring the numbers in sequence, one to thirteen, and then do it again. Variations of the game can be enjoyed by making your own rules.

To play: Players take turns throwing 3 rings each. If a ring falls on the floor, it may not be thrown again.

Each hook is worth points equal to the number beneath it. The player with the highest score after 12 throws is the winner.



Feather Race

Mexico

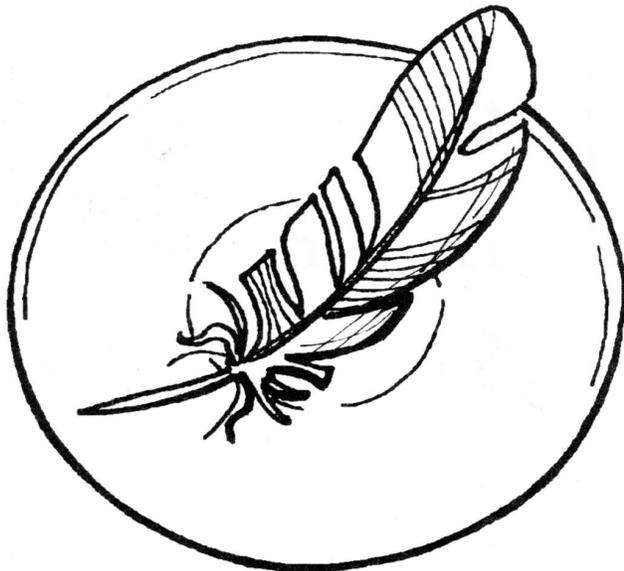
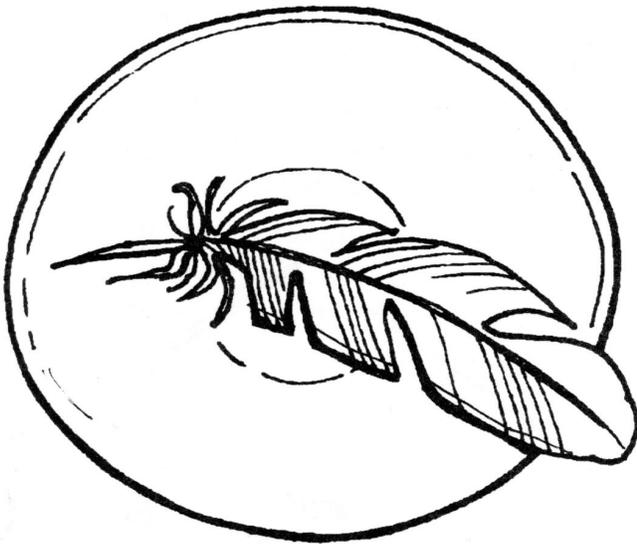
A simple relay game in which you use a colorful tropical bird's feather and a flat plate.

To play: Placing the feather (*la pluma*) on a plate (*el plato*), the player tries to keep the feather on the plate as they run a predetermined course.

The player is not allowed to touch the feather with their hands, except if it should drop to the floor. If the feather does blow off the plate and lands on the floor, the player must return to the beginning of the course and try again.

When the player gets to the end of the course, they place the plate on the floor where a teammate picks it up and runs back to the starting line. The next players do the same.

The teams can be any number of players as long as they are equal. If there are an odd number of players, one player can run twice. The team that finishes its task first is the winner.



Hoowats (Walnut Shell Game)

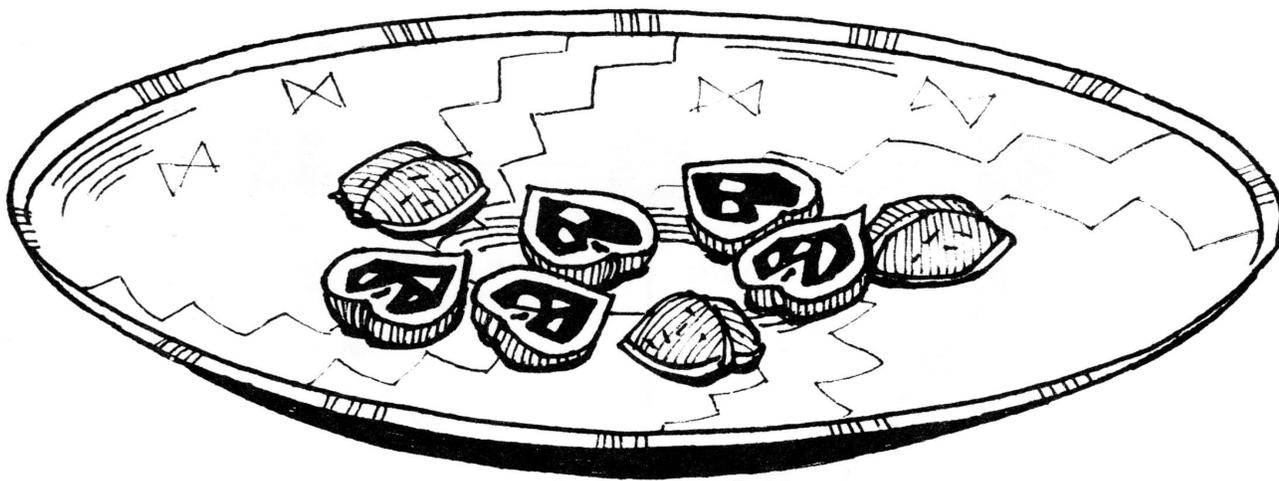
Paiute

This game of luck was played by Native Americans who lived in California, Nevada, and Oregon. Using walnut halves filled with a combination of pine pitch and powdered charcoal and inlaid with beads and bits of abalone shell, people gambled upon the outcome of each toss of the shells.

