

Traditional Games with a New Twist

NJEA Convention Presentation, November 2005

1. Marbles

(From eHow web site games page < http://www.ehow.com/list_1044.html >)

Although most of us think of marbles as an old-fashioned pastime, the game is still fun for kids of all ages and is played around the globe. There are many variations; this is just one.

Need: marbles, string/chalk, and large hoop.

Steps:

1. Draw a circle 2 to 3 feet wide. Use chalk on asphalt or concrete, a stick in dirt, or a string on carpet or tile.
2. Select your shooter and place any marbles you wish to play with as targets inside the circle; the other players do the same. Shooters are designated marbles used to knock targets out of the ring. Your shooter should be larger than the other marbles so it's powerful enough to do its job. It should also look different from other marbles so you can distinguish it from them easily.
3. Take your turn when the time comes by shooting your marble from outside the ring at any marble or marbles inside the ring. Shoot by kneeling on the ground and flicking your marble out of your fist with your thumb.
4. Gather any marbles you've knocked out of the ring.
5. Shoot again if you knocked any marbles out of the ring. Let the next player shoot if you haven't knocked any marbles out and/or your shooter remains in the ring.
6. Continue shooting in turn until the ring is empty.
7. Count your marbles at the end of the game. The winner is the player with the most marbles.
8. Return the marbles to their original owners unless you're playing 'keepsies.' In that case, each player keeps the marbles he or she won during the game.

Tips:

These are the rules for a version of 'ring law' marbles, an older, more common variant. There are many other ways to play.

A large hoop can be set around the smaller chalk/string circle to prevent marbles escaping on a hard or wood floor.

One way to decide playing order is called 'lagging.' The players line up opposite a line 10 feet away (the 'lag line') and shoot their marbles at it. The player whose marble ends up closest to the line goes first, the next closest goes second, and so on.

2. Mathematical Marbles

Played in a similar fashion to traditional marbles. Works on addition and subtraction

Equipment needed: Same as regular marbles, except with many marbles of each of 3 different colors.

Steps:

1. Use the same circle as in Ring Taw (above), including having a shooter. Have marbles of three different colors in the middle. Have one color worth 1 point, another worth 2 points, and the third worth 5 points.
2. Select a target number (Say, 21). The object is to get that exact number by knocking out selected marbles
3. The winner is the first person to collect 21 points. It must be exact.
4. If a shooter goes over 21, they now have to **subtract** the number value of marbles they knock out
5. If they miss 21 by subtracting, they begin to add again. The number value of the marbles must add up to 21

Large Motor Variation:

Equipment needed: Whiffle or tennis balls, large hoop

Play with retired tennis balls or whiffle balls. For the tennis balls, put an "S" on the shooter, and the numbers 1, 2 and 5 on the other). For the whiffle balls, use colors again. Use a hoop for the ring.

3. Jacks

(From the eHow web site games page < http://www.ehow.com/list_1044.html >)

“True classics never die, and this childhood game doesn't require much to keep it thriving: a little bouncy ball, at least 10 jacks, and a hard, level playing surface.”

Equipment needed: Set of metal jacks or larger plastic jack set (Can be found at toy stores).

Steps:

1. Sit on the ground (blacktop, sidewalk or floor) unless you're playing on a table, in which case standing is usually better than sitting on a chair.
2. Toss the 10 jacks gently out onto the playing surface.
3. Toss the ball into the air with your throwing hand.
4. While the ball is in the air, pick up 1 jack using only your throwing hand.
5. Catch the ball in your throwing hand before the ball hits the ground.
6. Repeat steps 3, 4 and 5 until you've picked up all 10 jacks.
7. Toss the 10 jacks out onto the playing surface again.
8. Toss the ball into the air, and now pick up 2 jacks each time and catch the ball before it hits the ground.
9. Continue tossing the ball, picking up jacks and catching the ball - increasing the number of jacks you pick up when the ball is in the air until you pick up all 10 at one time. (Image 4)
10. It's the other player's turn when you don't pick up the correct number of jacks or you miss the ball.
11. Begin where you left off when it's your turn again. If you were picking up 3 jacks at a time, toss the 10 jacks onto the playing surface and pick up 3 each time.
12. Declare a winner if you want to when you or your friend succeeds at 'onesies' through 'tensies' (1 jack through 10 jacks).

Tips:

Another way to play is to bounce the ball on the playing surface rather than throw it in the air, and try to pick up as many jacks as you can before the ball bounces again. A two bounce variation can be added for those experiencing difficulty.

There are ways to make the game more difficult, such as not touching jacks not being picked up and placing the jacks picked up in the other hand before catching the ball.

4. Geographical Jacks

Played the same way as Jacks, but with a geography “passport” question after each set or if the jacks player makes a miss. Works on social studies (geography) facts.

