



# Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

## Games Children Played

**School:** Veterans Memorial School  
**Subject:** Social Studies

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**Grade:** 2

### Introduction:

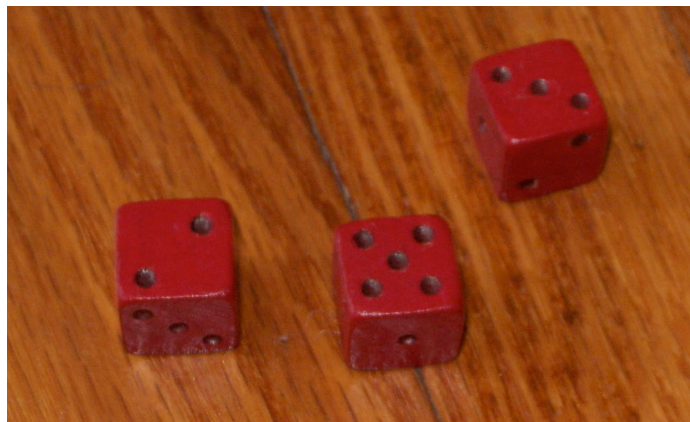
This particular lesson could be used after visiting many of the sites we visited (Saugus Iron Works, Rocky Hill Meeting House, Spence-Peirce Little Farm, Rebecca Nurse Homestead, Boardman House) to illustrate the popular of games played by early American children.

It could also during a field trip at a colonial site. Most colonial houses can only accommodate small groups, leaving others outside waiting. Some sites have alternative activities to fill the waiting time, some do not. The following activities can be used to fill that gap.

This lesson assumes the students have some prior knowledge of colonial life. Students should be familiar with the roles of children during colonial times and though children were expected to work along-side the adults, they were allowed to play.

### Objectives:

- Students will understand that the early American children spent most of their day doing chores and attending church services. There was not much time for play.
- Students will understand that early American children were only allowed to play a little each day – as long as they weren't playing instead of working.
- Students will understand that many of the games that they play are the same games children played 400-500 years ago.
- Students will come away with a better understanding of a colonial child's life.



Three wooden dice are tossed.

### Materials:

- *Toys & Games From Times Past... And Still Enjoyed Today* by George Rice
- *Life in Plymouth Colony – History Pockets* by Evan-Moor
- *Cornhusk Dolls* lesson plan from <http://town.saugus.ma.us/School/District/TAHG/>

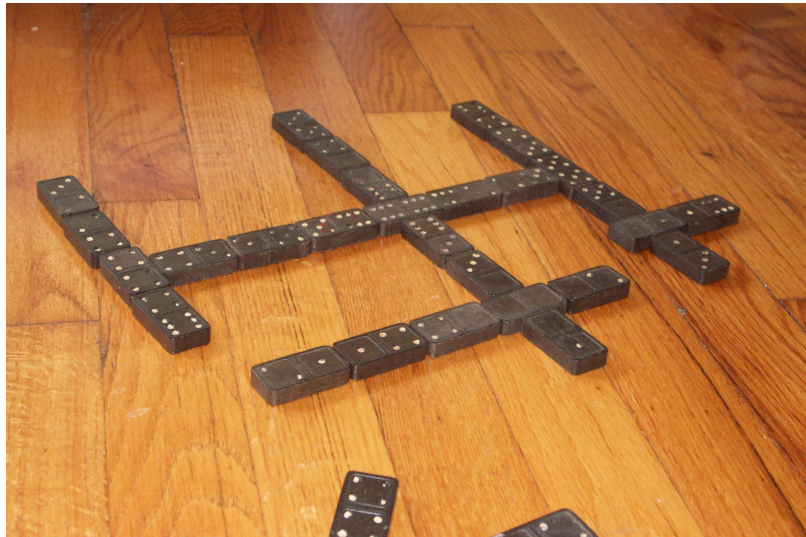


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- Marbles lesson plan from <http://town.saugus.ma.us/School/District/TAHG/>
- Additional materials as needed per game

