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# World Olympics

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Preparing Students for a  
Multicultural and Multireligious World

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A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY TANENBAUM FOR GRADES K-6



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

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# Games Around the World

## Unit 3, Lesson 3

**Objectives:** Students will learn about games that are played around the world. Then they will create “teaching games” (games that teach a particular concept or skill) for their classmates to enjoy.

**Skills:** Comparing and Contrasting, Social Studies

**Grades:** K-6

### **Materials:**

- Paper
- Markers
- Egg Crates for Mancala Board
- Pebbles for Mancala
- Tangram Pieces (included)
- Tangram Figures (included)

**Recommended Resources:** *Children's Traditional Games: Games from 137 Countries and Cultures* by Judy Sierra and Robert Kaminski and *How My Family Lives in America* by Susan Kuklin

### **Preparation:**

Collect Egg Crates for making Mancala boards (one per student).

Have the Tangram pieces cut out and the figures copied for the students.

### **PROCEDURE**

**Introduction:** Something that most of the children of the world have in common is that they love to play sports and games! Ask students what their favorite game to play is. Prompt students to think of different games including those they play with family, friends, in school or as a team.

Explain that many children’s games that we play in the United States are similar to games in several cultures around the world. For example, some ball games are the oldest games that children in the world played. In the ancient Mayan civilization, for example, a game was played with rubber balls thrown through hoops on either side of a court. Also, archaeologists (people who study ancient civilizations) have found ruins of hopscotch courts from Roman times.

Explain that students are going to learn to play games from different cultures.

# Tangrams

Puzzle games are some of the most common around the world. Ask students if any of them like jigsaw puzzles. Why do they like or dislike them? What makes a puzzle easy or hard?

A Tangram puzzle is a puzzle game that was originally played in China. The game was brought to America in the 1800s by merchants and became popular here for some time. The object of the game is to make figures of common animals and objects using seven small shapes.

## **How to Play**

**Step One:** Using the Tangram pieces template included on the next page, cut out colorful shapes for each student. Cardboard or a slightly firmer material will make it easier to manipulate the pieces, but if you don't have cardboard, you can use construction paper.

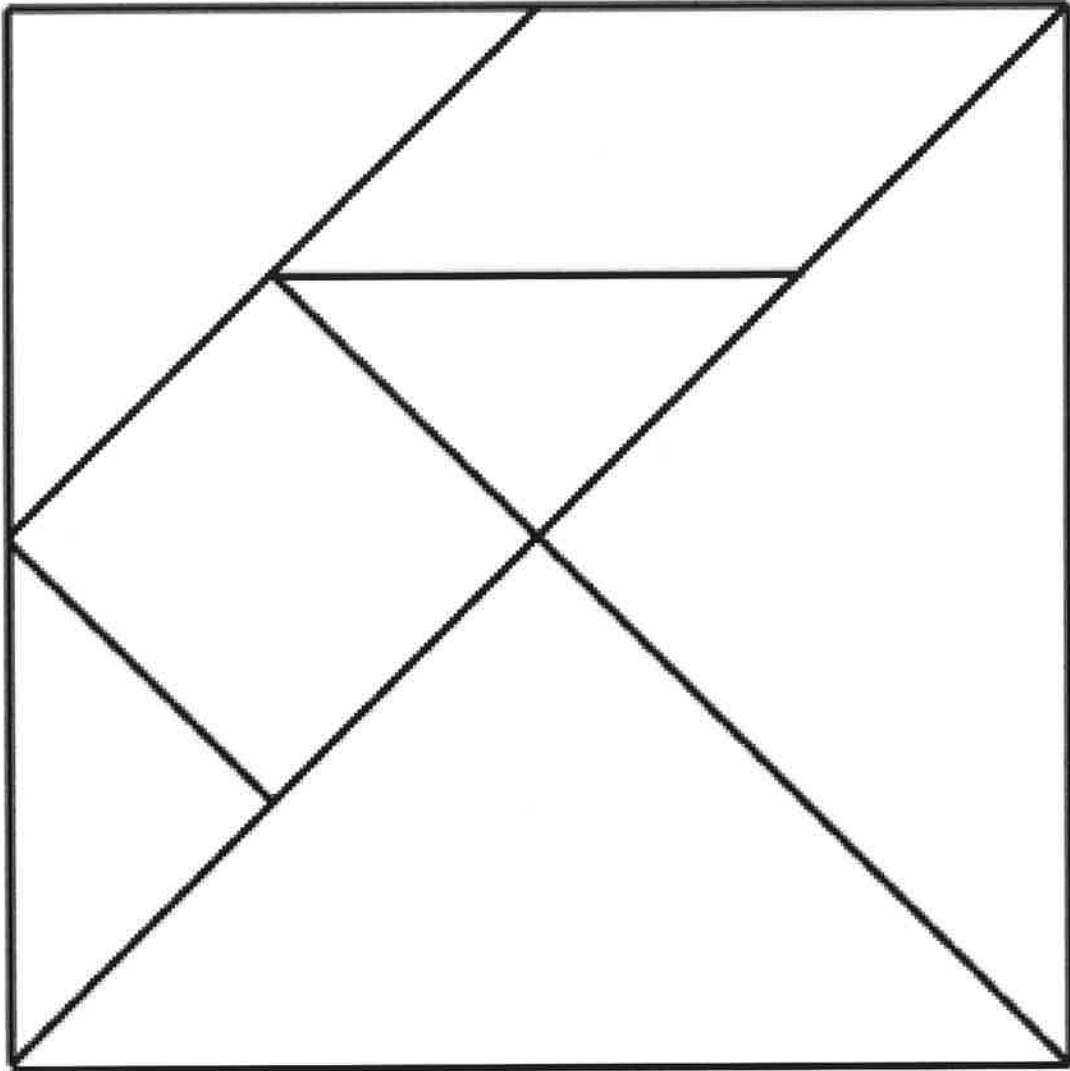
Review the shapes of each piece with students. Altogether there are seven pieces: five isosceles triangles (a triangle is an isosceles triangle when the length of two of its sides are equal), a parallelogram and a square.

