GAMES FOR TRANSVERSAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

COMPREHENSIVE TOOLBOOK FOR TEACHERS

Skills of tomorrow for children of present: complex future-skill development with the synergy of learning activities, game-based learning and STEAM
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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Teacher!

This toolbox is the second volume of the three comprehensive toolbooks of the Erasmus+ project "SPIRIT - Skills of tomorrow for children of present", which contains games for transversal skills development from 5 project partner countries. The 30 games presented in the this toolbook have been collected, adapted, tested and packaged in a Comprehensive Collection by the project partners with the specific aim to enrich the tools of primary school teachers with already tested games that all develop transversal skills that today's primary school children will need in 15 years to maintain emotional and social well-being.

The selection and testing of the games was conducted by 40 primary school teachers from the 5 partner countries and nearly 1200 pupils from 40 classes they teach. The games in this handbook have been grouped by skills to be developed. Thus, for each SPIRIT skill, we offer 3-3 games that develop that particular skill in a complex way together with the other spirit skills. We have included a brief description of each game, together with an explanation of how the skill is developed and how the results of the development can manifest in the children's behaviour. Similarly, for each game, you will also find some methodological tips and suggestions to help you in the playing and any discussions.

This toolbook has been produced the result of a collaboration between some of Europe's leading organisations involved in education, initial and in-services teacher training, and research – Erasmushogeschool Brussel (Belgium), Magyar Digitális Oktatásért Egyesület (MDOE, Hungary), Patrizio Paoletti Foundation (Italy), , Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Romania), VitaComm Education (Cyprus) and Thinking Skills Development Research Group (ELTE Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education) as the associate partner of MDOE

The book is also available online on the SPIRIT portal https://tomorrowskills4kids.eu/traditional-games/ .

We trust that the proposed games will bring much pleasure both to students and their teachers. We wish everyone a good time and good games.

The SPIRIT- Skills of tomorrow for children of today - project team

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2. GAMES, BOARD GAMES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

Introduction

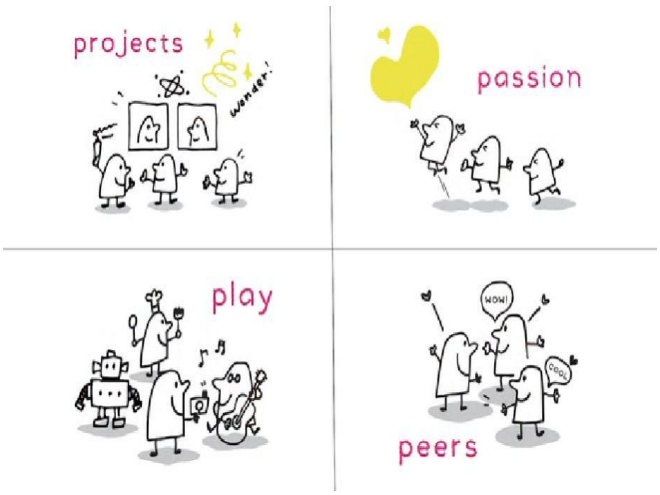
The evolution of modern games has led, albeit not immediately, to a reflection on the pedagogical benefits of playing. Thousands of new games are developed every year, most of them available in all partner countries. This creates a huge variety and a huge number of opportunities for teachers.

A wide variety of games means a wide variety of ways of thinking, a great diversity of activities, a large choice of topics, the possibility to play alone or with lots of people, to play for 3-4 minutes or 3-4 hours, with one and a half year olds and with adults.

Whatever you are looking for, you will find it. For example, if we are looking for board games that are good for developing different competences, we will find them, the immersion is so huge. This requires a good pedagogical approach, a great knowledge of games and a great knowledge of the learners. But then there's nothing else to do but just teach the children to play and let the playing work.

