



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

# Traditional Ring and Balance Games

### ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

- **Time Immemorial**

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will understand

- Oregon Tribes have been here "since time immemorial" and have always had games that taught important life skills,
- Different Oregon Tribes developed games to learn and practice coordination and balance, and the importance of following directions and sharing equipment respectfully during group activities.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How have games helped Oregon Tribes learn important skills since time immemorial?

### REQUIRED TIME

- 35 minutes

### Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about Native peoples in Oregon through traditional coordination and balance games that have been played "since time immemorial". Students will also develop fundamental motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Through modified activities that are the base of traditional Indigenous ring and pin or hoop and pole activities, students will understand that Oregon Tribes have rich traditions in skill-building games.

### Background for Teachers

This lesson addresses the Essential Understanding, Since Time Immemorial, which refers to a very long time that goes back beyond memory or records. For Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, this means their peoples, cultures, and traditions—including coordination and skill-building games—have existed here since the very beginning of their oral histories.

Traditional Indigenous games like "hoop and pole" and "ring and pin" were crucial



for developing skills children would need as adults. Hoop and pole games were popular across many Tribes and involved throwing spears or poles through rolling hoops, which teaches the timing, accuracy, and coordination needed for hunting. Ring and pin games were played by almost every Native Tribe across North America, where players would toss a ring into the air and try to catch it on a stick, developing hand-eye coordination and patience.

These games served multiple purposes: they developed motor skills, taught persistence and focus, provided entertainment, and connected children to cultural values about skill development and practice. Many coordination skills developed through these games translated directly to essential life activities like hunting, crafting, and daily tasks.

For Oregon specifically, different Tribes would have adapted these games to their environments and available materials. Pacific Northwest coastal Tribes might have used different materials than plateau or Great Basin Tribes, but the core principles of developing coordination, balance, and precision remained consistent across cultures.

## STANDARDS

### Oregon Physical Education Standards

- **PE.1.K.1:** Performs locomotor skills (hopping, galloping, sliding, skipping) while maintaining balance
- **PE.1.K.2:** Performs jumping & landing actions with balance
- **PE.1.K.4:** Maintains momentary stillness on different bases of support
- **PE.4.K.1:** Follows directions in group settings (safe behaviors, following rules, taking turns)
- **PE.4.K.4:** Shares equipment and space with others
- **PE.5.K.1:** Recognizes that physical activity is important for good health

## Considerations for Teachers

### Practices

While teaching this lesson, the following principles can help guide your decision-making and engagement with students:

- Focus on teaching Essential Understanding Time Immemorial through an analysis of today's traditional coordination and balance games.

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- When sharing content with students, address the "why" not just the "what"- explain how these games connect to the long history of skill development among Native peoples in Oregon.
- Highlight the strengths and continuing traditions of Oregon's Indigenous peoples today while also acknowledging their deep history and tradition.
- Ensure your teaching practices are accessible and appropriate for Native and non-Native students.
- Emphasize that the games learned today are adaptations and that real traditional games belong to specific Tribes.

### KEY WORDS and IDEAS

- **Time Immemorial:** A very long time, before anyone remembers
- **Coordination:** Using your hands, eyes, and body together smoothly
- **Balance:** Staying steady while moving or standing still
- **Tradition:** Something that has been done for a very long time and passed down
- **Oregon Tribes:** The Native peoples who have been here since time immemorial

### Assessment

During this lesson, observe and listen to students during discussions and as they work independently and collaboratively to determine how their learning is progressing. Write down what you notice about what students say and do in relation to the success criteria. Use this formative information to provide feedback to students and plan next steps.

### MATERIALS

**What materials are needed for students to engage in this activity?**

- Soft rings or hula hoops
- Student self-assessment

At the end of the lesson, provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their learning through a self-assessment. Students can indicate their level of learning in relation to specific success criteria. They can also write out an explanation of why they believe they are at that learning stage.