**Step Two:** Now show students the templates of the figures they have to make using the pieces. The only two rules are that the pieces have to touch at least one other piece, and they can't overlap each other. The templates we have provided (besides the fish) show how the individual shapes create each animal figure. When showing students the templates, make sure to adapt them to be lineless (like the fish).

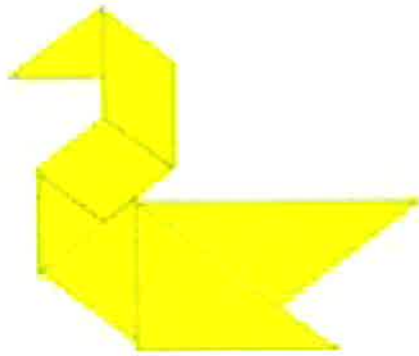
**Step Three:** If students have mastered the game, you can encourage them to create their own designs that others can try to make with their pieces.

**Step Four:** Finally, ask students: *Does this remind you of other games you have played? What is similar or different about them?*

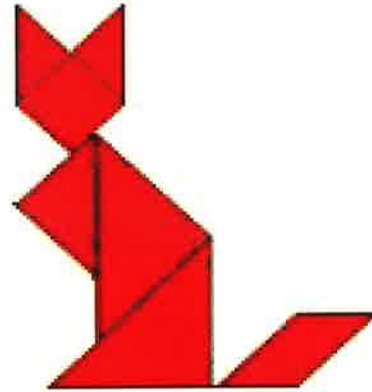
# Tangram Template



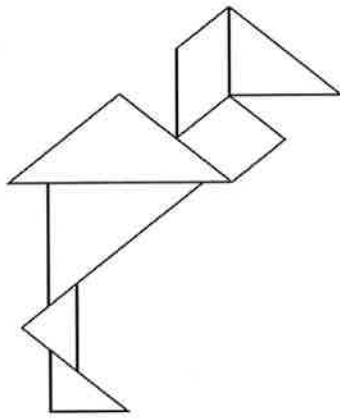
# Tangram Templates



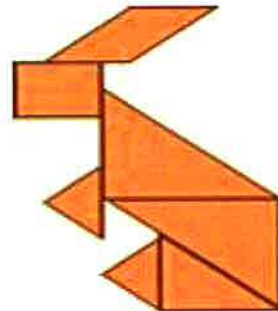
**Swan**



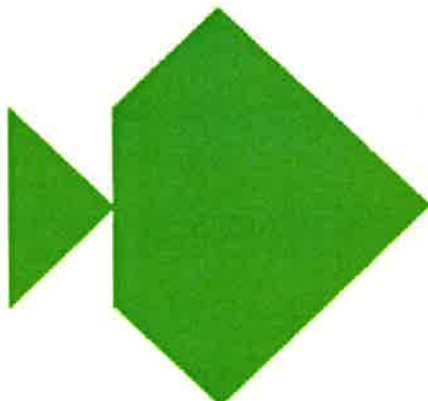
**Cat**



**Stork**



**Rabbit**



**Fish**

# Mancala

Mancala is one of the oldest games in the world. Historians believe that it originated in Egypt before 1400 B.C.E. Variations of the game are played in nearly every African country and in some Asian countries and other countries around the world. Mancala is enjoyed by people of all ages, from children to adults. Mancala is an important part of family life. In some African cultures, learning to play Mancala is a ceremonial rite of passage.

The word Mancala is an Arabic word that means "to transfer." The object of the game is to transfer playing pieces or stones from one bin to another. Ask if anyone has heard of or has played Mancala in the past. If there is someone who has played it before, perhaps they would like to demonstrate and/or assist in teaching the game to his/her peers.

Note: As stated earlier, many variations of the game exist. Therefore, it is likely that the instructions introduced by a student will be different from the instructions outlined below.

## **How to Play**

The game is played with two players. The board is placed between opponents and each player chooses one half of the board (the side facing him/her). Each takes twenty-four stones and puts four stones in each of the six bins on his/her side of the board.

The two larger bins on either side of the board are called kalahas. The kalahas are empty at the beginning of the game. The player with the most pieces in his/her kalaha at the end of the game wins.

