



Traditional GAMES



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TELEPHONE or GOSSIP

This game is known by both names. Players sit in a line or circle. The message giver writes down a message, which is not shown until the end of the action and whispers that message into the ear of one of the players next to him. That player then turns and whispers the message into the ear of the person beside him or her. This repeats until the last person in line receives a message and must then pronounce it aloud to the group.

The message repeated by the last hearer is then announced to the players and the original written message is read.

TUG OF WAR

From the available players, choose two teams to pull on opposite ends of the rope.

Place a goal line on the ground and a way to identify the center point of the rope. Align the two and then signal the teams to pull. You may have them pull until a certain amount of rope goes over the center mark or until one or more individuals are pulled across the center.

Instead of a center line, you may choose a pit of water or mud in the middle so that the penalty for being pulled is getting wet.

ARM WRESTLING

Two opponents sit across from each other over a flat surface. Each places their right elbow on the table close to the right elbow of the opponent.

They clasp right hands and on a signal push against their opponent's hand to force it down so that the back of the forearm touches the surface.

The match is over when one of the person has his right wrist pressed to the table surface.

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

The person who is the "Blind Man" is blindfolded. Everyone else arranges themselves around him. The "Blind Man" must identify each person by touch. The "Blind Man" may be led around the circle of players or discovers them randomly on their own.

If the "Blind Man" grasps a player, he must attempt to identify that person or release them.

The person whose identity is correctly guessed by the "Blind Man" must then take the blindfold and become the next "Blind Man".

TRADITIONAL GAMES

Believe it or not, there was life before electronics took over our lives.

Before computers and television, people found creative ways to entertain themselves and each other, and in the process learned very useful social skills.

This is a small collection of games that were played, with a very minimum of equipment or no equipment at all, and required mainly the attentive cooperation of groups or a small number of people.

CRACK THE WHIP

You need a minimum of six people for the game to be effective. You hold hands in a line. Someone is picked to be the leader (front) and someone as the caboose (back).

The leader runs around like crazy and everyone else follows, being sure not to let go of hands. As everyone runs at full speed and makes sharp turns, the caboose and/or people next to them get sent flying because of the force of the movement.

The leader and caboose can use two hands to hold on to the one person they are connected to.

DODGEBALL

Form two teams. Each team forms a line facing each other. Playground balls are ammunition (two balls or more). Players throw the balls at each other in an attempt to “tag” them.

Alternately, you can have a team form two lines and let the second team move around between the lines freely as the balls are thrown at them.

If a team member is hit below the shoulders, he is out and has to move aside. If a player caught the ball in the air (not after a bounce), he received a free “life”, i.e., if he is hit again, he has used up a “life” and is not out. A player may

STOP

This game is better if played with many players. You will need a ball.

To start, one player is selected to throw the ball. The rest of the players stand around that child, who throws the ball up and says one of the players’s names. The rest of the players have to run away as far as possible.

The named player has to catch the ball. If the ball is caught in the air, he can immediately say another name, toss the ball up and run away. If he doesn’t catch the ball in the air, as soon as he catches the ball, he has to say **stop!**

On **stop**, the other players have to stop running. The catcher looks to see which player is near him and takes three long steps toward that player. The catcher tries to hit the player with the ball.

If the catcher doesn’t hit him, he starts the game again by throwing the ball up and calling another name. If he hits the other player with the ball, that player starts the game.

SHEEP IN THE PEN

The task and challenge of this game is for one person to capture and keep corralled all the other players. It is a game related to "hide and seek". The designated shepherd allows all other players to scatter and conceal themselves, then go searching. When a hider is found, the shepherd commands that player to get into the "pen," a designated area of confinement.

Added to the challenge of searching out the concealed players is the ability of the "SHEEP IN THE PEN" to run away while the shepherd is not looking. So the shepherd must find the hidere while keeping an eye on the "pen." The shepherd calls the player's by name to keep them inside: "SHEEP IN THE PEN, Billy, Sam, and Fred."

SIMON SAYS

One player is designated to play "Simon." All the other players must perform whatever actions Simon says to do. Simon dictates actions by saying "Simon says stand on one foot" or "Simon says sit down." Everyone must do what "Simon says."

If the command giver says only "Sit down" without starting with "Simon says" and a player obeys a command then that player is out. The command giver tries to trick players by slipping in a command not prefaced by "Simon says." Last one standing wins.

PIN THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY

This game requires a fairly large picture of a donkey to be hung on the wall. It can be drawn by hand, but you can find low-cost versions at many party supply stores.

The tail of the donkey is missing. A "tail" with a way to attach it (pin, tape, etc) needs to be given to the player. The player is blindfolded and spun around three times before facing the donkey picture. The blindfolded player steps towards the wall to place the tail.

The person coming closest to the correct placement of the tail is the winner.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

IT stands at one end of the play area with the players at the other end. All others are seeking to be first to reach IT.