You can make your own equipment by filling walnut shell halves with clay or glue and sprinkling some small beads or bits of shiny shell over the clay while it is damp and soft. Use a flat basket tray to hold the shells.

To play: Place eight shell halves in the basket or tray. One player tosses them into the air and catches them in the basket again. When three or five shells land with the flat side up, the player scores one point. If any other number of shells land flat side up, there is no score.

Decide at the beginning how many throws each player will get. You can use pebbles or beans as counters to keep score. The player with the highest score at the end wins.

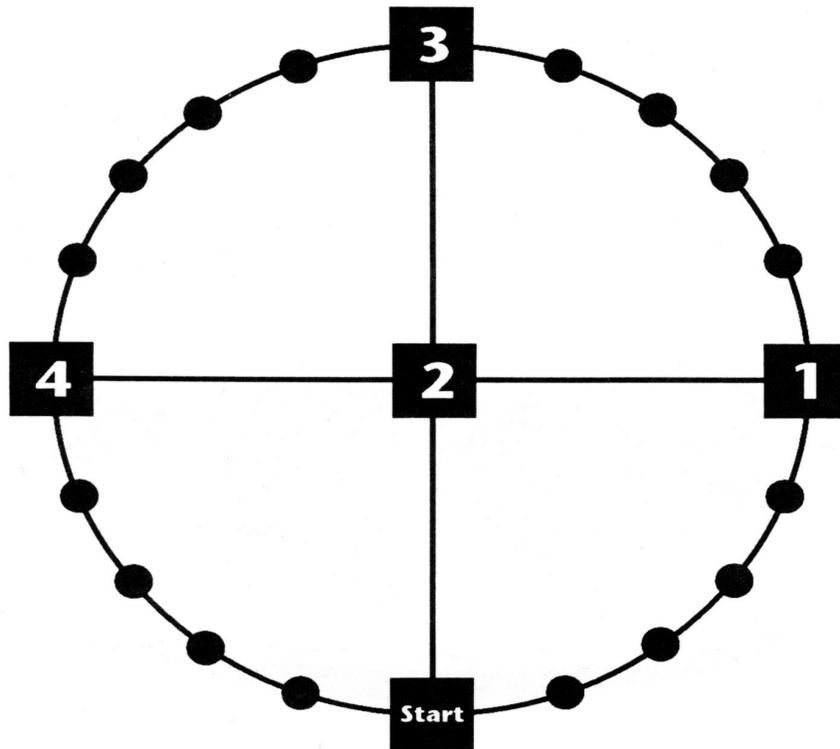
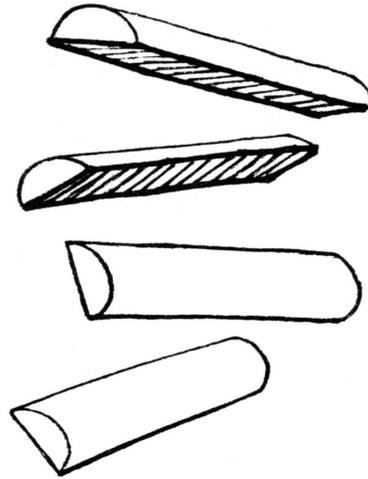


Yoot

Korea

Yoot is one of the most popular games of chance in Korea. It is played enthusiastically by children and grownups alike.

The game board can be drawn on a sheet of heavy paper. A set of four sticks with brightly colored designs is used to determine player's moves. Each of the sticks has one flat and one rounded side. Tokens are stones, chips, whatever - but must be identifiable to two to four players.



To play: In turn, players toss the sticks onto the board, moving their tokens according to the following results:

- All sticks land flat side up = 5 spaces
- All round sides up = 4 spaces and take another turn
- Three round sides up = 3 spaces
- Two round sides up = 2 spaces
- One round side up = 1 space

Play is counterclockwise. The object of the game is to return to Start as soon as possible. The first player puts their token on the Start and tosses the sticks. If they land on Station One using the number of spaces thrown, they are allowed to take the short route back to Start by making a left turn. If on the next play they land on Station Two, they again may turn left and move toward Start.

The exact number of spaces is needed to land on a Station. If more spaces are thrown than needed, the player may not take a short cut, but must continue around the circle.

If the player's throw produced more than enough moves to get to Station One, they must proceed to Station Three. If they land on Station Three, they can go directly toward Start by way of Station Two. If they pass Station Three, they go on toward Station Four and from there on to Start.

If a player lands on a space already occupied by another player, the first player must return to Start and begin again, regardless of where they are at the time they are overtaken.

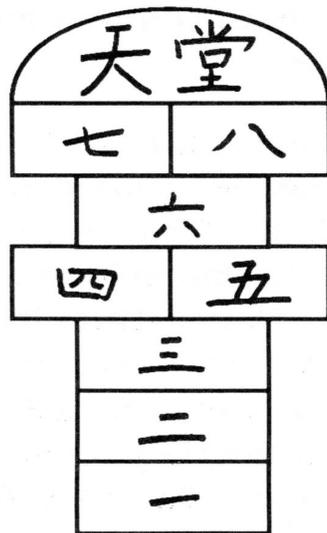
The first player to make it back to the Start wins.

Hopscotch

China

Many different kinds of hopscotch are played in countries around the world. The basic rules are similar wherever it is played.