During play, one can move any piece from his/her own side of the board only. Studying the board to see which pieces when moved will yield more stones dropped in one's own kalaha is a good strategy to use during the game.

## **Instructions for making a Mancala board out of an eggcrate follow.**

**Step One:** One player must begin (player A). Player A scoops up all the stones from any one bin on his/her side of the board.

Moving to the right in a counter clockwise motion, player A drops one stone into each bin that s/he approaches. Should a stone be dropped into a bin filled with stones, Player A scoops up all of the stones in that bin and continues playing.

Should Player A come to his/her own kalaha, s/he drops one stone into it and if there are remaining stones, s/he continues dropping them into his/her opponent's bins in the same counter clockwise motion.

If Player A comes to player B's kalaha, s/he skips it and continues dropping one stone into each of his/her own bins.

Player A's turn ends once she or he runs out of stones.



**Step Two:** Player B proceeds, beginning on his/her side, repeating the same type of move as Player A. Players take turns moving. The play continues until no more moves can be made and one side has been emptied of all of its stones. The player with the most stones in their kalaha wins.

**Step Three:** Finally, ask students what they learned from this game. Does this game remind students of other games they have played? What is similar or different about them?

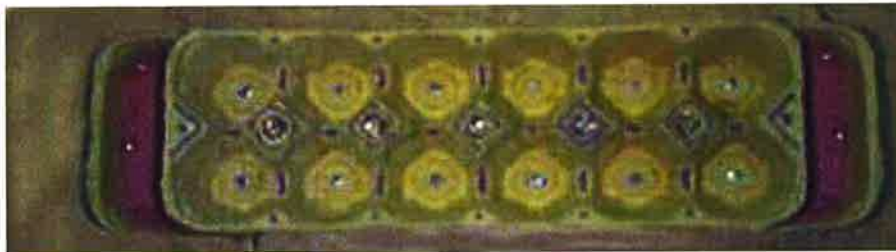
## Make Your Own Mancala Board

Separate the top of the egg crate from the bottom. The top piece will be used to make the kalahas. The bottom piece forms the bins of the Mancala board.

Cut the top portion in half widthwise. Glue the two top pieces to the underside of the bins, as seen in the picture below. Make sure to leave enough room to allow the kalaha to hold the stones. Kids can decorate their Mancala boards and be as creative as they wish.

Be creative when finding stones. Some examples: paperclips, marbles, beans, pebbles, etc.

**Your eggcrate Mancala board should look like this:**



**Here are some examples of more intricate Mancala boards:**



# Hopscotch

In **Indonesia**, many children play **One-Leg Jump**:

**Step 1:** Draw four or five one-ft x one-ft squares arranged side by side.

**Step 2:** Each player hops to the first square, then to the second one, then to the third one, and so on.

**Step 3:** After reaching the fifth square, the player has to turn around still on one leg and hop back from the fifth square to the first one.



