
World Olympics

Preparing Students for a
Multicultural and Multireligious World

A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY TANENBAUM FOR GRADES K-8



Imagine... a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.

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Olympic Mind and Body

Unit 3, Lesson 4

Objectives: Students will be introduced to Yoga and to Capoeira and will consider the importance of exercise and control over one's mind and body.

Skills: Timing, recording

Grades: K-6

Recommended Resources: Yoga poses in this lesson taken from *Yoga for Busy People* by Bijoylaxmi Hota. Capoeira moves from <http://www.sweb.cz/capoeira.orlova/pohyby/Spaceport/moves.html>.

Materials:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Timer or Clock

PROCEDURE

Part I – Measuring Heart Rates

Ask students if they have ever measured their heart rates before. If so, ask how they did it. Tell students that today they will be checking their heart rates – how fast their heart is beating.

Once students have been seated, ask them to put together three of their fingers on their right hand, and place these fingers on the base of their left hand's thumb, on the wrist. (if this is difficult help them find the pulse by putting two fingers on their neck). If they feel something, explain that this is their pulse.

Have students count the number of beats they feel as you time them. Say "GO." Wait for 30 seconds and then say "STOP." Explain that you timed them for half a minute. Ask them to write down their rate for half a minute. Now ask: "What would it be for one minute?" Have students jot this down in their journals.

Note: students can time each other instead of the teacher timing the students.

Part II – Visualization Exercise

Step One: Tell students that they will now do an exercise, but instead of using their bodies, they will use their minds. Instruct students in the following way:

- Close your eyes.
- Take a deep breath in.
- Now breathe out – exhale.
- Breathe in again, and this time, before breathing out, picture all your thoughts in bubbles.
- Breathe out and in your mind watch the bubbles floating away.
- Keep breathing in and out. (Wait for two or three inhales/exhales.)
- Now picture a wave of energy starting from your spine, and going all the way down, to your feet; through the floor; into the ground below and into the center of the earth. Now slowly open your eyes.

Step Two: Immediately after the visualization exercise, have students check and record their heart rates again. Jot these numbers down. Ask: *Is your heart rate different now? If so, why do you think? If not, why do you think? How did you feel during this exercise? Was it difficult to concentrate or to let go of thoughts? Why or why not? What connection, if any, is there between the mind and the body?*

Part III - Introducing Yoga

History of Yoga: The practice of yoga was started over 5,000 years ago in India by Hindu Rishis (sages). By observing their bodies and minds they developed postures and breathing exercises to raise mental awareness, release tension, and bring peace to the body and mind.

Yoga is based on the idea that strength does not come from bulky muscles, but from the energy in the body. Similarly, in karate, a heavy man may not be able to break a brick with one hand, but a child can do so with an expertly-placed chop.

Yoga is practiced by Hindu yogis and many others as a religious and spiritual practice. It has also become a popular activity for health and to bring peace to mind and body around the world.

In yoga, the word for energy is called prana. Other cultures also have a similar idea. Ask students if they know of any similar ideas in other languages:

In Hebrew it is called *Rauch*.

In Japanese it is called the *Ki*.

In China it is called the *Qi* (pronounced *chi*).

In Hawaii it is called *Manna*.

Step Two: Tell students that they will try some **asanas** – or postures that many people believe create strength and energy in the body. Tell students that they will do the Sun Salutation. As they do it, tell them to think about what each part of the body feels like. The poses of the Sun Salutation are illustrated in the next few pages.

Step Three: Initiate a discussion about the activity. Did students like it? Why or why not? Some questions you can ask are: *How does your body feel? How was this similar or different to the first activity? Did any of these positions seem familiar? Which positions were difficult? Why? What different part of the body could you feel?*

For more information please see: http://www.healthandyoga.com/html/info_place.asp

The Sun Salutation

Step 1: Stand straight with feet together. Join the palms together in front of the chest. Exhale fully.

Step 2: Inhaling, stretch both arms above head, palms facing upwards. Arch the back and stretch the whole body. This posture stretches the chest and abdomen.

Step 3: Exhaling, bend the body forward and down, keeping the spine straight. A flow of blood is sent to the spinal nerves. Hamstring muscles are stretched, and there is increased blood flow to the brain.

Step 4: Inhale and extend left leg back. Drop knee to the ground. The right knee is bent and foot placed flat on the ground. This lifts the spine.

Step 5: On the exhale bring right leg back to join with left. Raise buttocks and lower head between arms, creating a triangle. Try to place heels flat on ground. This strengthens the nerves and muscles in arms and legs, stretches the calf muscles and Achilles' tendon. Take a deep inhalation.

Step 6: Exhaling, drop both knees to ground. Slide body to bring neck and chest to ground. All eight limbs - toes, knees, chest, hands and chin - touch the floor.

Step 7: On inhalation lower hips and push chest forward and upward till spine is arched. Relieves tension of back muscles and spinal nerves.

