



The Games Kids Play

Activity 4

PURPOSE: To educate students about the fact that children everywhere play similar games, thereby encouraging them to focus on the things they have in common with children around the world.

Additionally, the games described build students' thinking, planning and strategy skills.

TIME: Half an hour for discussion, additional time if students want to try some of the following games

METHOD:

(See attached instruction sheet for rules of two popular African games.)

BACKGROUND: Young people in West Africa have their own versions of "hide and seek" (often played in the moonlight), hopscotch, marbles and soccer. The jumping game that the young girls in the video are playing is called ampe and is very popular in the Sotoubua area of Togo (where Kadambara is located). One girl starts dancing, kicking her legs up and out, from side to side, etc. The next girl copies the first girl's leg movements. If she manages to copy the dancer for some time, the challenger becomes the new dancer.

Ask students:

- Describe in detail a game that you and your friends play.
- Explain the rules and list the equipment needed.
- Do you think that young people in other countries might be interested in learning about your game?
- Think about the games you play regularly. Are there some games that only the boys play or only the girls play? Why is this?

Children will enjoy playing the African games Oware and Kote. Instructions are supplied on the next three pages. Ask the students to think about how many games they play that require a lot of elaborate pieces or equipment, software etc. The games that children in the South play tend to be those which require very little equipment - but they have just as much fun!

EXTENSION:

Your class could make a book of games for a group of young people in another place.

Oware/Ouri

MATERIALS: A flat piece of wood with two rows of six holes or 12 holes (two across by six long) dug in the sand, 48 marbles or pebbles

BACKGROUND: This game has many different names, including awale in Cote d'Ivoire, ayo in Nigeria, aju or oware in Togo and Benin, ouri in Senegal and malinke in Guinea.

Ouri originated in Egypt thousands of years ago and is now a major pastime for Africans of all ages. It is also played in India, where it is called pandi and in the Philippines, where it is known as dakon.

The basic rules are not difficult, but mastering the game requires practice. The rules vary from culture to culture, so students may find that the rules provided here (from Senegal) may be different than those from other countries where the game is played.

The game is played with two players. The object of the game is to be the person who collects the most marbles or pebbles.

How to play:

Place four marbles in each cup. The first player starts by picking up all the marbles from any cup on his or her side of the board and dropping them one at a time in each consecutive cup to the right, counterclockwise. The second player does the same, and the play continues in this manner.

"Capturing" marbles:

Players capture marbles if a marble falls on the opposite side (opponent's side) of the board in a cup containing either one or two marbles (prior to the move). When this happens, the player making the move scoops up all of the marbles from that cup and sets them aside to be counted at the end of the game.

A player can capture marbles from more than one cup in the same move, but the cups have to be side-by-side. For example, if the last and next to last cups contained only one marble, the player



ONE WHO
LEARNS,
TEACHES.

Ethiopian proverb

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would capture the marbles in both these cups. But if the last cup contained one marble, the next to last contained three and the one beside that contained two, the player would only capture the marbles in the last cup. Note that a player must drop one, and only one, marble into each cup, and must use all the marbles picked up in that turn.

End of the game:

The game ends when one player has no marbles left on his or her side of the board and the other player can't reach the other side of the board without making at least two consecutive moves. If the second player can move to the opposite side of the board in one move, he or she does so and the game continues. Finishing with no marbles on the board does not mean you win the game, although it is beneficial in scoring.

Scoring:

Each player counts the marbles he or she has captured, plus any marbles remaining on the opponent's side of the board. Since there are 48 marbles, any marbles over 24 are counted as one point. If, for example, you have 30 marbles (your opponent will have 18), you will receive six points and your opponent zero. Players can decide on what constitutes a match - three games, 100 points, etc.

Basic rules to remember:

Moves are always from left to right, counterclockwise.

A move is made by picking up all of the marbles from any cup on your side of the board and dropping them one by one in each consecutive cup. You cannot "skip" a cup, or drop more than one marble at a time.

In the West African version of oware, a player is entitled to only one move at a time. (In some versions, play continues until a marble is captured.)

A cup of marbles may be captured only when the last marble in a move falls into a cup on your

opponent's side of the board with only one or two marbles in it prior to the move.

To capture multiple cups of marbles, each preceding cup must similarly contain only one or two marbles prior to the move.

Yote

MATERIALS: A game board like the one in the diagram or an outdoor area with soft ground where a board can be dug out by hand, 24 playing pieces (use pebbles and small sticks)

BACKGROUND: This game, similar to checkers, is very popular in West Africa. It is often played outside, on the ground.

The game is played with two players. The object of the game is to "capture" all of your opponent's pieces.

How to play:

The board has five rows with six holes in each row. Each player has 12 playing pieces - one has pebbles, the other sticks. Players take turns putting one playing piece in each hole until all of the pieces are on the board. Players move their pieces in a straight line, vertically or horizontally (not diagonally) into an empty hole.

"Capturing" pieces:

Players capture pieces by jumping over the piece into an empty hole on the other side. Once a player jumps an opponent's piece, he or she takes this piece and another one from anywhere on the board.

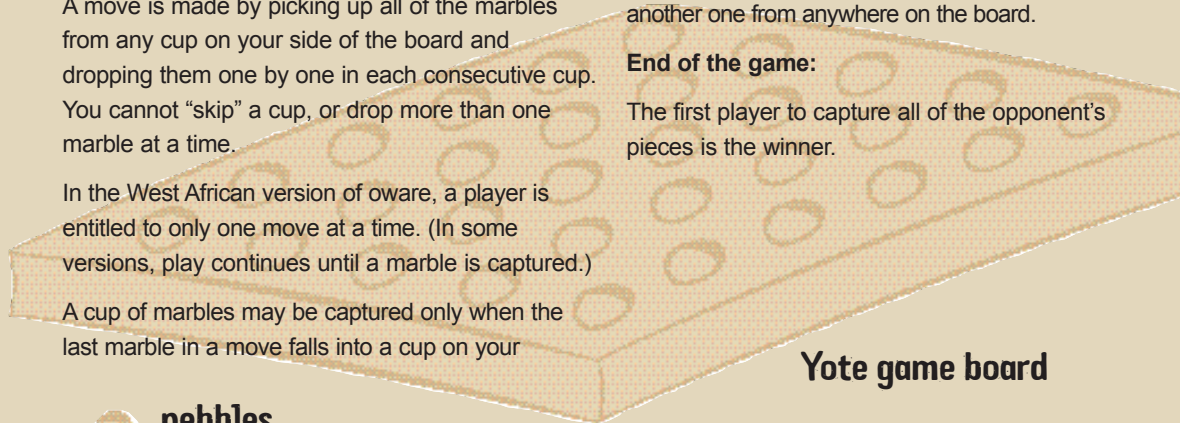
End of the game:

The first player to capture all of the opponent's pieces is the winner.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SEEKS TO ADDRESS NEGATIVE FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE AND TO GIVE CHILDREN A SENSE OF HOPE.

Kath Murdoch



Yote game board



pebbles



sticks