However, to achieve our pedagogical goals (which in this case is the development of transversal skills) the most important criterion is that play should always be play! "We must respect this in all our planning and decisions. No matter how great our pedagogical and skill development goals we have, if the child is not yet at the level of the game, if there are no suitable playmates, if the location is unsuitable, if the participants have other interests, etc. We need to think through all the possibilities, we need to have plans B, C, D and it is almost impossible to achieve a sure success with only 1-2 games."[1]

The power of play - Lifelong kindergarten approach[2]



The mission of the Resnick's Lifelong Kindergarten research group is „to extend the kindergarten approach to learners of all ages (including the elementary school students too). To do that we are cultivate caring community that, in the spirit of kindergarten, engage young people in creative learning experiences, so they have opportunities to think creatively, engage empathically, and work collaboratively" The principle of the „kindergarten learning model" called as 4P's of creative learning: project, passion, peers and play.

[1] József Jesztl – Máté Lencse: Boardgame pedagogy 2018.

[2] The idea and the phrase of **Lifelong kindergarten** was firstly raised by Mitchel Resnick, LEGO Pappert Professor of Learning Research at the MIT Media Lab, Resnick's Lifelong Kindergarten research group has developed a variety of educational tools that engage people (particularly children) in new types of design activities and creative learning experiences.

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For development of the transversal skills, we will collect and offer a wide range of games (indoor, table outdoor games) that are in line with our pedagogical credo of creating and keeping learning passion for learners, as follows:

1. **Let the game always be a game** (and make the learning and development game based). It means that enables children to **learn and be developed through play**
2. Focus on **doing, exploring, experimenting and not teaching/developing directly**. Involve as many activities, games into the development journey as possible, and encourages hands-on experiences, tinkering and ensure the active participation for all.
3. Focus on **children's interests and organise their development journey around activities and games they enjoy doing** (interest driven learning and development). Use, keep and develop the students' intrinsic motivations and passions as the long-term driving force of their development by allowing them to pursue topics that excite them. **Let them choose the games and activities they like.**
4. **Put the children to the "driver's seat"** and allowing them to control their learning experience. Do not tell and control them what and how they must play. Do not show them the suggested tactics in advance, how they can win for sure, but let them discover their own tactics and methods. Let them explore, lose, think, be curious, do and decide on their own and win according to their own ideas. But leading them with opportunities and encouragement. (Don't show them in advance the suggested winning tactics, how they can win for sure, but let them discover their own tactics and methods. Let them explore, lose, think, be curious, do and decide on their own and win according to their own ideas.)
5. **Ensure the collaboration, not only the competition.** Doing and playing together and in teams. Do the thing together is exciting.
6. Creating a playing **climate** and using **tools that ensure open discussion, creative thinking, and learning from mistakes, as well as create a safe environment to meet and deal with failure**.
7. Use **different games and wide variety of activities**. The chosen methods have to ensure to connect to real life, community, solve an open-ended issues and challenges, experimenting, discovering, tinkering, etc.
8. Support and **focus on process, not only the results.** Let the games develop open mindset.
9. Let the **flow feeling** for the kids. Keeping the students in a psychological state of deep engagement and concentration that the students can experience when the challenge of a task matches an individual's skill level, are sufficiently stimulating to capture their interest.

Based on the requirements for games and play, the partnership has adapted and successfully piloted 30 games (mostly well-known in the partner country) that develop the competences of primary school students for future well-being through playing. We invite you to try them out with your students.

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How to develop children's transversal competences with board games[3]

The simplest, shortest and perhaps most surprising answer to this question is "don't develop them, just let them play". There are so many developmental elements in every game. Some games focus on very clear areas of development, even some that are strongly linked to a single discipline. We can think here of maths, addition, if we have to add up the scores. But games in general, or more specifically, playing games, develop in a much more comprehensive way. For example, with a very simple game, in addition to playing, we can observe whether we're risk-aversive, whether we're able to change our attitudes, because it's often not good in a game if we're too safety-oriented, and the question is whether we're able to change our attitudes in order to win or just to enjoy the game more.

To be able to develop complex skills or skills in a complex way through playing games in a way that is not noticeable and enjoyable for children, but at the same time, as a teacher, we still need to be able to consciously develop complex skills or skills in a complex way, it is essential to find games that develop those areas. And one of the most important requirements for this is to have a great knowledge of games and to be able to select the games that are suitable for the development of the given area.

It is essential that play always remains play for the child! In other words, never let children know that we are playing this game because we want to improve their reading comprehension and we would like them to be a bit more creative. Everything should be about getting the children as motivated as possible. Apart from that, these should be planned, structured, thoughtful and conscious situations for the teacher!