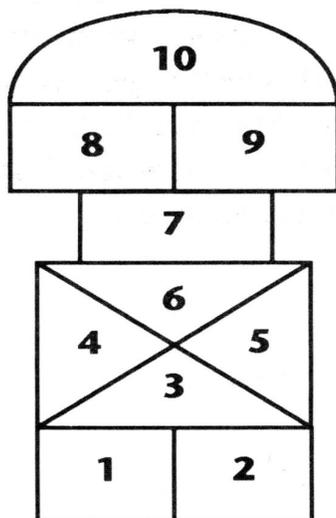
To play: A player tosses a stone, or other small, flat marker into the boxes in numerical order. If the marker stays in the correct box, the player hops on one foot through the other boxes, picking it up on the return trip. If the player misses the box, or falls down while hopping, the turn is forfeited and the next player takes a turn.



Chinese

In China the boxes are numbered one to eight. The final box at the top is called “Heaven.”

The game is played as described above, except that after getting to “Heaven,” the player stops, continues to face forward and throws their marker over their shoulder. The player gets the number of points in the square where the marker lands. Play continues until a player gets a total of 50 points.



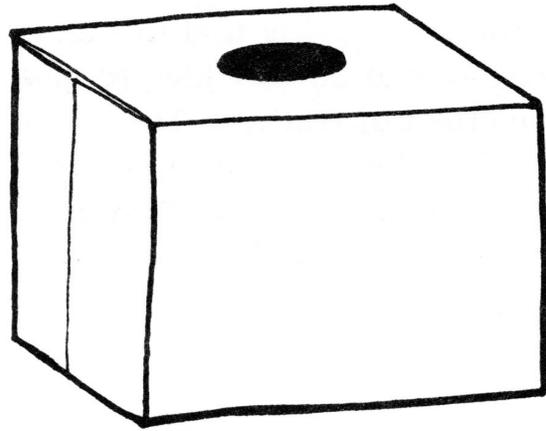
United States

Woodpecker Woodland Areas

This game is adapted from a free play activity observed by author Allan Macfarlan while researching Native American games in the 1950s. He watched children throwing pine cones into a small hole in a tree. The hole was only about two inches in diameter and about 15 feet from the ground. Standing about six to eight feet from the tree, the boys and girls threw the cones overhand, hard and fast. They said the pine cones were woodpeckers flying into the nest. The first child who got nine cones into the nest “counted coup.”

You can play this game without the tree. Make the woodpecker’s nest by cutting a hole about 2 1/2 to 3 inches in diameter in the lid of a strong cardboard box. A box from 12 to 24 inches square will do. Hang the box high off the ground on a wall, a post, or maybe, a tree. Rubber or paper balls can substitute for pine cones, if necessary, but make sure they fit through the hole.

To play: Players stand behind a line about ten feet away from the “tree trunk.” They throw the pine cones (or balls) overhand. The first player to put six in the box is the winner.



Jianzi: A Kicking Toy

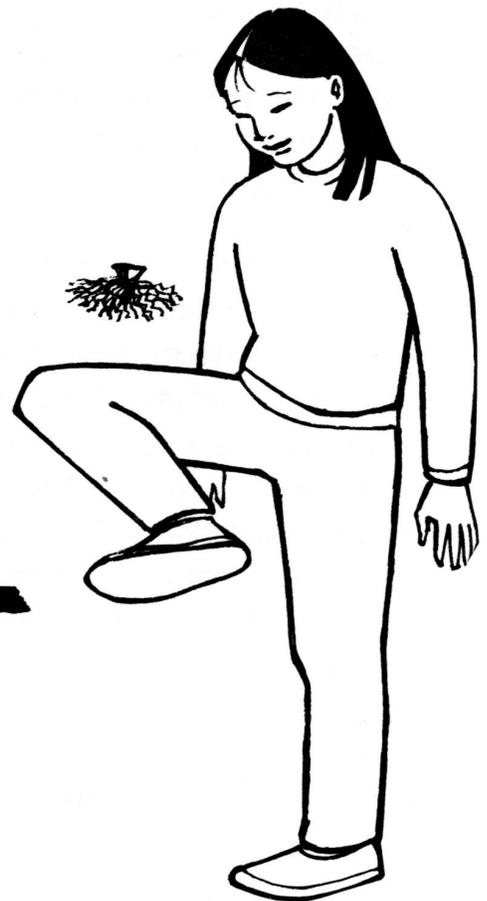
China

Jianzi means “shuttlecock.” Originally jianzi were made from chicken feathers. In cities, children often make the toy with a metal washer and plastic twine which is used to bundle purchases in stores. The twine, after being tied to the washer, can be shredded to give the effect of feathers. The children love to play this game during recess at school. After sitting in a cold classroom in the winter, this game quickly warms up the players.

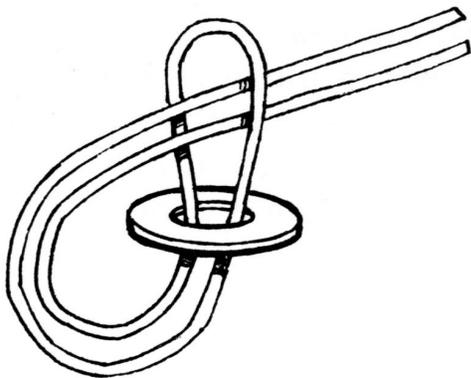
Wang Lu and Mei Bing, formerly from Nanjing, China, helped the children make the toys and play this game in 1992.

You can use plastic raffia, purchased at a craft shop, or strips of a plastic bag to make your jianzi. The more strips tied onto the washer, the better the effect.

