

LESSON PLAN: CAT'S CRADLE

Author: Maple Ridge Museum

Subject and Grade Level: Social Studies (Grade 2)

Objectives: Make historical games and activities more relevant and less abstract. Understand how people in the past entertained themselves. Improve fine motor skills

Materials:

1 loop of string that is approx. 120cm per 2-3 students

For detailed instructions and pictures:

http://www.ifyoulovetoread.com/book/chten_cats1105.htm

Additional Notes:

There are many books and infographics on other string games that are similar to cat's cradle.

REQUIRED PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

Some understanding that people in the past lived differently than we do nowadays. People often had to entertain themselves with basic items such as string.

PROCEDURE/STEPS:

1. Ask questions about how the students entertain themselves. Segway into the fact that people did not always have internet, phones, TV etc. and often used things like bits of string to create entertainment.
2. Give step by step instructions on how to play cat's cradle (in link above). In whatever way you believe would suit the students.
3. Put the students in groups of 2 or 3 and let them try to play cat's cradle. Go around and check in with them as they are playing.
4. When the children start becoming restless, when they have been able to reliably play the group version or the allotted time has elapsed move onto the discussion.

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW:

Discussion question ideas: Why do you think that children used to play with string? What time period do you think that this is from? Why is entertainment important for kids?

ASSESSMENT:

ENRICHMENT:

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- Cat's cradle is one of the oldest games in recorded human history. While the true origins are debated, it is known that the first reference to the game comes from 1768.
- The game might have originated from China.
- While the names, configurations, string material etc. differ, variations of a similar game were played in many different cultures throughout the world including in Africa, Eastern Asia, the Pacific Islands, Australia, the Americas, and the Arctic.
- The reason that child's play has evolved from games such as cat's cradle to the more modern toys and electronics is partly due to the advances in technology but also because of the relative increase in wealth of the average person.