



Native American Games





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Native American games provide an effective way to help children explore traditional culture. To share these cultural activities is to share an important part of our nations heritage. The Native American children relied on their environment for materials used in the games. Although games were played for fun and pleasure, Native American games also played a role in the education of the children, as well as helping them develop skills.




Running Game

Tribe: Klamath Tribe (Northwest Coast, USA)

Any number can play

Equipment: None

Instructions: Players line up behind a starting line. Taking a deep breath, they run as far as they can while yelling loudly. When a player runs out of breath he/she must stop and stand still. The player who runs the greatest distance before running out of breath wins.





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Laughing Game

Tribes: Chippewas (Northwest, USA and Canada)
Nootka (Northwest Coast, USA)
Intuit (Northwest Arctic, USA)

Any number can play
Equipment: None

Instructions: Players sit opposite each other in two lines or in pairs. Without speaking, each tries to make the opponent laugh. First to succeed, wins.




Bean Game

Tribes: Cherokee (North Carolina, Oklahoma, USA)

Two or more players
Equipment: A shallow basket or paper plate, seven flat-sided beans or peach pits marked with paint on one side only.

Instructions: Object of the game is to toss and catch beans/pits flipping them from marked to unmarked side up. Before you play, you must decide how many turns each player will take. Players alternate turns with scores for each turn totaled. All seven (7) beans/pits are placed plain side up on the bottom of the basket/plate. Holding sides of the basket/plate carefully toss beans up trying to flip them over to marked side. If any beans fall out of the basket/plate the player loses that turn and gets no score. When all the players have taken the designated turns the scores are totaled. Highest score wins. Small sticks or dried corn kernels can be given for students as scoring pieces. Each child counts their markers at the end of each game.





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Tribes Teachers Resource

The **Klamath Tribe** resides in the Northwest Coastal region of the United States. They typically lived in *earth lodges* which were built over basement-like holes dug in the ground. They would then make wooden pole frames shaped as cones and cover them with brush and packed dirt. They were known as a fishing tribe, as they made fishing nets and fishing traps but they also hunted small game and foraged berries, nuts, and plants from the forest.

The **Chippewas/Ojibwa Tribe** resides in Northwest region of the United States and also the adjoining areas of Canada. They typically lived in wigwams which were wooden framed birch bark dwellings and/or tepees which were built with large wooded poles and then covered with buffalo hides. They were know as farming people, harvesting rice and corn but they also hunted wild game and buffalo and foraged berries and nuts as well.

The **Nootka Tribe** resides in the Northwest Coastal region of the United States. They typically lived in wigwams which were wooden framed birch bark dwellings. This tribe was considered to be hunter/gatherers foraging for their food.

The **Intuit Tribe** resides in the Artic. They typically have two forms of shelter; tent/tepees in the summer months which were built out of driftwood or poles covered with seal and/or caribou skins; and Igloo/snow house in the winter months which were built out of snow and ice. They were a nomadic tribe and hunted and fished for food.

The **Cherokee Tribe** was originally from the Carolina region of the United States but were relocated in the 1800's by the US government to Oklahoma. Their traditional style of housing was the wattle or daub house. They were made with weaving river cane, wood, and vines into a frame then coated with a form of plaster. They were known as a farming tribe typically growing corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers.