

Games Children Played

Story Thematic - Lesson 1

Title: Nisei Nikkei Fun and Games

Summary: Highlight Omoide stories that discuss social and recreational activities the Nikkei authors and the community participated in as children.

Suggested age/grade level: 4th-7th

Related EALR: Check the OSPI website for EALRS and CBA's applicable to your grade level.



Suggested materials: Omoide IV stories – “Childhood Games,” “Sports,” “Barbed Wire,” “The Drowning,” (see additional bibliography)

Time needed: Approximately one class period

Objective: To enrich understanding and encourage empathy, students will identify games and activities that Japanese American children participated in the late 30's through WW2 and compare them to their own present day activities.

Presenting the Lesson

Preparation:

Select which and how many of the suggested Omoide stories students will read. Determine if you'll need extra copies for individuals or if you'll read them as a large group. Find additional stories or books from the suggested [bibliography](#).

Set/Introduction:

Describe a game that you played when you were the age of your students. Ask students to share games they play now they think you didn't play as a child.

Introduce the stories as they best fit with the background information your students may have. This includes setting, timeline, and previous cultural or ethnic studies they may have done on Japanese American history and other populations. For example you might say, “Today we will read what some Japanese American children did for entertainment before and during World War II.”

Main activity:

Read the stories as individuals, pairs, or as a large group. You may need to review or introduce vocabulary. (See [Story Vocabulary: Japanese terms and More - Lesson 1](#)) When students have finished reading the selections, use the guided questions to summarize or ones you have created.

Secondary activity:

On paper or the board, draw two columns. Title one column, “Then” and the other, “Now.” Have students list all of the activities or games that they still do in the **Now** column and the games that were specific to the era in the stories in the **Then** column.

Guided questions/Potential answers:

- ❑ How did the activities and games of these Japanese Americans differ from other American cultural groups? *(They used Japanese terminology. They weren't different.)* How were they the same? *(Many other American kids played basketball, baseball, swam, etc. Answers will vary.)*
- ❑ How did the time period affect the games or activities the Japanese American children played? *(Games were not electronic. Children played with others that lived close to them.)* How did different areas or the geography affect the games and activities played? *(Rules and procedures may have been changed based on the amount of space or the area in which the games were played.)*
- ❑ Did the Japanese American children play the same games as non-Japanese American children? *(Yes)* Did they play with each other or with anyone available? *(Answers will vary)* Why do you think so?
- ❑ What were some of the games and activities your grandparents played? Do you or did you play these games at any time? *(Answers will vary)*

Summary:

Have students make a list of questions that aren't answered in the stories about the games of long ago or the activities that people did as children when times were difficult. You can then choose to leave them open-ended for discussion, have students research them, or refer back to them as you teach other Omoide stories and related concepts.

Assessment options:

You can use the [response](#) or [empathy rubrics](#) to evaluate student responses during discussions. Or you may choose to have them write on any of the guided questions listed.

Extensions/Follow up:

Give students a chance to participate in one of the activities described in the stories. For example, a simple short activity you could have students use is mentioned in “Sports” - “Jan Ken Po” or as often found in English, “Rock, Paper Scissors.” Have students use “Jan Ken Po” to assist connection to the story. If you're able to do a more involved activity such as a jintori described in “Childhood Games,” make references to the story as children play.

Additional Bibliography:

Other resources can be found in the [References/Bibliography](#) section located on this curriculum website.

Notes: