

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

PK-2

Subject

**Social Studies
Art
Math**

Lesson Title

**Penobscot Nation Youth Ball &
Triangle Game: A Game of Chance**

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 sheet of paper
- 3 craft sticks
- Glue
- Masking tape
- Duct tape
- String
- [Images and original materials of the Ball & Triangle Game](#)

STEPS

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community, but it can also be done by the child alone.

1. Share with your child images of the Ball & Triangle Game.
2. Glue the craft sticks into a triangle, making the corners as equal as you can. Put your sticks aside to dry.
3. Crumple your sheet of paper, and tightly wrap it with masking tape. Be sure to crumple and wrap it firmly, so it will be tight.
4. Cut 18" of the string and tape one end to the ball.
5. When it comes to the string, you can make it longer but just know that the longer it is, the more difficult the game will be. Be sure not to cover too much of the string.
6. Decorate your ball with a layer of duct tape. Not only is it pretty but it will give weight to your ball, helping you to control it better.
7. Wrap it tightly, and use smaller pieces of duct tape to cover any places where masking tape still shows. Again, be sure not to cover too much string.
8. Squeeze it so the entire ball packs in tightly.
9. Tie the empty end of the string to a side of the triangle.

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ILLUMINATIVE



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K-12

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HELPFUL TIPS

- While helping your child to create the ball and triangle game, discuss with them the significance of this toy:
 - Show your child a [picture of the Ball and Triangle Game the Penobscot Indian children in New England](#).
 - Tell them that this game was often played as a **form of entertainment**. Children fashioned the toy from a triangle-shaped piece of bark from a birch tree.
 - Ask them to think about toys or games they have created by themselves or with friends when they were playing.
 - Remind them, these are toys or games they have made/made-up, not something they have bought.
- When your child is playing the game, discuss with them the [concept of chance](#).
 - Explain to your child that chance is the likelihood the ball will go into the hole. Think about the number of times you think the ball will go into the hole, and compare it to the number of times the ball actually does go into the hole. This is a game of chance. The number of times the ball will go into the hole depends on many things, including the strength with which you throw the ball, and the direction you throw it.
- Try changing the length of the string or add more holes into the bark and give them a point value.
 - Each time, ask your child to determine the chance that it will go into the hole(s).

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity may open to other talking points around the culture, traditions, and history of the Penobscot Nation

- Additional resources on the [significance of the Birch Tree to the Anishinabeg \(Ojibwe\) and Penobscot](#) with the many uses of its bark.
- This resource provides more information about the [history and culture of Penobscot Nation](#).
- This resources provides [child-friendly facts](#) about the Penobscot Nation.

Activity Resource Links:

- Resources on the significance of the Birch Tree to the Anishinabeg (Ojibwe) and Penobscot: https://folklife-media.si.edu/docs/festival/program-book-articles/FESTBK1981_03.pdf
- History and culture of Penobscot Nation: <https://www.penobscotnation.org/>
- Child-friendly facts about the Penobscot Nation: http://www.bigorin.org/penobscot_kids.htm
- Concept of Chance: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chance>
- Ball & Triangle Game Images: <http://www.nativetech.org/games/ball&tri.html>
- Adapted by:
 - <http://www.nativetech.org/games/ball&tri.html>
 - https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2215.shtml
 - <https://www.instructables.com/id/Ball-and-Triangle-Game/>
 - <http://mathcentral.uregina.ca/RR/database/RR.09.00/treptau1/game8.html>