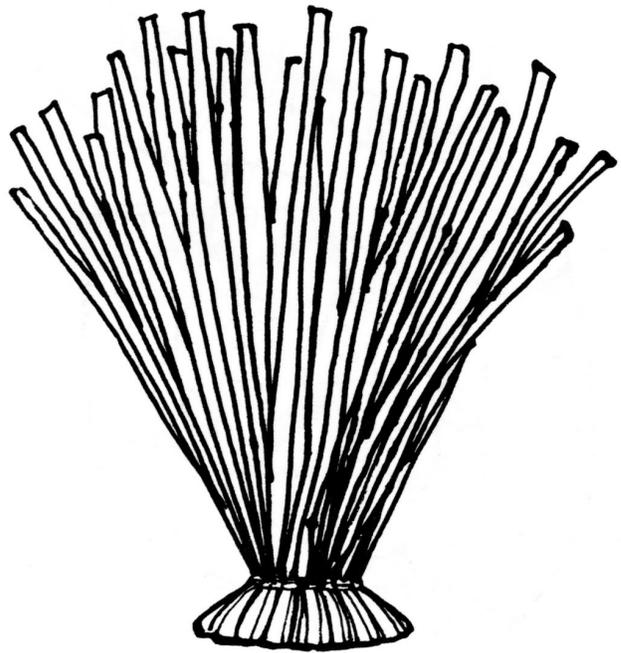
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To make: Cut the raffia or plastic bag strips to about 8 inches long. Fold in half. Feed the doubled end through the hold of the washer, put the loose ends through the loop and pull tight so the ends stand up straight (perpendicular to the washer). Attach at least 20 loops to the washer. More loops make it even better.



To play: The toy should be tossed close to the body. When kicking the toy, the feet should also be bent close to the thighs. Quick kicks close to the body keep the toy in the air. The object of the game is to keep it in the air for as long as possible, counting the number of kicks. If it drops to the ground, the next person takes a turn, with each trying to get the highest number of kicks. 100 kicks in a minute is a great score.



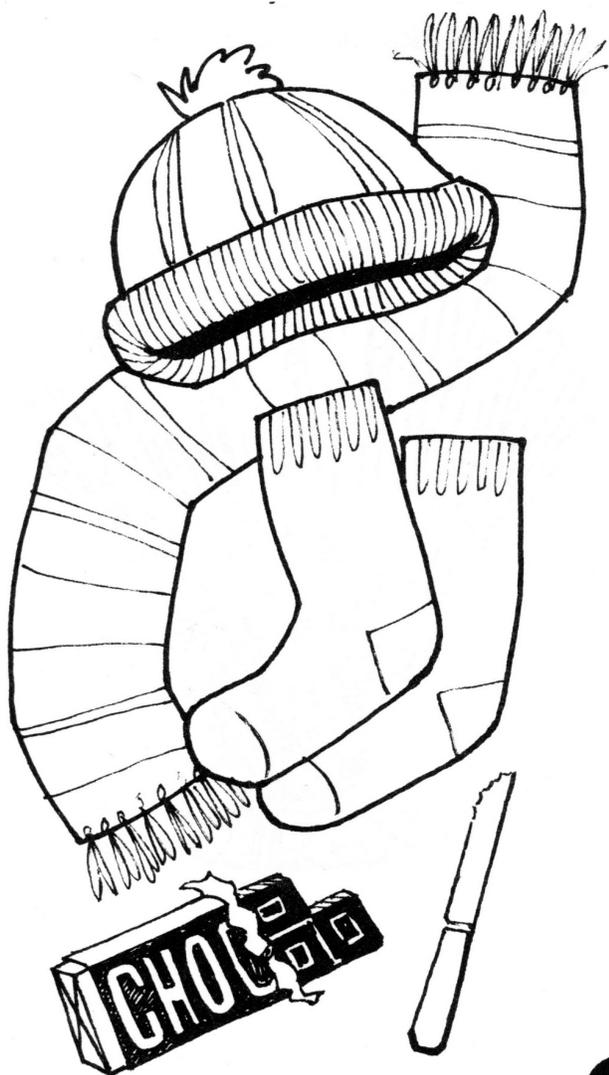
The Chocolate Eating Game

Germany

There are so many different and delightful sweets - chocolate tortes, chocolate candies, and the famous Black Forest cake - in Germany, that it is only natural that a game for chocolate lovers comes from this country. We thank Katie Greenman from Old Town who taught us this game on Games Day 1992.

To play: Players sit in a circle. In the center of the circle, on a plate, is a wrapped chocolate bar. One at a time and in order around the circle, players roll a die. If a six is rolled, the player puts on a hat, a scarf, and - on their hands! - a pair of socks. Then, with a knife, they try to cut the chocolate bar.

At the same time, the other players continue to roll the die. If someone rolls a six, the first player has to hand over the hat, scarf, socks, and knife to this person. Now the new person can try to open the chocolate bar. When a player is successful in opening the bar, they can start eating the chocolate bar one square at a time until the next player throws a six. The game continues until the chocolate is gone.



Stick Game

Canada's First Nations

In the Blood Reserve (Alberta, Canada) a game was played with three flat bone strips. Two different designs were etched on them. One was called the “man;” it was plain on one side and had dots on the other. Two others had zigzag designs on one side and were plain on the other side. They were called the “snakes.”

Stewart Culin (1869) reported the following information on the game which he learned from a Dr. George A. Dorsey: “I am informed that the Bloods generally use three instead of four bones. They call the games *nit sitai epsktpsepinan*. The stick marked with holes is called ‘man’ and the other two ‘snakes.’”

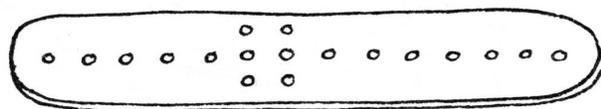
You can use 3 flat popsicle sticks instead of bone staves. On two of them draw a zigzag line on one side. Leave the other side plain. On the third stick make a design that looks like this:

To play: Hold all three sticks in both hands and toss them in the air.