## Activities:

1. Teacher will ask the students if they have ever played a game of naughts and crosses or draughts. It will then be explained that naughts and crosses is tic-tac-toe, also known as tit-tat-toe and draughts is checkers.
2. Teacher will discuss some of the different toys and games that were probably played or played with by early American children.
3. Students will work in centers either making a toy or playing games.
  - Naughts and Crosses (Tic-Tac-Toe)
  - Draughts (Checkers)
  - Ring Toss (see attached)
  - Pick-Up Sticks
  - Dominoes
  - Cornhusk Doll
  - Geese in the Garden (see attached)
  - Marbles
4. Students will go outside or in the gym to play some of the more physical activities.
  - Jumprope
  - Hopscotch
  - Hoop and Roll
  - Tug of War
5. Discuss and/or write about the differences and similarities between the games of colonial times and the games of today.



A game of dominoes.

## Assessment:

Students will be able to complete a Venn Diagram comparing toys and games of the early Americans to those of today.



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## Ring Toss

### Materials (Per Student):

- One pencil (or dowel)
- One 8" piece of string
- One 1" pre-cut end of a cardboard tube

### Set-Up:

1. Let the children decorate their cardboard tube with crayons, markers or cut-out paper.
2. Tie one end of the string to the cardboard tube (make a hole with a hole punch).
3. Tie the other end of the string to one end of the pencil (or dowel).

### To Play:

1. Hold the stick vertically in one hand.
2. Gently swing the ring up over the end of the stick and try to catch it.
3. The object of the game is to catch the ring on the stick.

### Discussion:

While making the toy, talk to the children about what types of materials they think the early Americans would have used. Also, remind the students that whatever the children wanted to play with, like everything else, it had to be made. Go over the hardships of how they had to make everything, and now we just have to go to the store to buy whatever we need.



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## **Americans and English** (now known as Tug of War)

### **Materials:**

- A rope can be used but it was not always available to early colonial children

### **Set-Up:**

Four or more players are divided into two groups. A line is scratched into the ground, “Americans” on one side of the line, “English” on the other side.

### **To Play:**

The player first in line on each side stretches out over the line to hold hands with the other team member, all players take hold of the person in front of them. The object of the game is to draw the other group entirely over the line.

### **Discussion:**

The game’s origins can be traced back centuries, this is the “American” version.

## **Beetle**

### **Materials:**

- One pair of dice for the group
- Paper & pencil for each player

### **To Play:**

Each player selects a number 1 through 6 and writes it at the top of their paper. Each player selects a number 1 through 6 and writes it at the top of their paper. Each player takes a turn at throwing the dice. Any player having the number rolled may draw a section of the beetle on their paper. If doubles are rolled the player may draw two sections. If the roller rolls his own number, he may roll again.



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## Cat's Cradle

### Materials:

A piece of yarn, string or cord, 6 feet long, ends tied together

### Set-Up:

One person creates a Cat's Cradle by performing the following steps:

1. Put hands (excluding thumbs) through the string.
2. Loop the string around each hand.
3. Slide your middle finger under the opposite loop and pull.

### To Play:

The real challenge is to transfer the Cat's Cradle to a second person without losing it.

### Discussion:

This game has a quite a history. It is believed to have come from Asia to Europe along with the tea trade in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In colonial America it was among the earliest and most popular string games.

## Hoop and Roll

### Materials:

- Large wooden hoops (embroidery hoops), *or* metal hoops (from old barrels), *or* Hula hoops (which are the easiest and safest)

### Discussion:

Children have been rolling hoops since ancient Egyptian times. In ancient Rome girls used wooden hoops while boys were pictured with metal ones. Tiny bells were fastened to the inside of some hoops just for noisy fun.

The colonists brought hoops with them from Europe. Hoops were either wood or metal. The hoop was kept rolling along with a wooden "roll" stick (you may want to not use this) or your hand. Hooping races were popular (fastest, farthest, straightest...)