Step 8: Exhale going back to posture 5. Then posture 4, 3, 2, and finally 1.

Pose 1

Stand with feet joined and hands folded in front of the chest.



Pose 3

Bend forward and place the hands flat on the floor. You may bend the knees in the beginning.



Pose 2

Raise hands and bend backward.



Pose 4

Stretch the right leg back while bending the left knee & lowering the torso. Stretch the neck backwards.



Pose 5

Lifting the hips take the left foot back to join the right foot. Lower your head. The body assumes a triangular position.



Pose 6

Lower the body to the floor. Let the chin, chest and knees rest on the floor but not the stomach.



Pose 8

Lift the hips up to the triangular position of pose 5.



Pose 7

Drop the stomach. Lift your head and raise the upper body. The abdomen should remain on the floor.



Pose 9

Bring the left foot forward and assume pose 4.



Pose 10

Straighten your legs and raise hips as in Pose 3.



Pose 11

Raise hands above your head and bend backwards.



Part IV - Introducing Capoeira (Cah-poo-weh-ra)

History of Capoeira: Explain that there is a Brazilian form of martial arts that originated in the 16th century and was created by people of African descent in South America.

Capoeira is a form of dance, game and art that involves playing instruments and singing. A roda or large circle is formed by a group of people who play music, clap along and sing, while two people go in the middle of the circle, and perform jogo or “the game” around each other in a playful dance that involves kicks, flips, handstands, and sweeps.

Although it has been controversial throughout history, Capoeira was still practiced as a way to retain and pass on culture from generation to generation, to keep the art alive, and lift the spirits of those who practiced it. The goal of Capoeira is not to hurt the opponent, but to show off skill and control.

Step Two: Tell students that they will try some Capoeira moves, and that they will also take their heart rate before and after performing the moves. Try out some of the Capoeira moves detailed on the next page.

Step Three: After students have had a chance to try the Capoeira moves and take their pulse again, discuss the similarities and differences between Capoeira and Yoga. Some questions can include: *What was your favorite Capoeira move? What was your favorite Yoga posture? How does your body feel in comparison to how it felt after doing Yoga? What are some similarities between Yoga and Capoeira? What are some differences?*

Math Extension

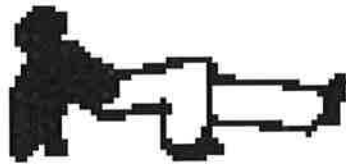
You can use this activity to show how people have similar and different flexibilities and heart rates. You can then make a chart comparing and contrasting some of the results.¹

1 Information from: <http://capoeira.orlova.sweb.cz/pohyby/Spaceport/moves.html>

Introduction to Capoeira

Step 1: Ginga is the most basic of all the Capoeira moves, and the one that all other moves are based on and returns to. For this move, instead of standing still, move around with a creeping motion, lifting your knees high with each step and pulling your torso up and down as you step with a rocking motion. You are almost walking in place, but creating a small triangle with the steps. This is done slowly, as your arms also swing back and forth very slowly. Ginga means “rocking back and forth.”

Step 2: Queda de Tres: There are two ways to do this move. First, crouch down to the ground and lift yourself on your tip-toes. Place one hand up to the face, covering it, and the other to your side, supporting you. Then, to smoothly transition into the second position, place both hands on the ground behind you, with your legs in front of you, one straight and one bent underneath. This is a position used to land after an “attack.” Queda de Tres means “fall of three” because you are being supported by three limbs.



Step 3: Queda de Quatro: is similar to Queda de Tres, only “Quatro” means four. So for this move, put all your weight on your hands behind you and gently kick your bent leg out, so as to be on support on all four limbs.



Step 4: Esquiva Baixa: A dodging move that can be achieved from the previous move by turning your body over so that you are facing the floor. Keep one leg back and bend the other one underneath you at a 90° angle. Now that you are in this position, put one arm on the floor for support, and the other over your head, blocking it.



Step 5: Rolé: This is a rolling motion that is kept very close to the ground, and one of the basic methods of traveling around the roda. Starting from a crouching position, with your hand supporting behind you, shift your weight to your left side of your body and lift your right arm, turning your body downwards simultaneously (and slowly!). Push yourself up, to bring the right leg around behind, landing it on the floor with your right hand. Finish the move by bringing the left side around like you did the right, until you are in the original crouching position.



Step 6: Meia Lua de Compasso: This is a spinning kick. For the safety of everyone trying these moves, it is important to do this move very slowly and controlled. This move can be done by placing both hands and feet on the floor, torso bent over the legs, which are in a step position. With both hands on the floor, kick the leg left up slowly, and as it comes down, lift the body up, bringing the kicking leg behind. Stand with the kicking leg far back, and the other leg bent over, while arms come up near the face, as to protect it.



Step 7: Return to standing and thank everyone who participated for joining in Capoeira practice!