



## HEALTH

# Traditional Games

### ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- History
- Lifeways

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Follow rules to play the game of shinny
- Explain why the game of shinny varied slightly from Tribe to Tribe

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do games help people to be part of a team?

### LOGISTICS

- Where does the activity take place?  
*Classroom*
- How are the students organized?  
 Whole class    Teams: 6 – 8  
 Pairs    Individually

### TIME REQUIRED

2 hours

## Overview

Tribal nations and Indigenous communities throughout North America have always enjoyed games and athletic activities that provide entertainment, teach skills of physical and mental endurance, promote Tribal values such as teamwork and fairness, and allow individuals and teams to challenge themselves in competition. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to learn about one such game called shinny. Many Tribes, including the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, played a version of shinny and continue to play today. This lesson focuses on physical education but also reinforces the idea that while Native American people groups often share similarities, including some of the games they play, they are far from homogenous and in fact represent a rich diversity of unique cultures.

## Background for teachers

Native Americans liked to play many games in their free time, including games using sticks and balls. One such stickball game was widely played by Tribes across North America. Called “shinny” in English due to its resemblance to a hockey-like Scottish game called “shinty,” shinny could be a women’s game or played by men alone, by men



and women together, or by men against women. The sticks were usually made from hardwood saplings and typically curved at the end, with some having greater length in the foot of the stick. Some sticks are painted or carved with designs, while others have the original bark on the stick. The ball could be made of wood, buckskin, bark peelings, or woven and could be a single ball or two balls tied together like a ladder ball. Pacific Coast and Southwestern Tribes typically used a wooden ball, while Eastern and Plains Tribes used buckskin balls. Goals were set at varying distances and could consist of one or two posts at each end of the playing area, blanket goals, or “hole in the ground” goals. The ball is batted or lofted with a stick (and in some variations kicked with the foot) toward the goal. Specific rules of play varied between Tribes and groups based on who was playing, the length of the playing area, and other considerations. The game could be played for fun and entertainment or be incorporated into ceremonies or special occasions.

The Cow Creek people played shinny using hardwood sticks and oak staves tied together. Goals were vertical poles posted at both ends of a playing area. Each pole had feathers and noisemakers attached so that it was clear when a goal had been scored. Anyone could play the game for fun, but only men played if the game was used as a substitute for fighting, competition, or warfare between groups. Rules were adapted based on the age range of players and the physical restrictions of the

## STANDARDS

### Oregon physical education standards

**PE.1.5.27** - Combines striking with a long implement (e.g., bat, hockey stick) with receiving and traveling skills in a small-sided game.

**PE.2.5.4** - Applies concepts of direction and force when striking an object with a short and/or long-handled implement, sending it toward a designated target in general situations.

**PE.5.5.3** - Describes the social benefits gained from participating in physical activity (e.g., recess, youth sport).

## MATERIALS

- Slides (PowerPoint slide deck)
- Classroom writing surface (e.g., blackboard, whiteboard, chalkboard, chart paper and markers)
- Supplies for playing an adapted form of shinny (enough for all students to participate)
- Long sticks with a curve at the end (field or floor hockey sticks can be substituted)
  - Small (4–5-inch diameter) soft ball; the Tribe suggests using two tennis balls wrapped in leather and tied together
  - A playing space of approximately 50 to 100 feet (indoor or outdoor or in gym)
  - Goal posts, goal nets, cones, or some other form of target; the Tribe uses two vertical poles with feathers and noisemakers attached
  - (Optional) Pinnies of various colors

*(Continued on next page)*



playing area, as shinny could be played in a small clearing or across a miles-long valley. The modern Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians teaches Tribal members how to play shinny—with some adaptations for safety, such as using tennis or whiffle balls instead of oak staves—as a fun recreational activity that promotes physical fitness and teamwork while maintaining ties to Tribal history and traditional practices.

### To prepare for lesson teachers should

- Review all materials for this lesson
- Prepare classroom audiovisual technology to display the slides
- Secure access to supplies (see “Materials”) and a playing space to allow students to play shinny
- Write the lesson objectives and key vocabulary on the classroom writing surface

### References

Culin, S. (1992). *Games of the North American Indians, volume 2: Games of skill*. Bison Books.

### Resources

The Traditional Native Games Society: <https://www.traditionalnativegames.org/home>

### MATERIALS (Continued)

- Classroom audiovisual technology and internet access to display PowerPoint slides, video, and websites (see following items)
- “Native American Shinny League Pre Season Promo 2018” video from the Native American Shinny League (run time: 5:37; available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/mQd85Y5CIAg>)

### VOCABULARY

**Póow** [BOH] – The word for a shinny goal in Takelma, the ancestral language of the Cow Creek people.

**Shinny** – Common name for a traditional stick-and-ball game played by many Native American Tribes across North America that involves using a curved stick or bat to strike or loft a ball toward a goal.

**Teamwork** – Decisions made or actions taken by individuals as part of a larger group; coordinated effort.

**t’elá** [t’-eh-LAH] – The Takelma word for a shinny stick.

**T’eut’áù** [t’-eh-oo-t’-AH-OO] – “They play shinny” in Takelma

**t’peèk’w** [t-BEH-kw] – The Takelma word for a shinny ball

## Considerations for teachers

### Assessment

The core activity of this lesson is focused on student discussion and engagement with narrative text. Teachers can assess student learning by monitoring student pairs and small group discussion.

Students will complete a summative assessment in which they write and present a narrative story that includes teaching elements.

### Practices

- *Classroom discussion* – Large group, whole class discussion allows students to express their thoughts and hear the thoughts of others. For the instructor, this practice is a good way to take the pulse of the group and see what general themes are emerging. For students, large group discussion can be a way to express themselves or to hear differing perspectives from others.
- *Adaptive physical education* – Address adaptive physical education needs with students prior to playing shinny to ensure that all students can learn, practice, and meet the grade-level standards and expectations with appropriate accommodations. Since shinny is an adaptive game with many variations, students can help provide guidance on ways to incorporate all students.

### ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING



The lesson is primarily structured around group discussion and exploration, but much of it can be adapted for distance or independent learning purposes. Be sure all students have either print or electronic access to the materials described. A suggested sequence follows:

1. Hold a class meeting online and, using the PowerPoint slides and the steps in Activity 1 (“Warm-Up”), have students respond to the discussion prompts provided on slide 2 (“Name this game”). Alternatively, you can post the discussion questions in your school’s online classroom platform or an online document and have students respond to them asynchronously.
2. Using a web conferencing or online meeting platform, the PowerPoint slides, and the steps and talking points in Activity 2 (“Let’s Learn About Shinny”), provide a virtual lecture and class discussion on the traditional Native American game of shinny, including variations on the game as played by members of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.
3. Invite students to prepare and play shinny at home with their family and friends using the instructions and materials provided and/or described in Activity 3 (“Let’s Play Shinny!”).
4. Convene an online class meeting to review and reflect together with students on the lesson and the experience of playing shinny (see steps in Activity 4, “Reflection”), answer any remaining questions, and distribute or discuss the exit ticket for student assessment (if using).

### Learning targets

- I can follow the rules to play the game of shinny.
- I can explain why the game of shinny varied slightly from Tribe to Tribe.

### Optional/Extension

Have students bring to class materials such as leather, denim, sticks, cords, cotton, yarn, or play balls to construct shinny sticks and balls. Point out how the available materials and design preferences vary between students, as they did for different Tribes.

### Appendix

Material included in the electronic folder that supports this lesson is:

- Slides\_Traditional Games.ppt

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## Activity 1

### Warm-Up

*Time: 15 minutes*

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#### Overview

Students engage in a warm-up activity to activate their prior knowledge.

#### Step 1

Welcome students to class.

#### Step 2

Display slide 2 (“Name this game”) and ask students to discuss the prompts with a partner. The prompts ask students to view a picture of a game of shinny being played and share what they think, wonder, and notice about it.

#### Step 3

Ask for a few volunteers to share what they discussed in their pairs.

#### Step 4

Provide some opening remarks to set up the lesson.

#### Say:

*Today, we’re going to learn about a traditional game that was played and continues to be played by the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and many other Native American Tribes across North America. Native people have been playing some variation of this game for years. In English, it’s called “shinny” because it resembled a form of field hockey from Scotland called “shinty” that Euro-American settlers in North America were familiar with. Its main pieces of equipment are curved sticks and a ball, but as we will see, there were many, many variations in how this game was played.*

#### Step 5

Review the learning targets and vocabulary for the lesson.

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## Activity 1 *(Continued)*

### Step 6

Pause to take any questions from students before moving on.

