



# Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

## Marbles

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**Subject:** Before & After School Program      **Grade:** K-6

### Introduction:

I am the director of the Kids Come First Before and After School Program for children who are in grades K-6, therefore, I want to teach a lesson that involves a game similar to one that children in the seventeenth century played. In this lesson, students will make marbles from Sculpey clay and then they will play a game of “Marbles” using the marbles they have made. This activity addresses the Massachusetts Frameworks strand 3.12 which states that children in the third grade should know that objects of everyday life in the past tell us how ordinary people lived and how everyday life has changed. Teaching this lesson uses what I have learned about colonial times during this course from Robert Smith’s lecture about the Salem Witch Trials and life in colonial Salem, MA.

### Objectives:

- Students will understand that toys could not be mass produced and purchased at stores as they are today and that they had to be made by hand from whatever materials were available.
- Students will be able to make marbles similar to those made by children in colonial times.
- Students will be able to participate in a game of “Marbles.”



A set of marbles made as per these instructions.

### Materials:

- Sculpey clay
- A small toaster oven
- Chalk

### Procedure:

1. The students will break off a small piece of Sculpey clay and roll it in their hands until they form a small ball, about one inch in diameter. They will repeat this procedure to make one more ball of approximately the same size.



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- The students will break off more ten pieces and make smaller balls, about one-half inch in diameter.
- The teacher will bake the small balls of clay in a toaster oven for approximately ten minutes, after which the balls will need to cool down.
- After all of the students have made their sets of marbles, each using a different color or mixture of colors, they will be grouped together in groups of three or four students.
- The teacher will make a twenty-four inch circle for each group of three students on the playground using chalk.
- Each group of students will drop their small marbles into the center of the circle, saving the larger marbles as their “shooters”.
- Each student will take turns shooting their large marbles at the group of marbles in the center of the circle so as to knock the other marbles out of the boundary of the circle.
- When a student knocks a marble out of the circle, he or she claims it as their own.
- When all of the small marbles have been knocked out of the circle, the student who has the most marbles in their possession wins the game.



An old-fashioned clay marbles kit of modern manufacture.

## Evaluation:

The goal is for the students to produce a set of marbles that they can use to play a game of “Marbles.” They will be evaluated on whether they actually finish the project. The marbles that were home-made in colonial times were not perfectly round or of the exact same size, so it doesn’t matter how the students’ marbles look as long as they can be successfully rolled in a game of “Marbles”. The experience of making the marbles and playing a game with them is what is emphasized in the lesson.

## Resources:

I used the website [www.thinkquest.org](http://www.thinkquest.org), *Colonial Kids: A Celebration of Life in the 1700's*, which showed a video of children dressed in colonial clothing playing a game of Marbles, as well as [www.ushist.com/props/toys-and-games.htm](http://www.ushist.com/props/toys-and-games.htm), which confirmed that children in colonial times made their own marbles of clay.