Skills: Physical Activity, Social Studies, Math

Objective: Students will participate in a traditional Native American game and a traditional pioneer game.

Background

People of all cultures and time periods have played games. From the mid to late 1800’s into the early 1900’s Native American and Pioneer settlers were the primary residents of what is now Oklahoma. Life was hard in Oklahoma territory. There was much work to be done by everyone, just to survive. Still both the Native American Indians and the Pioneers managed to find time to play games. There were games that developed dexterity and physical skill. There were other games of amusement or entertainment.

The early pioneer settlers had few toys. If they wanted a toy, they usually had to make it themselves. Pioneer children played many games that children still play today. Some of the games they played were Drop the Handkerchief, Blind man’s Buff, Leap Frog, Hunt the Shoe, Croquet and Shuttlecock.

Games were an integral part of traditional Native American Cultures. Some of the games were just for men others just for women, a few were for both. Often games involved all ages. Children played with the adults while the elderly gave advice. Some of the games for the men included running, wrestling, archery, hoop and stick, lacrosse, and snow snake. Some of the games for women included running, shinny, little pines, run and scream, and ball games.

Social Studies

1. Give students a copy of an “Indian Territory, 1866-1889” map. Help students find which Indian tribe occupied the area where your county is currently located. Maps of Indian Territory are available at http://www.okatlas.org/
2. Display an Oklahoma map showing the dates and locations of the land openings. Discuss the time of the land opening for your county and how that effected the population in your county.
3. Have students create a timeline including Indian settlements, land openings, and Oklahoma statehood specific for your area.

Steps to a Healthy Oklahoma

P.A.S.S.

GRADE 3
Social Studies—1.1
Math Process—1.1; 4.4; 5.1,2
Math Concept—2.1a; 3.2b; 4.2b,3

GRADE 4
Social Studies—1.2; 2.2; 5.2,5
Math Process—1.1; 4.4; 5.1,2
Math Concept—4.4b
Physical Education

1. Select one or more Native American Indian and one or more Pioneer Settler Games to play.

Math

1. Play the game “Cheyenne Ball Game,” listed under “Native American Games” below.
   —Have students develop strategies for keeping count of points using the counting sticks.
2. Have students develop strategies for marking the playing areas for the games below, using various traditional and nontraditional measuring tools (yard sticks, meter sticks, their feet, string, etc.)

Resources

www.avcnet.org
www.prairie.district96.k12.il.us/Museum/games.html
www.nativetech.org
www.nativeamerican.gameserver.net
www.cheyenne-arapaho.org
Gibson, Arrell M., The History of Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Publishing Division of the University of Oklahoma; 1984
Neithammer, Carolyn, Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of Native American Women.
Early American Games

Native American Games

Run and Scream
1. Children start running and get a big breath of air.
2. As they cross a line on the ground, they start screaming.
3. Children continue to run and scream as long as they can.
4. Then they mark the place where they stop.
5. The one who runs the farthest while screaming is the winner.

Cheyenne Ball Game
Traditionally a ball was made of hide and stuffed with grass or animal hair. A ball of about 8” in diameter and about 300 counting sticks are needed for this game.
1. Players are divided into two teams.
2. The first player goes to the center.
3. The ball is balanced on the instep of one foot.
4. It is then kicked into the air, caught with the foot and kicked into the air again.
5. This continues until the player misses and the ball falls to the ground.
6. The number of times the ball is kicked before it is missed is counted. The player gets that number of counting sticks.
7. Then a player from the other team takes a turn.
8. The teams continue to take turns sending a player to the center until all of the counting sticks are gone.
9. Then the teams total their counting sticks. The team with the most counting sticks wins.

Little Sticks
1. A bundle of thin cedar sticks is dropped from the hand.
2. Players then take turns trying to remove one stick at a time from the tangled heap without moving any of the other sticks.
3. The player that removes the most sticks wins.

Pioneer Games

Blindman’s Bluff
1. One person is blindfolded.
2. The other players call out to the “blind man” while trying not to be tagged.
3. When the blindfolded player tags another player, he must guess who the player is.
4. Then a different player is blindfolded.

Hunt the Shoe
1. Each player removes one shoe.
2. Players form a circle.
3. One player is selected to be in the middle.
4. The shoes are passed from player to player (behind their backs).
5. The player in the middle says “stop” and tries to guess who has the match to the shoe he has on.

Leapfrog
1. Players stand in a line, bent over with their hands on their knees.
2. The person in the back of the line is the leaper.
3. The leaper leaps over the other players until he is in the front of the line.
4. Then the new leaper goes over the line.

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