Another very important thing to be able to develop the child's flow feeling is that children can choose and decide what they want to play with in a given situation. So, when we want to develop some skills area, we should not just have one or two games, but several ones that develop that particular area, so that the child can choose which game they are more interested in, which one suits them or their mood, without knowing the area we want to develop. In other words, in order to develop a given skills, or skills area effectively, we need to know and have 8-10 games for the skills area.

For example, adequate knowledge of games is also important to be able to select games of different difficulty levels, to be able to offer games based on very simple choices, but also to be able to support development by teaching complex games where a number of factors and correct interpretation of information are required over a long period of time and where the route to winning is not the easy one.

Emotions, empathy, resilience and more

Let's talk a little about some specific SPIRIT transversal skills. To start with, it's no coincidence that we talk a lot about emotions in relation to games and playing. Especially about whether someone can lose or how they handle situations of stress, temptation of luck, or even success. Almost any board game or

[3] An extract from the thought inspiring introduction of Máté Lencse's presentation about the games for transversal skills development during the 6th Hungarian SPIRIT CoP

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game can serve as an example in this domain, as we can experience emotions and learn to manage them in a protected environment, fighting for symbolic goals.

As parents or teachers, one of our most important tasks is to ensure that children can develop through play, joyfully and spontaneously, experiencing their emotions freely and respecting each other. Playing, especially board gaming, as an activity, can be a very good way to support the development of this area.

If we simply consider that good board games are building on trying to make the best possible decisions based on the interpretation of the information available, then there can be no doubt that children's creativity, problem solving or critical thinking develops whatever we play with them.

Adaptability, reinvention and flexibility are essential aspects of the games. Information is constantly changing, well worked out plans can fall to pieces. Moreover, most good games don't even give us a complete set of information, so we have to adapt to a lot of uncertainty Games, whether outdoors or in the classroom, played in groups or individually, create "what if" situations, so they are a great way to test ourselves in difficult situations that require flexibility, resilience, structured problem solving, information selection and evaluation, but have no real stakes.

Even ordinary games require a high level of interdependence if you really want to play well. Moreover, group games or board games are themselves a social activity that is much less enjoyable without a high level of empathy. Building a shared culture of playing is also essential in groups of children, and empathy is a key element.

One more thing – final thought

It is strongly recommended that the teacher should, if possible, participate in the game, as he or she can teach and educate a lot through his or her behaviour patterns and reactions to situations.

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3. GAMES FOR TRANSVERSAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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3.1 EMOTIONAL AWARENESS, REGULATION AND COMMUNICATION

3.1.1 Emotional Hopscotch

Brief description, and rules of the game

In this adapted version of hopscotch, the traditional numbered squares are replaced with emotions such as “joy,” “anger,” “fear,” or “curiosity.”

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Empathy
- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness
- Connectedness

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2 to 10 children (pairs or small groups)	20-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Draw a traditional hopscotch grid on the ground using chalk or tape. Instead of numbers, label each square with a different emotion (e.g., joy, sadness, anger, surprise, pride, fear).
2. Children take turns standing behind the starting line and tossing a small object (like a beanbag or stone) onto one of the squares.
3. The player hops through the grid on one foot, skipping the square where the object landed, as in classic hopscotch.
4. When they reach the end, they turn around and hop back toward the start.
5. Upon finishing their turn, the child picks up the object and pauses to interact with the emotion written in that square by doing one of the following:
   - Share a personal story or memory related to that emotion
   - Act out the emotion using facial expression and body language
   - Describe a strategy they use to regulate or manage that emotion
6. The teacher may suggest which of the three tasks to perform or let the child choose.
7. The game continues until all children have had at least one turn.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Outdoor: Ideally played in a courtyard or schoolyard where the hopscotch grid can be drawn with chalk on a flat surface. Ensure enough space around the grid so children can move freely and observe each other's turns without crowding.