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## Activity 2

# Let's Learn About Shinny

*Time: 30 minutes*

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### Overview

In this activity, students learn the general rules and materials of shinny as well as ways in which they varied among Native American Tribes.

### Step 1

Ask students to work in pairs to discuss the following question.

#### Ask:

*Why do humans like to play games and sports?*

### Step 2

After a few minutes, invite students to share what they discussed with their partners and record a few responses on the classroom writing surface.

### Step 3

Prompt students to deepen their understanding of how games and sports help individuals and groups survive and thrive using the following prompts or others you think of.

- Support physical and emotional health
- Teach people to cooperate with others to achieve goals
- Channel competitiveness in healthy ways
- Provide socialization opportunities for both players and spectators
- Can resolve or ease tension and rivalry between groups in safe ways



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## Activity 2 (Continued)

### Step 4

Share the following to connect students' discussion to traditional games organized and played by members of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and other Native Americans.

#### Say:

*Tribal nations and Indigenous communities throughout North America have always enjoyed games and athletic activities that provide entertainment, teach skills of physical and mental endurance, promote Tribal values such as teamwork and fairness, and allow individuals and teams to challenge themselves in competition. Native Americans liked to play many games in their free time, including team sports using sticks and balls. One such game became an international sport we today in English call "lacrosse." [Pause to ask for a raise of hands of students who play lacrosse, have friends and family who play, or who watch or follow lacrosse as a spectator.] Another such game is shinny, which is played much like the modern-day sport of field hockey.*

### Step 5

Play the first two minutes of the "Native American Shinny League Pre Season Promo 2018" video from the Native American Shinny League (see link in "Materials").

### Step 6

Ask students if they have any questions about the video, then ask them to discuss their reactions to it in pairs, using prompts such as the following or others you think of.

- What did you notice about how shinny was being played in the video?
- What were some of the reasons the narrator mentions for why Tribes played and continue to play shinny?
- What other questions do you have about shinny?

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## Activity 2 (Continued)

### Step 7

Display slide 3 (“Shinny basics”) and review the image and text on the slide with students.

#### Say:

*Shinny is a ball-and-stick game like modern-day field hockey. The goal of shinny is to strike or loft a ball with a stick to move it toward a goal. It was and continues to be a popular sport among Native American Tribes all over North America. While the basic strategy of the game is the same, different Tribes used different materials to create the sticks and balls and followed different rules for playing the game. Shinny was played by both children and adults. For adults, it could be played by women or men alone, by men and women together, or by men against women. The game could be played for fun and entertainment, be incorporated into ceremonies or special occasions, or be used to ease tensions between different groups instead of fighting each other.*

*Shinny sticks were fashioned from saplings or branches of local trees, and the ball could be made of wood, buckskin, bark peelings, or woven. Pacific Coast and Southwestern Tribes typically used a wooden ball, while Eastern and Plains Tribes used buckskin balls. Balls could be a single ball or two balls tied together. Goals were set at varying distances and could consist of one or two posts at each end of the playing area, blanket goals, or “hole in the ground” goals. The ball cannot be touched with the hands but rather is batted or lofted with a stick (and, in some variations, kicked with the feet) toward the goal.*

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## Activity 2 (Continued)

### Step 8

Ask students if they have any questions so far, then ask them to discuss in pairs the following prompt.

#### Ask:

*Why do you think there were variations between Tribes in the materials and rules used?*

### Step 9

Invite a few pairs to share their responses to the prompt, then share the following to deepen students' understanding of how Tribes are not homogenous.

#### Say:

*While Tribes—particularly those close to each other in the same region of North America—might have many commonalities, they are not homogenous. While they might borrow ideas and practices from each other, they might express or carry them out differently based on their specific cultures, the landscapes they occupied, and the resources available to them.*

### Step 10

Display slide 4 (“Cow Creek-style shinny”) and discuss the text and images with students.

#### Say:

*The Cow Creek people played shinny using hardwood sticks and oak staves tied together. Goals were vertical poles posted at both ends of a playing area. Each pole had feathers and noisemakers attached so that it was clear when a goal had been scored. Anyone could play the game for fun, but only men played if the game was used to ease tensions and reduce fighting and competition between groups. Rules varied based on the age of the players and the length of the playing area; it could be played in a small clearing or across a miles-long valley.*

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## Activity 2 (Continued)

### Step 11

Display slide 5 (“CCBUTI and shinny today”) and discuss the text and images with students.