Equipment needed: Set of metal jacks or larger plastic jack set, Geography fact/flash cards.*

Steps:

1. Use the same playing rules as regular Jacks, with the additional rules described below.
2. When getting to the end of each set (“onesies”, “twosies”, etc.), the player has to answer a geography question or fact on the card picked by their partner from the top of the pile
3. If the player gets the geography fact correct, they can continue to the next set. If they get it wrong, they lose their turn. Each time the card should be put to the bottom of the pile
4. If a player makes a miss in the middle of a set, they can try to answer a geography fact. This gives them another turn in the set if they answer correctly. If not, they lose their turn as normal. This can only be done once in any given set. * **Sample geography facts used:** *USA Fact Pack* state fact cards from *Learning Horizons*.
5. Repeat steps 3, 4 and 5 until picked up all 10 jacks are picked up or time is up.
7. Toss the 10 jacks out onto the playing surface again.
8. Winners can be declared if desired, based on number of jacks sets completed, and on number of Geography facts answered correctly (have pupils keep score of this on a pad).

5. Four Square

(From eHow web site games page < http://www.ehow.com/list_1044.html >)

Players take turns bouncing a ball into each other's squares in this game, which is a bit like tennis.

Steps:

1. Play this game with children ages six and up. Four people are needed to play, 6 or so is good.
2. Draw a large square with sides of at least four feet - use chalk on pavement or masking tape on carpet.
3. Divide the square into four equal squares and make a circle around the lines that meet in the center.
4. Number the squares one through four.
5. Use a bouncy ball about the size of a volleyball.
6. Place one player in or just behind each square.
7. Place the starter in square four.
8. Line up any additional players behind square one.
9. Serve the ball from square four by bouncing it in that square and then hitting it into another square. Players are fine if the ball lands in another square or if someone hits it before it bounces into a square.
10. A player should return the ball any time it bounces in their square. Hit it and bounce it into another square.
11. A player leaves their square and goes to the end of the line behind square one if the ball they hit goes outside the boundaries without bouncing or being touched.
12. A player goes to the end of the line if a ball bounces in their square and they can't hit it.
13. A player goes to the end of the line if a ball they hit lands in the circle in the center.
14. Move up as other players miss and have to go to the end of the line.
15. Develop strategies by learning to bounce the ball at the edge of the square so that it bounces and then goes out of the square.
16. Try putting a spin on the ball so that it bounces and then rebounds in the opposite direction.
17. Win the game by making it to the fourth square and staying there longer than anyone else.

6. Foreign Language Four Square

Same as four square, with the addition of using foreign language counting or study words. Works on basic world language skills.

Steps:

1. Play the same way as regular four square, but allow a 3 second catch (or appropriate time depending on language skills of pupils)
2. On each catch and throw/catch and hit, have the students count in French or Spanish. If they can only count to 10, have them start at one again.
3. Rules for going to the end of the line are the same as regular four square, with the addition of hesitating too long in saying the number or saying the wrong number.

Variation:

Add a tricky “think on your feet” element and have them say “buzz” every set number, say every third number (in English, this would be: “One, two, BUZZ, four, five, BUZZ”, etc.) This is really quite tricky, and it may be OK just to have them try it in English! However, if there are ELL pupils in the class, teach the class to count to 10 in their native language, and watch them shine when it is time to play the “Buzz word” version of the game! This can also be done in lining up the class for dismissal, as it can be hard enough without the four square rules!

7. Hopscotch

(Adapted from *Games Kids Play* website < www.gameskidsplay.net/games/other_games/ >)

Hopscotch is a great hopping game that can be played on a bare patch of ground or on a floor indoors. There are hundreds of variations of the diagram that can be drawn.

Use chalk to draw a hopscotch pattern on the ground or use masking/floor/electrical tape on a floor.

Equipment needed: Chalk, floor, sidewalk or driveway, rock/shell/button/bottle cap/bean bag

Play: Draw the layout with the chalk - 2 single squares, 1 double square, 1 single square, 1 double square, 1 single square. The squares can be numbered. Many different numbers of squares and patterns can be used. Each player has a marker such as a stone, beanbag, bottle cap, shell, button, etc.

Steps:

1. The first player stands behind the starting line to toss her or his marker in square 1. Hop over square 1 to square 2 and then continue hopping to square 8, turn around, and hop back again. Pause in square 2 to pick up the marker, hop in square 1, and out.
2. Continue by tossing the marker in square 2. All hopping is done on one foot unless the hopscotch design is such that two squares are side-by-side. Then two feet can be placed down with one in each square. A player must always hop over any square where a marker has been placed.
3. A player is out if the marker fails to land in the proper square, the hopper steps on a line, the hopper loses balance when bending over to pick up the marker and puts a second hand or foot down, the hopper goes into a square where a marker is, or if a player puts two feet down in a single box.
4. The player puts the marker in the square where he or she will resume playing on the next turn, and the next player begins.
5. A winner can be declared when they have been out and back with all squares covered

Tips:

Sometimes a dome-shaped "rest area" is added on one end of the hopscotch pattern where the player can rest for a second or two before hopping back through

8. Historical Hopscotch

Equipment needed: Chalk, floor, sidewalk or driveway, rock/shell/button/bottle cap/bean bag, and historical fact cards with a question on the front and answer on the back, based on what the class has been studying in social studies*. Works on social studies (history) facts.

