

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

6-8

Subject

Social Studies

Lesson Title

Let's Play Chunkey!

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Wide open space for throwing a stick or pole
- 2 or more people to play
- One or more long thin sticks or poles that has a narrowed tip (not sharp) These should be at least 5 feet long or more
- A round flat stone/disc (the chunkey) between around 4 to 6 inches in diameter and 1 or more inches thick.
- (Optional) Brief [YouTube video: Cherokee Chunkey Game](#)
- [Chunkey info-graphic from PBS](#)

STEPS

Be sure to have a very open space for this game. An outdoor space such as a field is best because the stick will not damage the ground. For a visual example and background information, view this [info-graphic from PBS](#). Though tribes may have different ways to play chunkey, but here are the basic steps to play:

Activity Steps:

1. If you have WiFi watch this brief example of [chunkey on YouTube](#).
2. Two or more people line up with a chunkey (stick) in hand.
3. Another person rolls the stone along the ground.
4. Once the stone begins to roll, the others launch the chunkey into the air toward the stone.
5. When the stone stops rolling, the person whose stick landed closest to the stone wins a point. If a person's chunkey touches the stone, that is two points.

After the Activity:

1. This activity can be used for cultural game events or cultural competitions.
2. Be sure to check out the resources for learning more to find ideas for other traditional games that you can play at home.

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HELPFUL TIPS

Parents and caregivers: This is an opportunity for your child to practice hand-eye coordination while learning about traditional cultural games. Please monitor your child while playing this game to ensure the safety of everyone. As you play chunky, share this information with your child:

- This activity helps children engage in physical activity while also working on coordination and strength. It is important to maintain safety while playing so be sure to have adult supervision.
- Traditionally tribes used games to bring people together to strengthen relationships. These games were also used to teach young people life skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, patience, and endurance that would be useful for adult life.
- Different tribes have variations of this game. Take this opportunity to teach and play any games that your tribe shares traditionally.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity gives young people an opportunity to play a traditional tribal game. Chunkey is still played by many tribes today especially at cultural game events. To learn more about chunky or cultural game events, visit the sites below:

- To learn more about the annual Cherokee games watch this [YouTube video from Cherokee Nation](#).
- To learn more about the history of chunky and see different artifacts from the game watch this [slideshow on YouTube](#)
- To learn more about playing other traditional Native Games check out this [guide from the Wake Forest University Anthropology Kits](#)

Activity Adapted from:

- "Cherokee Chunkey Games" on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIGDAaYwsYY>
- "Chunkey" info-graphic on the Public Broadcasting Station and WKNO <https://www.pbs.org/native-america/extras/chunkey/>

Additional Resources:

- *Traditional Native Games* YouTube video by the Cherokee Nation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho00NS7E30s>
- *Chunkey Stone Slide Show* by the Illinois State Archaeological Survey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytYgCo1rf5c>
- *Native American Games* kit from the Wake Forest University Anthropology Kits <https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/88/2012/04/Fun-and-Games-Teachers-Guide.pdf>