The patterns in which they fall are scored in different ways.

- All plain sides face up = 4 points
- All marked sides up = 4 points
- Two snakes and one plain = 6 points
- Two plain and one snake = 6 points
- One plain, one snake, one man = 0 points

Play continues until someone reaches 50 points.



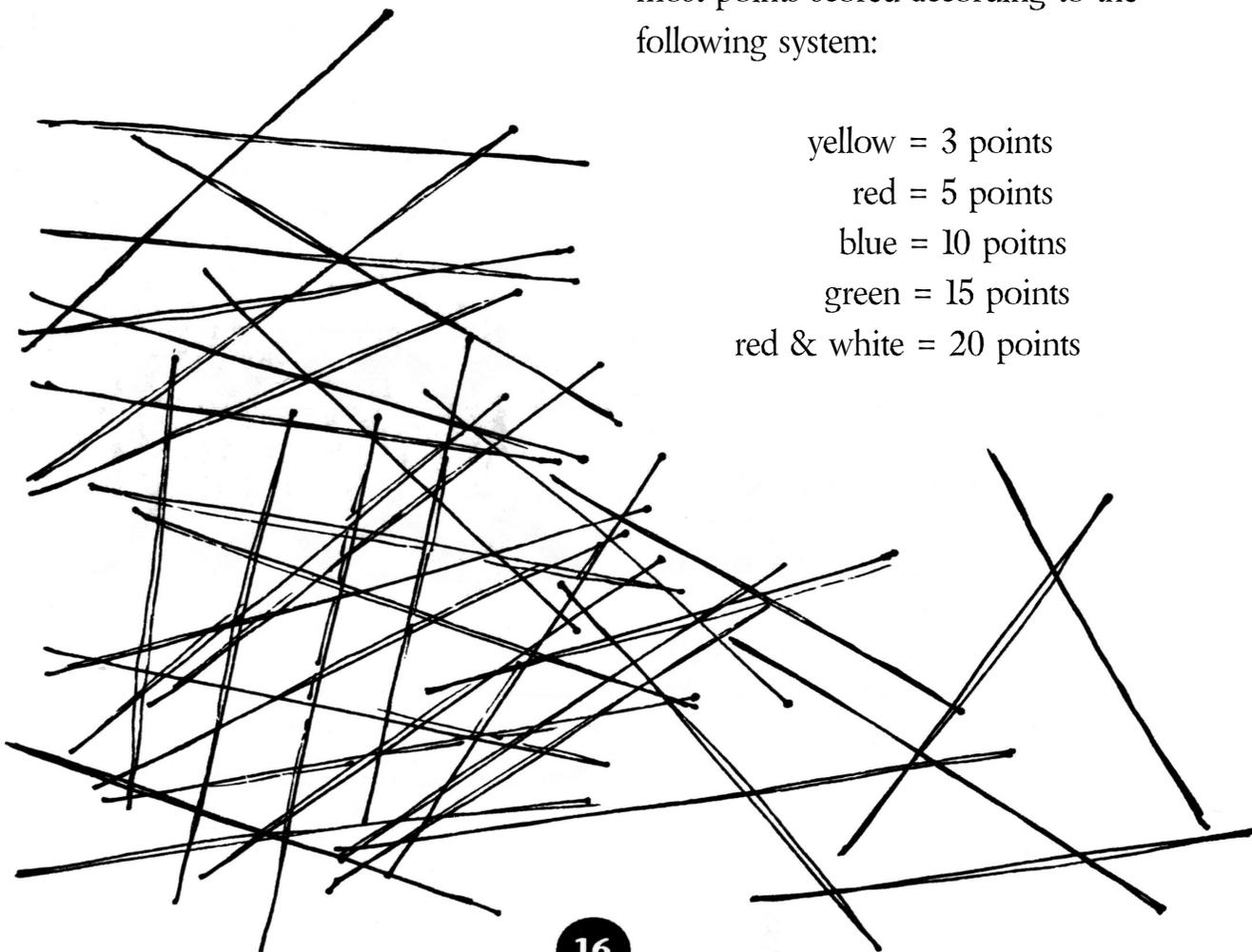
Mikado

Netherlands

This game is a version of jackstraws. Eljo Dassen, our (1994) Museum intern from Maastrich, noted that this game is called Mikado in the Netherlands. Use a bundle of at least 50 various colored sticks, or buy the round containers of jackstraws available in many stores. You need the following combination of colors: 25 yellow; 15 red; 5 blue; 3 green; and 2 red-and-white striped sticks.

To play: One player mixes the colors thoroughly, then takes the entire bunch and, holding them just above the tabletop, drops them so that they land on the table in a random pile. Around the table in turn, players try to pick up the jackstraws without moving any others. If a player touches or moves a stick that they were not intending to pick up, the turn is over. The winner is the person with the most points scored according to the following system:

yellow = 3 points
red = 5 points
blue = 10 points
green = 15 points
red & white = 20 points



