

## Pioneer Games

While many of the children's sports and activities today are run and organized by adults, the games played in the early 1900's required no adult help. These rules were created by the children and then passed down from child to child. Without TV, planned activities or expensive toys, children from the past had to be resourceful in organizing their own amusements and making their own toys. Below are some of the classic pioneer games, try some with your class! Perhaps you may still recognize them!

**Blind Man's Bluff:** This is a variation of Hide and Seek. Players form a circle while one person is blindfolded and put into the middle of the circle. They must try and tag someone while blindfolded. Once they "catch someone" they must feel their head and neck to try and identify them. If they guess right, the person who got caught assumes the role of the "blind man"; if they guess wrong then the game resumes.

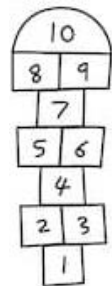
**Push the Potato:** Students line up at the start line. Using only their nose they must roll a potato in a straight line all the way across to the finish line!

**Skipping Rope Rhyme:** Pioneer children skipped rope just like you. Here is a rhyme they might have used. In this rhyme the player has to act each action. When the player gets to the spelling part, the others turn the rope as fast as possible. The player must spell the word without missing a beat while skipping.

Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, turn around;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, touch the ground;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, shine your shoes;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, read the news;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, go upstairs;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, say your prayers;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, blow out the light;  
Grizzly bear, grizzly bear, spell good night –  
G-O-O-D-N-I-G-H-T!

### Hopscotch

Toss a token or a charm onto the hopscotch pattern on the ground. Hop on the squares, following the rules of one foot or two, whoever reaches the home space first wins! But don't step on the tokened square!

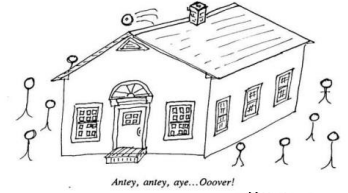


### Stand-O

Bouncing a ball against a wall, a catcher will shout to others who are running to stop. The catcher will try to hit a runner with the ball. If you are hit, you become the catcher.

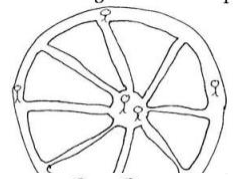
### ***Antey-ay-over!***

After the call of “antey-ay” and the response “over!”, the ball was thrown over the schoolhouse roof. If caught, the catcher would race around the school and try to take a prisoner by touching them with the ball. Whichever team had the most players at the end, wins!



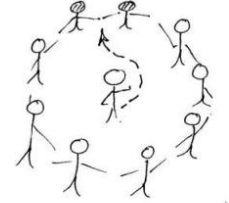
### ***Fox and Goose***

This game would be played in freshly fallen snow! A large circle with cross paths would be created by many stomping feet. The fox would try to catch all the geese in the paths. If you made it to the center circle, you were safe. If you left the tracks or were tagged, you became a fox.



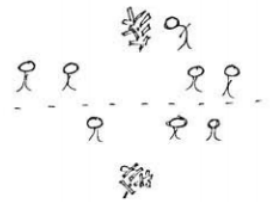
### ***Bull in the Ring***

Children created a circle by holding hands, a ‘bull’ would be placed in the middle of the circle. The bull would have to force their way out of the ring, often by cleverly choosing a weak spot between two children. A similar game called Red Rover could also be played in two lines facing each other trying to break through the other team’s line.



### ***Prisoners Base / Steal the Picket***

This was an early version of capture the flag! The goal is to steal a picket or stick from the opposing team. If you were tagged in the enemy territory, you became a prisoner at their home base until you could be tagged by a team member. Whichever team collected the most pickets, won!



### ***Jacks***

The modern version of the game consists of bouncing the ball and picking up a specified number of jacks and catching the ball before it bounces a second time. In the basic game, players start by picking up one jack each bounce, then two, then three, and so on. More primitive versions were also played using bones, seeds, stones and small cloth bags filled with sand.

### ***Marbles***

One of the oldest of all known games! A circle is drawn in the dirt and marbles are placed inside. Players try to shoot the marbles out of the ring using a shooter marble or ‘knuckler’. Once all marbles are out of the ring, whoever has collected the most, wins!

### ***Pick-up Sticks***

The object of the game is to drop the sticks in a pile and then remove them one at a time without disturbing the rest. The game can either be scored by counting the number of sticks each player picks up or, using the color of the sticks determine their point value, with the player having the greatest number of points declared the winner. Earlier versions of this game used ivory or bones as the sticks.