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## Jump Rope

### Materials:

- Rope lengths suitable for the height of your students *and/or* 10-12 foot length for groups of 2-4 jumpers.

### To Play:

The children can chant rhymes in time to their rope jumping. Here are a couple of rhymes<sup>1</sup>:

#### Here Comes the Teacher

Here comes the teacher,  
Better think quick!  
Now it's time for arithmetic!  
(skipping faster)  
5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40...

#### Will I Marry?

Will I marry, tell me so,  
Is the answer yes or no?  
Yes, no, maybe so,  
Yes, no, maybe so...

### Discussion:

Jumping rope has been popular for centuries.

Skipping rope with chanting rhymes appeared later. Boys didn't chant the rhymes associated with jump rope, but just held contests to see who could jump the most or fastest.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhymes end when the jumper stops jumping.



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## **Jackstraws**

(now known as Pick-Up Sticks)

### **Materials:**

- Any number (10-25 is a good default but vary with the age and skill of the players) of any long (10"-12"), straight, stiff item (like straws, wood kabob skewers, wood dowels, pencils...)

### **To Play:**

A player drops the pile of sticks from a few inches off the playing surface (a table, the floor, the ground), then begins to pick them up without touching or disturbing any other of the sticks. If and when another stick is disturbed it becomes the next players turn.

Scores can be kept in several ways.

- After a predetermined number of turns the one who picked up the most sticks wins.
- colored sticks can be used, each color having a point different value, the most points wins.
- the player to pick up the entire pile wins.

### **Discussion:**

Jackstraws (or Jerkstraws, Spilikins, or Woodpile) – the game we know as Pick-Up Sticks – was a popular game played by children and adults during the colonial period. Jackstraws were originally made of ivory or bone. As it became a favorite among children the straws were made of wood.

The name Pick-Up Sticks comes from the counting rhyme:

- 1, 2, buckle my shoe;
- 3, 4, shut the door;
- 5, 6, pick up sticks...



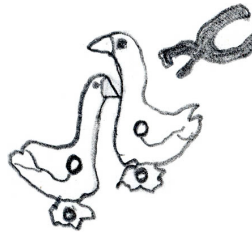
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## Geese in the Garden

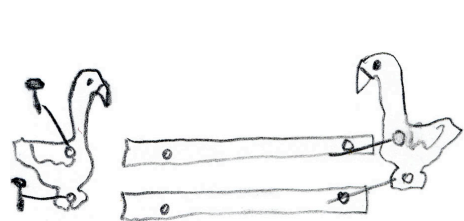
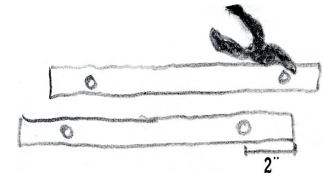
### Materials (Per Student):

- Duplicated Geese in the Garden Worksheet
- Two 1¼" x 12" strips of oaktag
- 8½" x 11" oaktag
- Markers or crayons
- 4 paper fasteners
- Hole punch
- Scissors



### Set-Up:

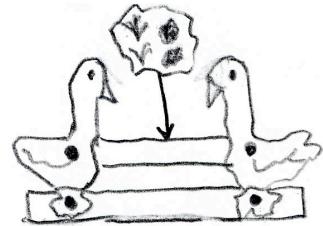
1. Distribute the worksheet with front & back of geese and garden.
2. Have student color and cut out parts.
3. Glue the cutouts to oaktag and cut around shapes to reinforce them.