Indoor: The grid can be created using colourful tape on the classroom floor. Emotion labels can be attached inside the squares or placed on small removable cards. Ensure that there is enough space for hopping safely and that the activity doesn't disturb other classroom materials.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game supports the development of emotional awareness by encouraging children to recognize, express, and reflect on a wide range of emotions in a playful context. As they move through the hopscotch grid, they are prompted to connect the named emotion with their own lived experiences, body signals, or regulation strategies. Through repetition and peer listening, children build a richer emotional vocabulary and become more confident in expressing feelings.

Some variations also involve imagining how others might feel in certain situations, gently introducing elements of empathy and perspective-taking. This game encourages expressing emotions using both verbal language and body cues, which strengthens emotional literacy and helps children better understand the connection between body and feelings. Children also begin to develop empathy, especially when variations of the game include imagining how others might feel in different scenarios.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After playing this game, students will:

- Become more confident in recognizing and naming a wide range of emotions, going beyond basic labels like "happy" or "sad" to include more nuanced feelings such as "proud," "nervous," or "frustrated."
- Be able to associate emotions with real-life experiences, practicing how to describe what made them feel a certain way and how they responded in those situations.
- Be able to use some basic techniques to regulate their emotions, such as pausing, breathing, or reframing their thoughts
- Strengthen self-awareness by reflecting on their own emotional experiences and sharing them with peers in a safe and supportive environment. Children will be able to recognise and talk about the emotions involved in school and non-school situations.
- Be able to listen more attentively and respectfully to others' emotional experiences and understand that others may have similar emotions to his or her own, contributing to a more emotionally supportive classroom climate.

Suggested use, and practical examples

A typical round might involve a child tossing the stone onto the "fear" square. They might then share a time they felt scared, such as during a thunderstorm, and explain how they calmed down. Another child landing on "joy" might act out their feeling by jumping with excitement and recalling a happy moment like a birthday party.

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Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Chalk (for drawing the hopscotch grid on the ground) or tape (for indoor play)
- A small stone or beanbag to toss onto the grid
- Emotion labels (either written directly on the ground or placed on small cards)

Guiding questions

- What does this emotion look like on your face or in your body?
- Can you remember a time when you saw someone else feeling this way?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Some children may struggle to talk about personal experiences related to certain emotions, especially more difficult ones like sadness or anger.
  Tip: The teacher should create a supportive environment where sharing is encouraged but not forced. If a child feels uncomfortable, they can be given alternative ways to participate, such as acting out the emotion or describing a situation in a story format rather than a personal one.
- **Challenge**: Other children may exaggerate their reactions when acting out emotions, turning them into caricatures.
  Tip: The teacher can guide them toward more natural expressions by asking questions like, “Have you ever really felt this way? What did it look like?”
- **Challenge**: It is also possible that some children will find it difficult to describe strategies for regulating emotions.
  Tip: In this case, the teacher can introduce a brief discussion after each turn, where the group suggests different ways to manage emotions like frustration or fear. This collaborative approach fosters shared learning and helps children discover new coping strategies.
- **Challenge**: In another variation, a child who lands on "sadness" might struggle to find words to describe their experience.
  Tip: Instead of pushing them to share something personal, the teacher could gently guide them by asking, "Have you ever seen someone else feel sad? What helped them feel better?"

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): It is helpful to include visual cues by drawing simple emoticons inside each square. Instead of discussing emotions deeply, they can simply mimic the emotion they land on or use a sentence starter like “I feel happy when…”

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): The game can be expanded by adding real-life scenarios. If a child lands on "anger," for example, the teacher might ask, “Imagine your friend took your toy without asking—how would you feel, and what could you do?” This introduces problem-solving and emotional regulation skills.

Experts (9–10 years old): The game can take a more introspective turn. They can be asked to describe how different emotions feel in their bodies (e.g., "When I’m nervous, my stomach feels tight"), helping them develop a deeper emotional vocabulary and greater self-awareness. A more advanced scenario could involve a child landing on "frustration" and being asked to demonstrate how frustration feels in their body. They might clench their fists or sigh loudly. The teacher could then ask, "What could you do to calm down in a frustrating situation?" This encourages self-regulation strategies and peer learning.