Play: Use the same layout as regular hopscotch. Each player has a marker such as a stone, beanbag, bottle cap, shell, button, etc.

Steps:

1. The first player stands behind the starting line to toss her or his marker in square 1. Hop over square 1 to square 2 and then continue hopping to square 8, turn around, and hop back again. Pause in square 2 to pick up the marker, hop in square 1, and out.
2. Continue by tossing the stone in square 2. All hopping is done on one foot unless the hopscotch design is such that two squares are side-by-side. Then two feet can be placed down with one in each square. A player must always hop over any square where a marker has been placed.
3. A player is out if the marker fails to land in the proper square, the hopper steps on a line, the hopper loses balance when bending over to pick up the marker and puts a second hand or foot down, the hopper goes into a square where a marker is, or if a player puts two feet down in a single box.
4. Modifier to rule 3: the player is out **UNLESS** they get a "pass". A pass is gained when their partner asks them a history question and they get the answer correct. If the answer is not correct, their partner takes their turn. ***Sample history facts used:** *US Presidents Pocket Flash Cards* from *Trend Enterprises, Inc.*
5. The player puts the marker in the square where he or she will resume playing on the next turn, and the next player begins.
6. At the end of each successful out and back, the player again needs to answer a historical question correctly. If not, they lose their turn and their partner goes.
7. A winner can be declared in the same manner as regular hopscotch.

9. Penny Drop

(From eHow web site games page < http://www.ehow.com/how_8624_play-penny-drop.html >

Players must try to cover a quarter at the bottom of a bucket of water by dropping pennies.

Equipment needed: Lots of pennies, enough quarters for one for each bucket if using more than one, bucket(s), water.

Steps:

1. Fill a bucket with water.
2. Give the players pennies.
3. Place a quarter at the bottom of the bucket.
4. Tell the players that the winner is the person who drops the penny that covers up the last bit of the quarter.
5. Have players take turns dropping one penny at a time into the bucket. Players must not bend over while dropping pennies.
6. Remove the pennies and play again once the quarter is covered.
7. Give the winner a quarter or some pennies.

Tips:

Use a larger target if desired, but make sure it is flat.

Color the water to make the game more difficult or to match a party or holiday theme.

10. Penny Drop Prediction

Equipment needed: Lots of pennies, enough quarters for one for each bucket if using more than one, bucket(s), water.

Same rules as Penny Drop, but for this version, have groups work together to predict how many pennies it will take to cover the quarter. Encourage them to talk about strategies that might help them to cover the quarter, this time allowing them to drop the penny from lower (minimum of 1 foot from the surface), higher, on its edge, at a certain place on the surface, spinning, etc. Works on cooperative/processing skills and estimation skills.

11. Twister

See the rules to the Milton Bradley game, *Twister*®.

Equipment needed: Twister game, available in many toy and department stores.

12. Total Concentration Twister

Played using red, yellow, green and blue poly spots in a similar arrangement to the board game (a row of 5-6 of each color). Have a card with a picture of a bone with the correct anatomical name randomly placed under each poly spot, two of each bone. The purpose is to combine the rules of “Twister” and “Concentration” to collect bone pairs. The person collecting the most pairs wins. Helps review bones of the body discussed in health and physical education classes.

Equipment needed: *Twister* spinner, or similar spinner, 24 poly spots (6 each of red, green, yellow and blue), 24 or more cards with skeleton diagrams and a different bone identified on each diagram (two of each bone).

Steps:

1. Have a referee place the bone cards randomly, face up, under the poly spots. Have the referee spin the twister dial to begin the game.
2. Once the players hands and feet are on a poly spot, players may lift a spot with one hand and see what is under it.
3. After looking under the spot, the player chooses another poly to look under using the same hand. If the bone matches, they get both cards put into their pile. They then give the cards to the referee and have to replace their hands on the same spots.
5. A player may politely ask another to move one foot or hand if they believe that foot or hand to be on the spot covering the matching card.
4. Tell the players that the winner is the person collects the most bone pairs – but there will be a spot quiz to see if they know their bones!

13. Paper Airplane Toss

Equipment needed: Used, uncreased paper (for recycling/reuse),

Have pupils make a paper airplane and toss it from a certain line in the room. They can compete for distance, straightest flight, smoothest landing, accuracy (toss into a hoop, for example), etc. For each different competition, have them explain how they had to adjust their throwing (hand speed, release point, body alignment, etc.)

Paper airplane diagrams are available at:

<http://www.paperairplanes.co.uk/planes.html>

14. Performance Physiology Paper Plane Toss

Equipment needed: Sheets of paper with relevant exercise physiology questions on one side, and folding instructions, if desired, on the other.

Have the students take a short quiz on basic exercise, anatomy and physiology concepts covered in class (8 -10 questions multiple choice or fill in the blank). After pupils take the test they have to make a paper airplane out of the quiz and fly it into a hoop or bucket. (Teachers have been surprised at the number of students who do not know how to make paper airplanes. Airplane designs can be found at: <http://www.paperairplanes.co.uk/planes.html>).

Scores can be given for the test and for throwing accuracy.