

Native American Games

Grades: K - 3

Time: 45 minutes

Rationale and Context:

Playing games, engaging in contests and story telling are a natural form of human engagement. In this lesson, students will come to understand the value of these Native American activities as physical and mental skill builders, opportunities for sharing beliefs, and a way of guiding character development in youth. Story telling, in particular, holds significance as a way to reinforce beliefs, pass knowledge, share important events, and explain the natural world. Participants will listen to a story and play group, partner and individual games that will engage their bodies and minds as well as their spirit of fair play. The message will be clear that many present day games, sports and pastimes are rooted in Native American's ingenuity for reinforcing learning through fun!

Teacher Background:

The Paleo-Indian culture of Vermont is believed to have established itself some 11,000 years ago when the glaciers of the last ice age had finally receded from the area. These were the early ancestors of the Abenaki tribe that lives on the VT shores of Lake Champlain and across most of the northern and central regions of the state as well as areas in New Hampshire and Maine. The Abenaki probably numbered more than 20,000 people before first contact. After European contact many Abenaki fled to Canada. Today Abenaki live in two reservations in Quebec and scattered throughout New England.

Vermont Standard(s):

Grade Clusters	Grade Expectations	Inquiry Skills and Content
1-2, 3-4	H & SS.1	Students initiate inquiry by asking relevant questions based on what they have seen
	H & SS.2	Students develop a hypothesis, thesis, or research statement by using prior knowledge to predict results or proposing a choice about a possible action
	H & SS.8	Students connect the past with the present
	H & SS.9	Students show understanding of how humans interpret history
	H & SS.13	Students analyze how and why cultures continue and change over time

Learning/Behavioral Objective(s):

1. Students will achieve an understanding of the values (including inclusion, fair play and cooperation) of Native Americans through a description and by playing Native American games..
2. Students will think about the survival skills learned through game playing and how these lessons were an integral part of education for Native American children.
3. Students will gain an appreciation for the ingenuity in the design and practice of Native American games
4. Students will compare and contrast the games of the past and those of present day including the cultural philosophies and motivation of play.