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Debriefing and reflection questions

- Was it easy or difficult to express some emotions? Why?
- Did you recognize an emotion that you hadn't thought about much before?
- Which emotions do you think are the hardest to talk about?
- How do you usually express emotions like anger or sadness? Do you think that's helpful?
- How can we better recognize emotions in others and support them when they feel that way?
- How did you feel hearing your classmates talk about these emotions?
- Which emotions are easiest or hardest for you to talk about?
- What can we do to help someone who is feeling this emotion?

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3.1.2 The Witch Commands an Emotion

Brief description, and rules of the game

This game is a variation of the classic Italian children's game Strega Comanda Colore, where instead of finding a specific colour, children must express or act out emotions to avoid being caught by the "witch" (the chaser). It helps children develop emotional awareness in a playful and engaging way.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Empathy
- Resilience
- Creativity

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	6 to 20 children	15-25 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Select one child to be the “Witch” and have them stand in the centre of the playing area (indoor or outdoor).
2. The rest of the children move around freely, walking or skipping within the space, making sure to stay alert.
3. At a chosen moment, the Witch loudly calls out:
   Witch commands emotion... [name of an emotion]!”
   (For example: “Witch commands emotion... joy!”)
4. All other children must immediately stop and express the emotion through:
   - Facial expression (e.g., a big smile for joy)
   - Body language (e.g., jumping with excitement)
   - A short, mimed situation (e.g., pretending to open a birthday gift)
5. While they express the emotion, the Witch tries to tag someone before they begin their expression.
6. If a child is tagged before expressing the emotion, they become “frozen” and must stand still in place.
7. Another player can unfreeze the frozen child by:
   - Touching them
   - Saying a real-life situation where someone might feel that emotion
   (e.g., “You feel joy when your dog runs to greet you!”)
8. The game continues with new emotions chosen by the Witch each round.
9. After a few rounds, rotate roles so that different children have the chance to be the Witch.

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10. The game ends when each child has had a turn or after a set time limit.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Outdoor: Ideally played in a large, flat area like a playground or grassy field, where children have space to run safely. Use cones or chalk to define the play area and ensure a safe boundary. The atmosphere should encourage free movement and creativity while remaining within the rules.

Indoor: Suitable for a gymnasium, sports hall, or a cleared-out classroom. Use tape on the floor to mark safe zones or a playing boundary. If space is limited, the game can be adapted with walking or mimed expressions instead of running, maintaining focus on emotional expression and peer observation.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game helps children develop emotional awareness by requiring them to quickly recognize and express a specific emotion through body language, facial expressions, or role-play. Because the emotion is chosen randomly and must be expressed immediately, children learn to connect feelings with physical cues in a spontaneous and embodied way.

The added challenge of being tagged creates mild pressure, helping children practice identifying and expressing emotions even in dynamic situations. The "frozen" rule reinforces emotional recognition through peer interaction, as children must think of real-life examples where someone might experience that feeling. This deepens their understanding of emotions in context and supports perspective-taking.

By taking turns in different roles – expressing emotions, interpreting others' expressions, and giving examples – children enhance their ability to observe, understand, and name emotions, both in themselves and in others.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of this activity, students will:

- Be able to identify and distinguish emotions that are familiar to them.
- Be able to express emotions through facial expressions, gestures, and body language in ways that can be clearly observed by others.
- Be able to regulate and control their emotional reactions in moments of challenge or temporary "freeze," continuing to act even when experiencing a negative emotion.
- Understand and be aware that emotions can be expressed in multiple ways and that these expressions can be interpreted by others.
- Understand and be aware that their peers may recognise and respond to their emotional expressions during the game.

Suggested use, and practical examples

In one round, the witch calls out "witch commands emotion... fear!" Some children might widen their eyes and freeze in place, while others might hide behind their hands or crouch as if scared. A child who gets tagged and frozen might be freed when a friend says, "People feel fear when they hear a loud noise in the dark.

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In another round, the chosen emotion is "pride." Some children stand tall with their hands on their hips, while others smile and pretend to show off a trophy. One player, unsure of how to express it, looks around for inspiration. After the round, the teacher helps them reflect by asking, "What does pride feel like in your body? Can you think of a time you were proud?"