IT covers his / her eyes or turns away and says:

- Green light — players move towards the goal
- Red light — players stop and don't move

After saying "red light", IT looks at the players. Anyone caught moving returns to the starting point.

The first player to the goal becomes IT.

not have more than three "lives." For additional times a player catches the ball, he may bring players who were out, back into the game by calling their name.

VARIATION: If a player on the opposite team catches a ball you threw before it bounced, the thrower is "out".

DOGGY, DOGGY, WHERE'S YOUR BONE?

A player is chosen to be IT and sits in a chair with their back to the other players. An eraser or another object is put under the chair as the bone.

While the dog is turned around with their eyes closed, one person sneaks up and steals the bone to hide it on his person. Sometimes it may be left under the chair.

Then everyone sings:

Doggy, Doggy, where's your bone?
Somebody's stole it from your home.
Guess who it might be.

Then the dog has three chances to guess who took it.

If the dog guesses right then he remains IT. If he guesses wrong than the person who took the bone becomes IT.

INDIAN WRESTLING

Two people lie with their right arms touching with their feet in opposite directions (head to toe).

Each raises his or her right leg to a position perpendicular to the ground and lowers it again three times while counting to three. On the three, the two players use their raised hands and press so as to try to roll their opponents backwards over his or her head. The person who moves their opponent or rolls the opponent over wins.

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

The game deals with guarded territory. One person (alone or with a group) attempts to achieve a difficult to reach position (the top of a small hill or a large rock). Then they must defend that spot from all others who seek to pull or push the king out.

There is no time limit. The game ends when one person proves they have the strength / endurance / determination to maintain the top place on the "mountain" until all the others "give up".

FLINCH

Flinch can be played anywhere with two people. The game's goal is not to flinch.

One person pretends to hit at the hand / fingers at the other, intending to come as close to the target's body as possible without touching. These feints are accomplished within the target's view so they can see what's coming.

If the target flinches they receive a real hit to the flincher's upper arm, near the shoulder. However, if the aggressor does hit the target, then the target is allowed to hit the arm of the aggressor in the same area.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

One person is designated the leader. The others follow the leader, avoiding obstacles or spaces, and doing all the actions and motions, which are performed by the leader.

The game can be played so that players are eliminated by their failure to follow / where the leader goes.

VARIATION: This can be a game of participation where following is sufficient reward with no "winning" or "losing".

LONDON BRIDGE

Two people form an arch by facing each other and clasping their hands above them. The other players pass through the arch while singing "London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down. London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady!"

At the last phrase of the chant the people forming the arch lower their clasped hands encircling and capturing whomever happens to be under the arch at that time. They then sing "Take the keys and lock her up, lock her up, lock her up. Take the keys and lock her up, my fair lady!"

The captured player may be eliminated from the game or replace one of the people forming the arch.

LEAP FROG

This game can be played with three or more. Everyone spaces themselves a few feet apart and get down on their hands and knees. The person at the back of the line, using their hands (placed on the back of the kneelers), vaults over the backs of the kneeling players.

The person who leaps successfully the most times wins. Alternately, this game can be played with no winners.

RED ROVER

Two teams (preferably of ten or more people) line up facing each other across enough space to allow full speed running. Each line of players grasps one another's hands, trying to form an impenetrable barrier. Each team has a captain. When the lines are in place and all are braced, the captain of one team chants "Red Rover, Red Rover, let (name of person in the other line) come over." The named person charges at the opposing line, picking a point in the opposite line of clutched hands which seems weakest, and throws his or her body against that set of hands, trying to break the grip and break through the line.

If the line breaker is successful he or she selects someone to come over and join the other line. If the line doesn't break, they stay at that line. The object is to get everyone in one line.

ROCK SCHOOL

This is a game you can play on porch steps. The "teacher" holds a rock behind his or her back, then extends both closed hands to one of the other players who must choose which hand holds the rock. Each successful selection of the rock-holding hand entitles the correct chooser to move up one step. Turns are taken until one person reaches the highest level and then takes the place of the teacher hiding the rock for the next round of guesses at the lowest level.

MOTHER, MAY I?

One person is designated as "Mother". There are different kinds of steps, which may be allowed. Each player in turn asks "Mother, may I take (X number) of (name the kind) steps?" to which Mother responds with either "Yes, you may" or "No, you may not". Mother may give permission to take some kind of steps not requested, such as "You may take three giant steps." Steps might include baby steps, giant steps, long steps, etc.

Play continues until someone has reached the end of the play area. Then that person becomes Mother.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

This activity requires music that can be stopped or turned down. A ring of chairs is arranged so that there is one fewer chairs than there are players. When the music plays all players move around the circle. When the music stops each sits down in the chair closest to him or her. The one person without the chair is out.

Then a chair is removed from the circle and the music begins again. Each time the music stops one more person is eliminated and one more chair is removed until only one person remains.