4. Punch holes in the geese on the wing and feet where the circles are drawn.

5. Punch holes in both oaktag strips 2" from each end of strip.

6. Use paper fasteners to attach the geese to the oaktag strips.

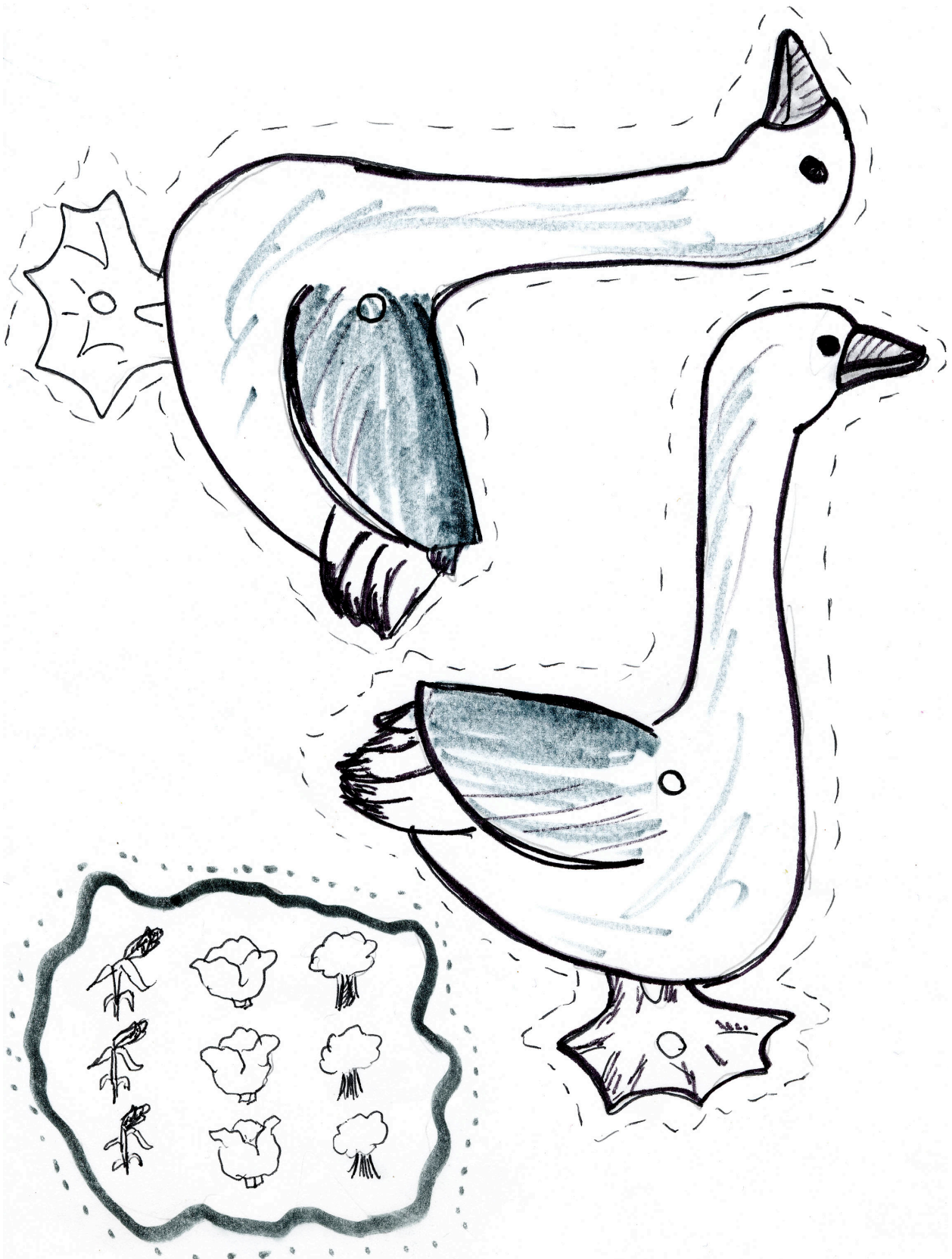


7. Glue the garden to the center of the top strip.
8. Hold on to the bottom strip while pushing and pulling the top strip to see the geese reach for the garden vegetables.





# Geese in the Garden Work Sheet





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Games Children Play Work Sheet

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