Another interesting scenario arises when the witch commands "jealousy." Some children struggle to act it out at first, but soon they start mimicking looking at someone else's toy with folded arms or sighing. This leads to a discussion about how jealousy can be hard to recognize but is something everyone experiences at times.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- A spacious playing area where children can run freely
- A list or cards with emotions (optional, to help the witch choose emotions)
- A timer or whistle (optional, to regulate rounds if needed)

Guiding questions

- What are different ways we can express the same emotion?
- How do our faces and bodies help others understand what we feel?
- Can we feel more than one emotion at a time? What does that look like?
- What clues do we use to guess how someone else is feeling?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Some children might struggle to quickly express an emotion, especially those they are less familiar with (such as embarrassment or frustration).
  Tip: The teacher can encourage them by offering simple prompts, such as "Think about a time when you felt that way," or "How would your body look if you were really excited?"
- **Challenge**: There may also be instances where children exaggerate their expressions, making emotions appear unrealistic or overly dramatic.
  Tip: In these cases, the teacher can facilitate a short discussion about how real emotions are often more subtle and can vary between individuals.
- **Challenge**: Some players may have difficulty thinking of real-life examples when trying to "rescue" frozen peers.
  Tip: The teacher can model examples, such as "People feel disappointment when they lose a game" or "Pride happens when we do something difficult successfully." This helps expand children's emotional vocabulary and recognition skills.
- **Challenge**: Lastly, younger or more sensitive children might get frustrated if tagged frequently.
  Tip: To ensure inclusion and engagement, the teacher can modify the rule so that frozen players are released automatically after a short time, regardless of peer intervention.

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Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): It helps to demonstrate each emotion before the game starts. The teacher can go through common emotions one by one with the group, ensuring they recognize how to act them out before playing.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): The game can include more complex emotions like frustration, jealousy, or relief. After each round, the teacher can briefly ask, “Who has felt this emotion before? When?” to encourage deeper reflection.

Experts (9–10 years old): An advanced version of the game could require children to pair emotions with a situation as they express them. Instead of simply making a happy face, for example, they could also say, “I’m happy because I won a prize.” This enhances emotional literacy and connects emotions to real-life experiences.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which emotions were easiest to express? Which were harder? Why?
- Did you notice differences in how people expressed the same emotion?
- Have you ever felt frozen in real life, like when you didn’t know how to react to an emotion?
- How did you feel when you were ‘frozen’ in the game? How did it feel when someone helped you?
- Why is it important to recognise emotions in others? How can this help us in everyday life?
- How can games like this help us notice and respect others’ emotions in real life?

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3.1.3 The emotional wolf

Brief description, and rules of the game

Inspired by the traditional Italian game Lupo Mangia Frutta (literally "Wolf Eats Fruit"), this emotional variation helps children recognise, express, and regulate emotions while engaging in a fun and active game of tag. Instead of naming fruits, children take on different emotions, which they must express and defend before being caught by the “wolf.”

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Empathy
- Connectedness
- Critical thinking
- Decision making

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	6 to 20 children (team of 4-6)	15-25 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Choose one player to be the “Wolf” and have them stand in the centre of the playing area (gym, courtyard, or open field).
2. All other children line up on one side of the play area, opposite the Wolf.
3. Each child silently selects an emotion from a predefined list (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear, excitement, frustration) and keeps it secret.
4. The Wolf loudly calls out: "Wolf eats..." followed by one of the emotions (e.g., “Wolf eats... fear!”).
5. All children who had chosen that emotion must run to the opposite side, trying not to get tagged by the Wolf.
6. Any child who is tagged must stop and express the emotion in one of three ways:
   - Describe a time they felt that emotion.
   - Mime or act out the emotion using body language.
   - Show the emotion clearly on their face.
7. If the emotion is expressed clearly and convincingly, the child can return to the main group.
8. If not, they become a “baby wolf” and help the main Wolf in the next round to catch others.
9. The game continues until all children have had a turn and most have experienced being both players and wolves.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Outdoor: Ideally suited for a wide, open space such as a playground, sports field, or courtyard where children can run safely. Mark clear boundaries to define the playing field. Emotion cards (if used) can be placed near a wall or fence where children can consult them before the round starts.

