

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

6-8

Subject

Physical Ed.

Lesson Title

Do You Have What it Takes to Compete in the Native Youth Olympics?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Wide open space for physical activity
- Friends or family to join
- A strong wooden stick about 2 feet long and 1 inch thick
- WiFi access (Optional)
- YouTube video on [Native Games: Origin](#)
- Online descriptions and examples of [Native Youth Olympic events](#)

STEPS

Each year in Alaska, the Native Youth Olympic games bring together young people to compete in cultural activities that test strength and endurance. Each event represents a traditional tribal practice used to train young Alaskan Natives for hunting, fishing, and survival in extreme cold. Before you begin the activity, watch this [YouTube video](#) about the origin of Native Games.

The Eskimo Pull: (for pulling seals from the ice)

1. If WiFi is available, watch the [Eskimo Stick Pull YouTube video](#).
2. Two people sit on the floor facing each other with the bottoms of their feet touching. Knees should be bent slightly.
3. Both people hold the stick in between them with their palms facing to the floor. Hand positions can be changed between each round.
4. Have someone signal to start. Both people will try to pull the stick away from the other without jerking or moving their hands on the stick.
5. The first person to lose their grip, fall over sideways, or be pulled up from the floor loses the round. After winning two rounds, the winner moves to another opponent.

The Seal Hop/Inuit Knuckle Hop: (for sneaking up on seals while hunting)

1. If WiFi is available, watch the [Seal Hop YouTube video](#).
2. Determine how far you want to hop and place a line to mark the turn around point.
3. Females should be in a push-up position with arms straight and palms flat on the floor. Males should stay in a lowered push-up position with elbows bent and hands curled and knuckles down on the floor.
4. At the signal to start, you should hop like a seal across the floor while staying in push-up position. Once your shoulders have passed the marked line, turn around and hop back to start. If you pause or your body touches the floor, you must stop. The person to hop the farthest wins.

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HELPFUL TIPS

Parents and caregivers: This is an opportunity for your child and family to practice traditional challenges used to train Alaskan Native youth to hunt, fish, and survive in extremely cold weather. This could also be an opportunity to host an event like the Native Youth Olympics in your community. Visit the [official website of the NYO](#) to learn about more competitive events that young people can practice. Share this with your child while engaging in this activity.

- Some of these activities can be physically challenging. While it is important for young people to get exercise and spend time outdoors, please be sure that adults are present to ensure no one gets hurt.
- These activities are not only considered as a form of exercise, but for Alaskan Natives they represent a long cultural history of preparing young people to participate in the customs of survival such as hunting and fishing.
- Discuss any cultural activities that your tribe or community shares to prepare young people physically and mentally for adult life (for examples, archery, rock climbing, building shelter, etc.)

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity may invite questions about other cultural competitions like the Native Youth Olympics. To learn more about the Native Youth Olympics and other competitive events visit the sites below:

- To learn more about the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics in Alaska, visit [WEIO website](#) which explains 50 games that take place at the event.
- To learn more about the first World Indigenous Games held in Brazil., read the article "[The World Indigenous Games.](#)" It shares pictures of the events that represent Native people from around the world.

Activity Adapted from:

- Competitive Events on the Cook Inlet Tribal Council website for the Native Youth Olympics <https://citci.org/partnerships-events/nyo-games/competitive-events/>

Additional Links:

- Native Games: Origin YouTube video by the Cook Inlet Tribal Council <https://youtu.be/TvpAREkxGlg>
- The WEIO Games featured on the World-Eskimo Indian Olympics website <https://www.weio.org/games>
- The World Indigenous Games" featured in The Atlantic <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2015/10/the-world-indigenous-games/413077/>