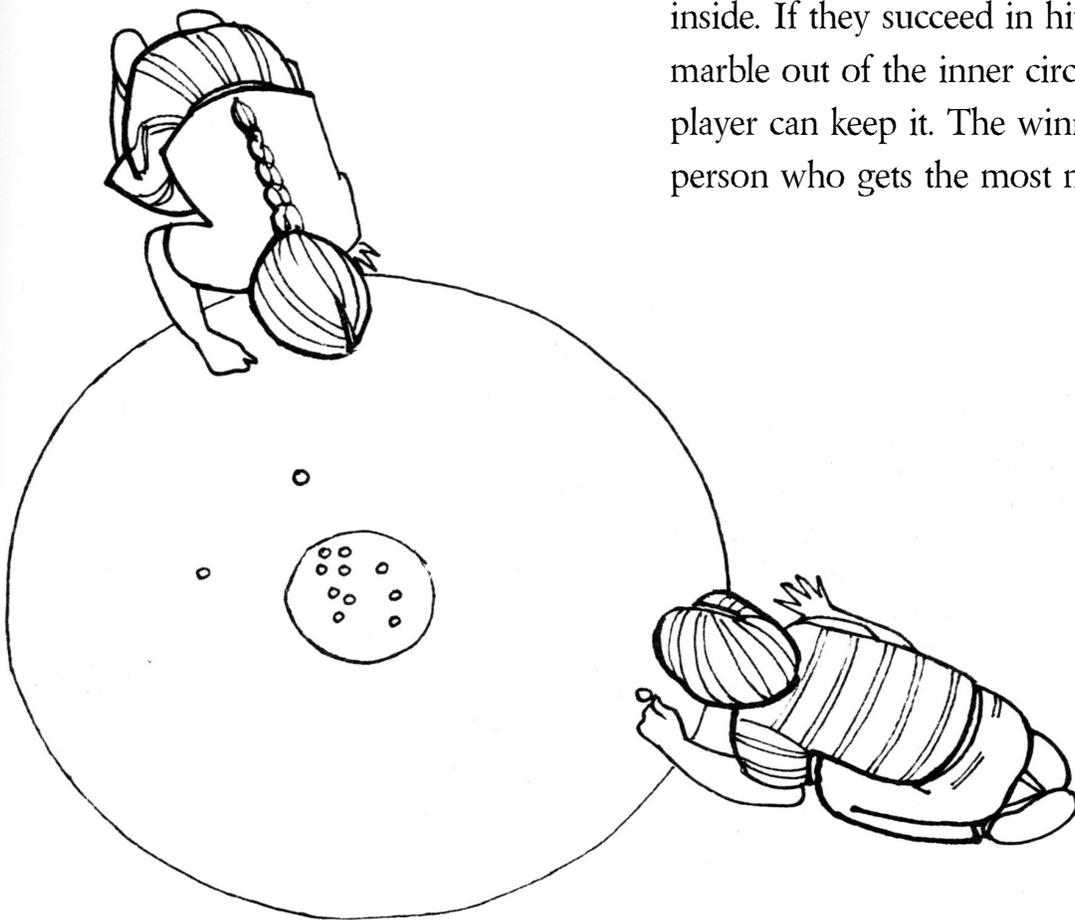
Marbles

United States

Marble games have a very long history. Marbles games were played in ancient Egypt and in pre-Christian Rome. Centuries after that historians note that marbles were popular in Germany, which became a world center of the marble trade. In the beginning, the little balls were made from real marble stone. Later they were made from fired clay and glass.

To play: Draw two circles, one inside the other. The inside circle should be about 12 inches in diameter, the outside circle about 6 feet across.

All players place the same amount of marbles in the middle circle. Kneeling outside the big circle, a player rests their hand on the ground, and, using their thumb to propel it, shoots a marble (usually larger in size and called a “Shooter”) at the others inside. If they succeed in hitting a marble out of the inner circle, the player can keep it. The winner is the person who gets the most marbles.



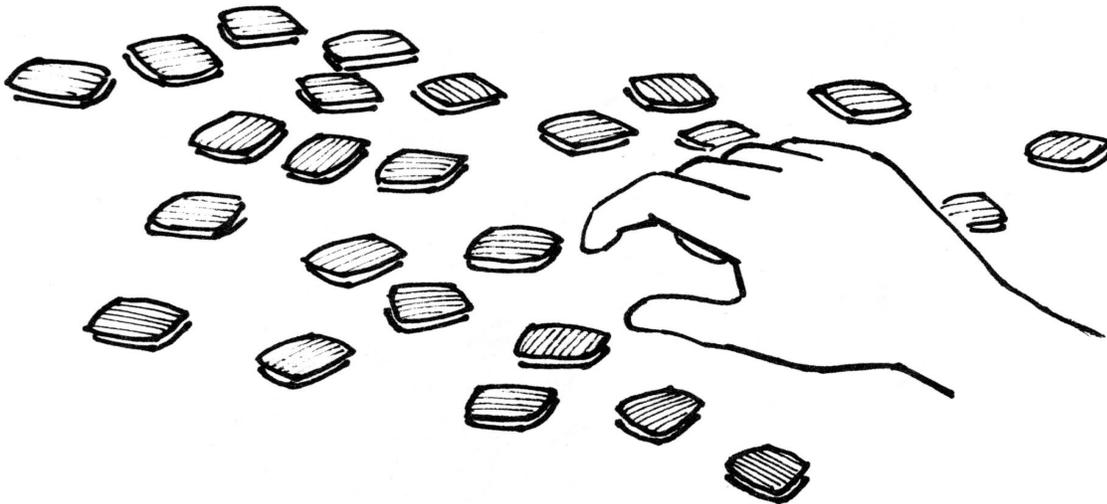
Hajiki

Japan

We learned this game from Kathy Schilmoeller of Orono who joined us for Games Day 1991 and 1992.

Some people describe this game as a combination of marbles and jacks. You will need a careful eye and very quick fingers because the object of the game is to “bump” the others out of the game. Game equipment consists of a bag of flat glass pieces.