#### Say:

*The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians teaches Tribal members how to play shinny—with some adaptations and modern materials for convenience and safety, such as using tennis or whiffle balls instead of oak staves—as a fun recreational activity that promotes physical fitness and teamwork while maintaining ties to Tribal history and traditional practices.*

### Step 12

Answer any questions from students before moving on.

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### Activity 3

## Let's Play Shinny!

*Time: 60 minutes*

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### Overview

In this activity students play one or more rounds of shinny. See “Materials” for a list of needed equipment. The activity uses or adapts rules that the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians uses to teach Tribal members to play shinny. There will be a slight variation in use of the stick if using a Cow Creek-style ball—two balls tied together—versus a single ball; see description below.

### Step 1

Direct students to relocate to a suitable indoor or outdoor playing space.

### Step 2

Have the class do some stretching exercises and then run several laps around the playing space to loosen up and increase their heart rates.

### Step 3

Have students help set up the playing space if you have not done so beforehand (i.e., set up goals at either end of the playing space and distribute sticks and a pinnie, if using, to each player).

### Step 3

Divide the class into teams by selecting team captains to choose players one person at a time, or using another selection method of your preference to ensure the teams are well mixed by gender and ability level. Depending on class size and the available playing space, form two or more teams with equal numbers of players as needed to ensure all students have opportunities to actively engage in gameplay.

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### Activity 3 *(Continued)*

#### Step 5

Provide essential game instructions and safety talk:

- Teams will work together to use their sticks to strike or loft the ball toward the opposing team's goal. The opposing team will defend their goal and attempt to intercept the ball and move it toward the opposing goal.
- The ball can only be moved with or on the stick, like in hockey. Generally, no part of the body can touch the ball.
- There are no offsides, and any player can play any position. Goalies are not required, but teams can choose to have one or two players watch the goal.
- Players should generally keep their sticks below waist level. If using a Cow Creek-style ball (two balls tied together), players can raise their sticks to catch the ball but should toss the ball underhanded. If using a single ball, students should keep their sticks below waist level and avoid "high-sticking" when striking the ball and following through.
- At no time can players strike or contact each other with their bodies or sticks.

#### Step 6

Decide if there will be out-of-bounds rules or not, based on the size and surroundings of the playing space, and share them with students. In traditional play, there were no out-of-bounds areas and play could continue behind goals, but space restrictions or playing indoors may require enforcement of out-of-bounds and a restart of play (such as at the nearest one-quarter field point).

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### Activity 3 *(Continued)*

#### Step 7

Set point limits before the game starts based on the size of the playing space. The limits should generally be odd numbers (1, 5, or 7) with one point for a large field and more points for smaller spaces. If using a basketball court, play the first game to five points and adjust for subsequent games based on how the students are performing. A point is scored when the ball hits (or passes through) the goal.

#### Step 8

To start gameplay (or restart gameplay after a goal is scored), have teams position themselves on opposing halves of the playing space (with each team starting on their own side of the centerline), then toss the ball into the center of the field.

#### Step 9

Monitor gameplay to ensure students are playing safely, fairly, and inclusively. Help students to negotiate and/or resolve any disputes or safety issues fairly and productively.

#### Step 10

Encourage teams to work together to plan and play to their individual strengths while making allowances for the strengths and weaknesses of their teammates.

#### Step 11

If students bunch up fighting for the ball, count aloud to five. If the group does not break up at the end of the count, stop and reset play.

#### Step 12

When gameplay has ended, have students help clean up equipment and do a cool-down activity, such as another round of stretching.

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## Activity 4

# Reflection

*Time: 15 minutes*

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### Overview

In this activity students reflect on and summarize what they learned in the lesson.

### Step 1

Restate or point to the learning targets for the lesson and review with students. Ask if they have any questions about what they learned.

### Step 2

Ask students to share out what stood out or surprised them the most in the lesson.

### Step 3

Sum up the lesson by giving the students an exit ticket with the following questions:

- *How was it playing a game with very few formal rules?*
- *Did you have to adapt to anything new about this game?*
- *What did playing shinny teach you about yourself? What did it teach you about Cow Creek and other Tribes that enjoyed and continue to enjoy playing shinny?*
- *How did teamwork play a part in this game?*