## Special Rules of the Game

While hopping, the player must not step on the line between the squares, and must keep his or her balance. If, for instance, the player's other leg (the one which is lifted) touches the ground, the player fails.

If a player breaks a rule, as punishment, the failed player must stand on one leg for about five minutes.

## Chinese Hopscotch

Draw the hopscotch design according to the diagram below:

<b>C</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>A</b>

**Step 1:** A player jumps with both feet into box 1. The player then hops out of the box.

**Step 2:** The player repeats the jump into box 1 and then jumps with feet apart into the pair of boxes marked A. He then brings his legs together into box 1 again and then hops out. A mistake is made if a player steps on a line or misses the pattern.

The player continues the following pattern:

1, A, 1,  
 1, A, 2, A, 1,  
 1, A, 2, B, 2, A, 1,  
 1, A, 2, B, 3, B, 2, A, 1,  
 1, A, 2, B, 3, C, 3, B, 2, A, 1,

# Marbles

In **Indonesia**, there is a game called **Kelereng**.

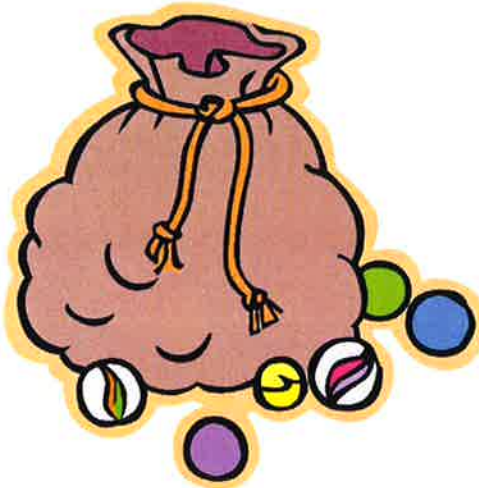
- Place all the marbles at the center of a 10 by 10 square-foot triangle or square.
- Each player has his or her own shooter marble to shoot the set. Shooting is done by placing the shooter marble between the index finger and the thumb and moving the thumb outward to shove the shooter marble in order to hit the marbles in the set.
- The first player shoots at the set and goes on playing until s/he misses.
- Then, it is another player's turn to shoot the set.
- Each player temporarily keeps any marbles that s/he can hit and move out of the triangle or square.
- In the final session each player takes a turn against each other. If a player's shooter marble gets hit, s/he loses and must give his/her temporary wins to the one who hit him/her. At the end of the game, the winner takes all.

In **Turkey**, there is a game called **Hakan Tuncer**.

- First, draw a large triangle.
- Then put all the marbles into the triangle.
- Then shoot your favorite marble at the others in order to throw the others out of the triangle.
- The game continues until all the marbles are gone.

In **Cyprus**, many children play a game called **Peirilia**.

- Every player should bring six marbles. Draw a large triangle in the middle of the yard. Put the marbles in the middle of the triangle with about an inch of space between each one. Have the players stand back from the triangle.
- The first player throws his/her marble and tries to kick the other marbles out of the triangle.
- The winner of the game is the player who takes all the marbles from the other players.



# Teaching Games

Explain to students that in many cultures there is a concept of a “teaching game”. Ask students: *What do you think a “teaching game” means?* Explain that a teaching game is a game that teaches a particular skill or concept through a fun game. Ask students what they think the games they just played in this lesson (Tangrams, Mancala and Marbles) teach, for example. Answers can include: counting, addition, Geometry, quick reflexes, hand-eye coordination, etc. Encourage curiosity about other games and cultures.

Have students create a game to teach other students everything they have learned about the Olympics. Examples include jeopardy style quiz games, mimicking games, jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles, board games or memory games. Remind students to make sure their games are flexible – they can be made harder or easier, there can be more than one way of winning, they can be played as a team or by a single person, etc.

## **Extension**

Have students brainstorm something that they are really good at like science or drawing, and ask students how they could teach it through a game.

You can include other games that people play around the world such as board games, card games, ball games, etc. in this lesson as well. Students can study the history of different games through library or internet research. Students may be interested in beginning a club to learn games such as chess.