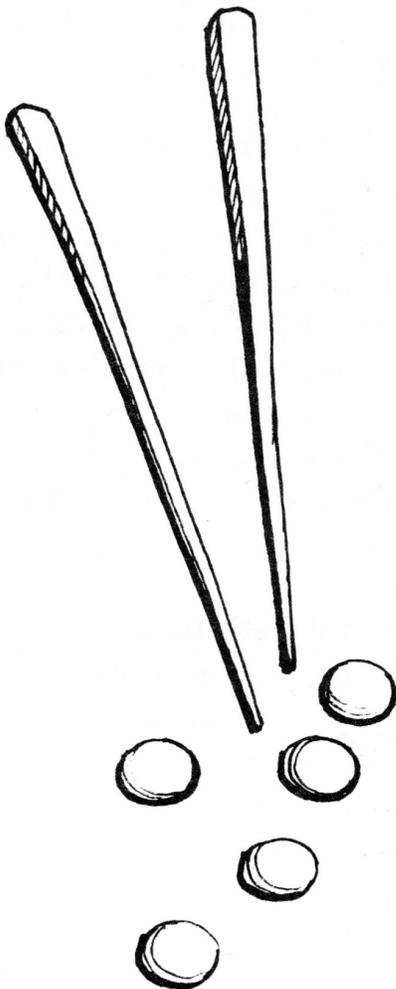
To play: Place about twenty pieces on a tabletop. Find a place where you can put your finger between the pieces without touching any of them. Choose a free piece and “bump” it with your finger and try to hit only one other piece with it. When a player succeeds and only hits only one, then they may keep the piece. If the shooter hits more than one piece, it is a miss. The goal is to gather more pieces than your opponent.



Pick Up Race

China

For each player, you need one pair of chopsticks and two bowls. Place the bowls eight or ten feet apart and put four or five marbles in one of the two bowls. If you are playing this game for the first time, it might be a good idea to start with something easier to carry like marshmallows, popcorn, or nuts.



To play: At a signal, players pick up the marbles with the chopsticks and bring them to the other side of the room, leaving them in the other bowl. The one who brings all the marbles from one bowl to the other first is the winner.

When there are many players, this game can be made into a relay race. More marbles may have to be placed into the bowls.

Rules:

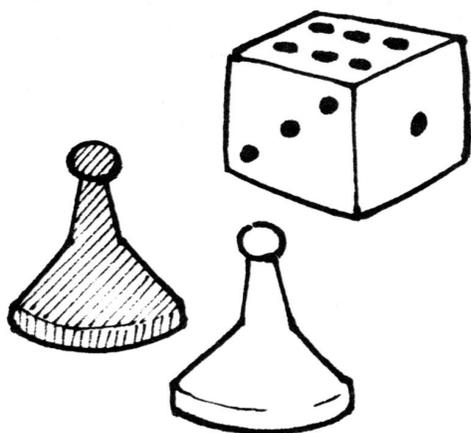
1. The marbles must be picked up one at a time.
2. Players are not allowed to touch the marbles with their hands.
3. If a marble falls on the floor, the player has to go back and start over again.

Hyena Chase

North Africa

This is a game about the risks in everyday life in North Africa. In the countryside there are wild animals, such as hyenas, and sometimes it can happen that an animal might chase, or even hurt a person. (The hyena native to North Africa is a small predatory scavenger. It has yellow-gray fur with black stripes.)

In this game, the goal is not to be caught by the hyena. Each player has one token that represents “mother.” An additional token represents a hyena. The goal of the game is to get mother safely to the well and back. The first player to do so is the winner and may use the hyena to chase the remaining mothers.



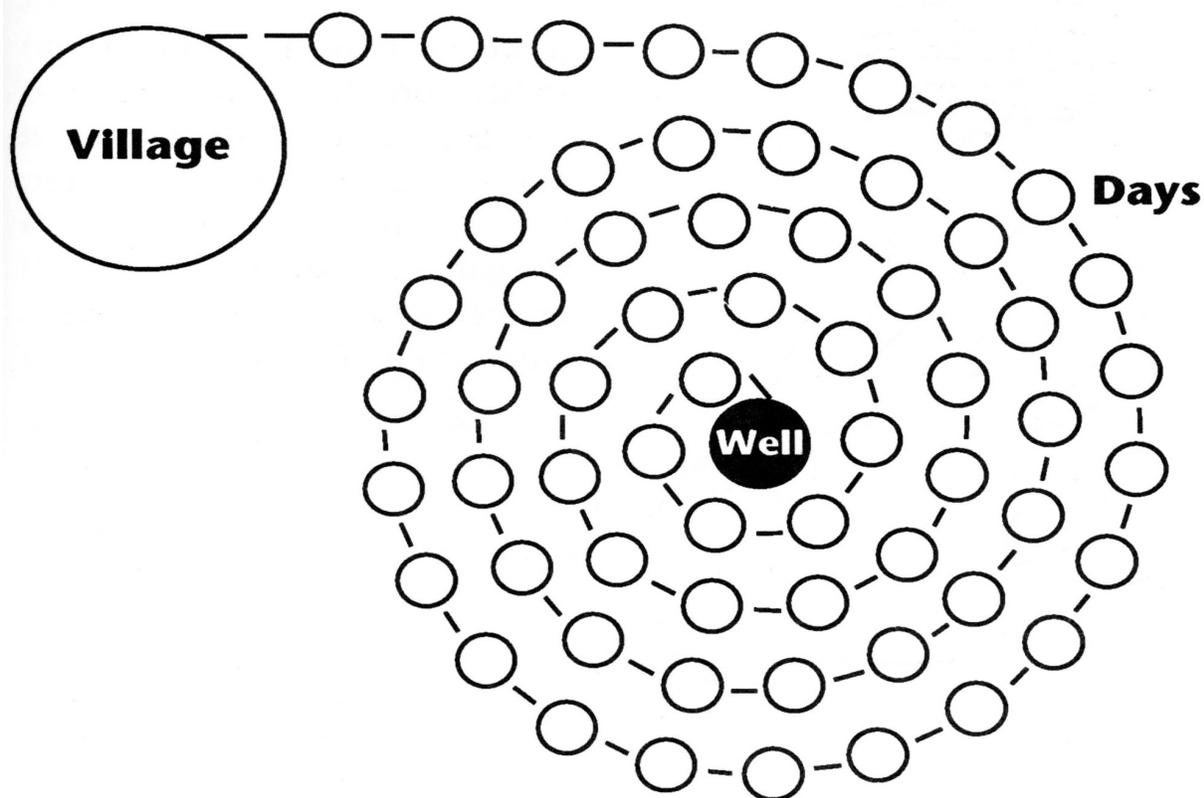
To play: Draw a board with a large circle to represent the village, and a spiral of dots leading to a central well. The dots represent the days that mother has to travel to get to the well and back. Players take turn throwing a die. Before their mother can leave the village a player has to throw a six on the die. This first six will place mother on the first dot outside the village. After this, if a six is thrown during mother’s journey, the player can throw the die again. If yet another six is thrown, the player is allowed to throw a third time.

