



Activity Suggestions

The Victorians were very resourceful and played many games that are still familiar today.

1. Play some Victorian games

We have compiled lots of different games, both indoor and outdoor, that were played during Victorian times. Why don't you have a go?

2. Design a new toy/game

The Victorians used spare bits and bobs to make toys and games. In our collection at the Macclesfield Museums we have yo-yo's, hoopla games and skipping ropes made from old bits of mill equipment. This was like early recycling. Can you design a toy or game and make it from recycled materials?

3. Changes in games and toys

How have games and toys changed through time? Do you still play games like the ones here? Contact an elderly friend or relative and ask them what games they played when they were young. What differences and similarities can you find between their games and the ones you enjoy?



Victorian Playground Games

The Potato Race

Spoons, potatoes (real/fake), basket



This is a funny game that can be played with potatoes or balls. Two people race to collect all their potatoes. Two rows of 12 potatoes are laid out. The rows should be about 1m apart. A basket is placed at the far end.

The race is to be the first person to pick up all your potatoes and put them into the basket without using your hands. You have a spoon to pick them up with. If they fall off the spoon they must be picked up again using only the spoon.

Follow the Leader



Players all form a line behind the leader. The leader marches, stops, jumps, stoops, kicks, dances, whistles and poses in as many different ways as they feel, whilst the followers have to copy them exactly.

Oh, Great Queen/King

Stool / crown



One player stands on a stool or box which is their throne. The other players have to walk in front of the throne one by one. Each player stops in front of the queen/king and must say 'Oh great Queen (or King), I worship thee and bow down before thee' in a very serious manner. The Queen then makes the most ugly faces and strange poses to make her subject laugh. If the Queen manages to make the player laugh then that person becomes the Queen.



This is my eye



The aim of this game is to try and get other players to make mistakes by saying or doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. The players take it in turns to touch different parts of their body. When they do so they have to call it by the wrong name.

For example, the first player says 'This is my nose' while pointing to their eye. The next player then has to touch the body part said by the first player while calling it something else (they point

to their nose and say 'this is my toe', for example). Play continues in this way, moving from one player to the next.

The faster the game goes, the more likely players are to make mistakes by touching the wrong part of their body or calling it by its real name. Players are allowed to make two mistakes before they are out of the game.

Kim's Game

Tray, sheet, several small objects



This is a simple memory game, named after Rudyard Kiplings novel, Kim, published in 1901. Put a number of small items on a tray. The children are given a time to look at the tray and try to remember what is there. The tray is covered or removed, and the children then try to make a list of the items. It is much harder than it sounds and the memory plays many tricks.

An alternative is to take something away while no one is looking and challenge them to work out what is missing.

Sack Races

Pillow case or sturdy shopping bag (one per person)



Decide upon your course. You can do it inside or outside. You could have a straight race or have a turning point at the end.

Each competitor needs their own sack. They have to stand inside it and jump their way to the end of the race.

You can do this as a race against each other or challenge yourself to beat your own personal best time using a stopwatch.



Skipping

Skipping rope or long piece of rope



Long-rope skipping was extremely popular in Victorian times. It was normally played by a group of 3 or more girls. The ends of the rope were turned by 2 girls who weren't skipping while one or more girls did the skipping. They jumped in time with the rope and to the beat of a poem or chant which was normally performed by the others. Single skipping became more and more popular too.

Here are some skipping rhymes that you can try. You can also try to write your own.

*Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.
Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your shoe.
Teddy bear, teddy bear, that will do.
Teddy bear, teddy bear, go upstairs
Teddy bear, teddy bear, say your prayers
Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the light
Teddy bear, teddy bear, say goodnight.*

*Jelly in the bowl, jelly in the bowl,
Wiggle, waggle, wiggle, waggle,
Jelly in the bowl.*

*One two buckle your show
Three four shut the door
Five six pick up sticks
Seven eight lay them straight
Nine ten this is the end.*

*I'm a girl guide, dressed in blue,
These are the actions I can do:
Salute to the captain,
Bow to the Queen,
Turn right round
And count sixteen.
1,2,3,4,.....*

*Not last night but the night before
Twenty-four robbers came knocking at my
door,
They called me out for the world to see,
And this is what they said to me:
'Spanish dancer turn around,
Spanish dancer touch the ground,
Spanish dancer do the kicks,
Spanish dancer do the splits.'*



Marble Games



Marbles have been used to play games for thousands of years. Early ones were made of clay, stone or real marble. The Victorians loved to play marbles. They even had marbles made of real marble which were very expensive. Cheaper ones were made from glass and clay.

Conqueror

Marbles

Two or more players start with a pile of marbles. The first player throws one forward. The next player then throws theirs to try and hit the first one. If they hit it, they capture it and pick both of the marbles up. That player then starts the game again by throwing one of their marbles.

If instead the second player misses the first marble both marbles are left on the floor. The next player can then throw a marble and try to 'capture' either of them.

If you are able to hit two marbles with one throw then you capture them both.

The game can carry on until one person has all of the marbles.

Hundreds

Marbles, chalk

This is a game for two players. Draw a circle about a metre away from you. Both players take it in turn to shoot a marble towards the circle. If both or neither marble stops in the circle, then both players must shoot again. When only one player's marble stops in the circle, that player scores 10 points. The first player to reach 100 points is the winner.

(Shooting – most marble games use shooting instead of throwing. To shoot properly takes some practice but is done like this - put the knuckle of your forefinger on the ground with the marble balanced in the bent forefinger. Put your thumb behind the forefinger and then release with whatever force you like. If this is too hard you can flick it instead.)

Odd or even

Marbles

One player closes in their hand a number of marbles. They ask their opponent whether it is an odd or even number. If they guess correctly they take one of the marbles. If they guess wrongly they have to give one to the first player. The second player then has a go and asks 'odd or even?' The game goes on until one player wins all the marbles.