### Success Criteria

- I can move my body safely and with balance during the games.
- I can describe why traditional games are important to Native peoples in Oregon.



- I can explain how long Native peoples in Oregon have been on this land.

## Lesson Activities

### Opening

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**Time: 10 minutes**

#### Step 1:

Gather students in a circle and introduce the concept of "time immemorial" and skill-building games.

Say to students, "Today we're going to learn about special games that Oregon Tribes have played for a very, very long time—since time immemorial. That means since the very beginning, longer than anyone can remember."

"Oregon's Tribes—like the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Klamath Tribes, as well as many others—have always been here and have always had games that helped children learn important skills and adults stay good at them."

Note: If needed, pre-teach or use resources from the lesson, Oregon's Nine Federally Recognized Tribes, to support students to build background knowledge of Indigenous Oregon.

#### Step 2:

Demonstrate the concept of coordination and skill-building

Say to students, "These weren't just fun games—they were practice games! Not just for children- but also adults! Oregon's Tribes played games like these all throughout the year to keep in shape for hunting and other activities

Show students simple hand-eye coordination: clap hands together, touch nose with finger, balance on one foot.

Say to students, "Let's practice some movements that Native American children in Oregon might practice to become strong and coordinated"

#### Step 3:

Lead students in simple warm-up coordination movements (Do these with students to

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show an example and then run through them a few times.)

Students practice:

- hopping in place
- balancing on one foot
- hopping from one foot to the other

## Main Activity

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**Time: 15 minutes**

### Step 1:

Engage students in a Ring and Pin Coordination Station (Adapted from traditional ring and pin games) *Materials needed: Soft rings or hula hoops*

Explain to students, "This game is inspired by ring and pin games that were played by almost every Native Tribe across North America. Children would practice catching rings on sticks. We are going to pretend WE are the sticks!

- Example - Ring version:
  - Take ring and toss it to catch on your arm
  - Have a student come and toss a ring to you, and you try and catch on your arm
  - Toss the ring to a student and have them catch on their arm
  - Have each student take a turn with you
- Example - Hula hoop version:
  - Take the hula Hoop and step inside it - say I am the stick!
  - Have a student come and be the stick- toss the hula hoop and have them get under it.
  - Have each student take a turn with you.

## Closing

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**Time: 10 minutes**

### Step 1:

Gather students back in circle for a movement reflection.

Say to students, "Let's practice some of the coordination movements we learned today."

Engage students in a quick practice: balance on one foot, and then the other.

### Step 2:

Connect back to Essential Understanding, *Since Time Immemorial*. Ask students:

- "What does 'time immemorial' mean?" (Sample answer: Since the very beginning, a very long time)
- "How did games help Native children long ago?" (Sample answer: To learn skills, get strong, practice for grown-up activities)
- "Why do you think Native children practiced coordination and balance?" (Sample answer: To become skilled hunters, crafters, to be strong and healthy)

### Step 3:

Engage students in further reflection.

Remind students that, "Today we learned that Oregon's Native peoples have been here since time immemorial and have always had wonderful traditions of games that taught important skills. Different Tribes have different games, just like different families might have different favorite activities, but they all understood that practicing coordination and balance was important."

Ask students, "What movements did you practice today that could help you run, jump, or play games?"

## Additional Resources

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Kindergarten lesson, Who Am I? Exploring Culture by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

- [Lesson Plan 3](#)
- [Culture Slide Deck](#)
- [My Culture Worksheet](#)

## Student Self-Assessment

**Name:**

**Directions for teachers:** Read aloud the lesson Success Criteria in the first column to students. Have them indicate if they were able to meet the criteria by marking it in the handout, with hand gestures, or by sharing aloud. Ask students to explain why they chose “not yet” or “yes” to a peer.

Success Criteria	Not Yet	Yes
		
I can move my body safely and with balance during the games.		
I can describe why traditional games are important to Native peoples in Oregon.		
I can explain how long Native peoples in Oregon have been on this land.		