Two mothers may arrive on the same “day” at the same time. When mother finally nears the well, the player must roll the exact amount of days needed to end up at the well. If more than the necessary number of days is rolled on the die, the player will have to wait for the next turn.

Once at the well, mother has to wash her clothes until the player throws a six and then she can begin her return journey to the village.

The first one to arrive back at the village is the winner and is awarded the hyena counter. (Arriving back at the village, it is not necessary to throw the exact amount needed to go into the village.) The game continues with the winning player moving the hyena and the remaining mothers trying to make it back to the village.

The hyena also needs a six to leave the village, but it travels at twice the speed of the mothers, so it makes double the amount of moves on the die. As it approaches the well, it will also need the exact amount to get to there. If it wants to leave the well, it will need a six. If on its journey back to the village, the hyena overtakes a mother, it captures her and the token is taken off the board.

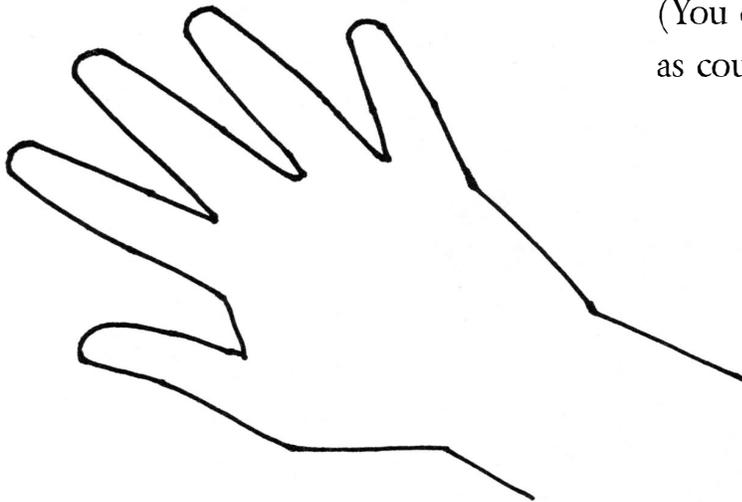
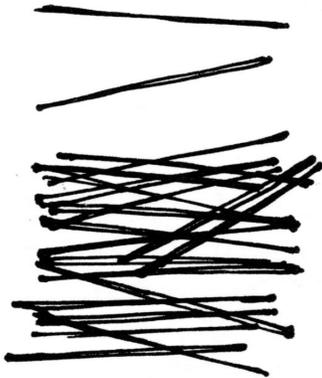


Jackstraws

Alaskan Native

This game was played by Alaskan Natives living near the Bering Strait, Alaska, in the late 19th century. Our version is based on an American Bureau of Ethnology report.

To play: Place about 50 small sticks between 3 and 4 inches long (you can use toothpicks) in a pile crosswise on the back of the player's right hand. The player quickly removes their hand and attempts to catch between thumb and fingers as many of the "jackstraws" as possible while they are still in the air. The player must keep their palm downward.



Each jackstraw dropped to the floor is counted as a miss. Each successful catch entitles the player to a counter. The player with the most counters when the game ends is the winner. (You can use pebbles or wood chips as counters.)

Piñata

Spain, Latin America

“It’s not a party in Peru without a piñata,” says Maria Del Carmen Sandweiss. She treated children to hours of fun on Games Day 1994. With music and great excitement, they tried to break the piñatas. The word piñata comes from the Spanish *apinar*, meaning to bind up in a bundle. Piñatas have many shapes and designs, from donkeys to caricatures of popular figures. The basic shape is formed by a balloon (or a clay pot in Mexico) and papier-mâché which, when dry, is covered with colorful crepe paper. The balloon is then deflated and removed from the hardened papier-mâché shell, and it is stuffed with treats.

To play: Beginning with the youngest, each player is blindfolded, turned three times, given a stick, and told to “Hit it hard!” A special song is sung for each child as they try to hit the piñata, which is pulled in and out of range. (Small children are often not even blindfolded.) Both young and old can play, but at least one adult is needed to pull the rope suspending the piñata. Once the piñata is broken, all the children rush to get the treats which have fallen to the floor.



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