Indoor: Can be adapted to a gymnasium or large multi-purpose room. Use cones or tape to mark the start and finish lines. Reduce the running distance to avoid collisions and ensure adequate adult supervision. If space is limited, consider replacing the run with a "walk to the other side" mechanic to preserve safety and flow.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game helps children become more aware of their emotions, learning to identify, express, and regulate them in an engaging and interactive way. By requiring children to explain or act out their emotions when caught, the game reinforces emotional literacy and helps them recognize emotions in themselves and others. It also supports the development of empathy by encouraging children to put themselves in the emotional shoes of others. By choosing an emotion and reacting to it during the game, children are prompted to reflect on what that emotion feels like in real life. When tagged, they must express the emotion clearly – through stories, facial expressions, or body language – helping both themselves and others recognize and understand that emotion more deeply.

The addition of “baby wolves” allows children to observe and support their peers in identifying emotions during subsequent rounds. This shared focus on recognizing and responding to emotions builds emotional sensitivity and awareness of others’ inner experiences in an engaging, movement-based way.

The game encourages quick thinking, decision-making, and cooperation, as children must choose whether to run, act, or communicate their emotions effectively.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of this activity, students will:

- Able to identify emotions in themselves and others through physical cues, actions, and verbal expressions.
- Able to express their emotions clearly by using movement, gestures, or short explanations when prompted.
- Able to regulate their emotional responses when caught or when facing small moments of pressure during the game.
- Aware that emotions can be interpreted and expressed in different ways depending on the situation and the individual.
- Aware of their peers’ emotional experiences by observing how classmates choose to act out or communicate different feelings.
- Able to make quick decisions about how to act, move, or communicate while staying engaged with the group dynamics.

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Suggested use, and practical examples

In one round, the Wolf calls out "Wolf eats...anger!". Some children immediately tense up their bodies, clench their fists, or pretend to stomp their feet before running. If one is caught, they might say, "I felt angry when my little brother broke my toy." This leads to a group discussion about healthy ways to express anger.

Another round features "Wolf eats...happiness!" and children laugh, jump, or wave their arms excitedly before running. A caught player might say, "I feel happy when I play outside with my friends." This helps reinforce the connection between emotions and real experiences.

A more advanced round might involve "Wolf eats...fear!", where some children may hesitate, unsure of how to express it. The teacher can help by asking, "Can anyone share a time they felt scared? What did your body do?" This discussion helps children understand that fear can be expressed in many ways, from freezing in place to hiding.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- A spacious play area for children to run freely
- Emotion cards (optional, to help children choose their emotion)
- A whistle or bell (optional, to regulate turns)

Guiding questions

- Why do you think someone might feel that emotion?
- Can you show me how your body feels when you have that emotion?
- What would help you feel better if you felt that way?
- Have you ever seen someone else feel this emotion? What did you do?
- If you were the Wolf, how would you guess someone is feeling just by looking?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Some children might struggle to quickly express an emotion, especially those they are less familiar with (such as embarrassment or frustration).
  Tip: The teacher can encourage them by offering simple prompts, such as "Think about a time when you felt that way," or "How would your body look if you were really excited?"
- **Challenge**: There may also be instances where children exaggerate their expressions, making emotions appear unrealistic or overly dramatic.
  Tip: In these cases, the teacher can facilitate a short discussion about how real emotions are often more subtle and can vary between individuals.
- **Challenge**: Some players may have difficulty thinking of real-life examples when trying to "rescue" frozen peers.
  Tip: The teacher can model examples, such as "People feel disappointment when they lose a game" or "Pride happens when we do something difficult successfully." This helps expand children's emotional vocabulary and recognition skills.
- **Challenge**: Lastly, younger or more sensitive children might get frustrated if tagged frequently. To ensure inclusion and engagement,
  Tip: The teacher can modify the rule so that frozen players are released automatically after a short time, regardless of peer intervention.

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Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): It can be helpful to use visual emotion cards to help them choose their emotion more easily. Instead of explaining emotions verbally, they can be encouraged to act them out using body language.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): The game can include more subtle emotions, such as embarrassment, pride, or relief. After each round, the teacher can ask, "Can anyone share a real-life example of when they felt this emotion?" to encourage deeper reflection.

Experts (9–10 years old): The game can be made more challenging by adding a new rule: players must justify why they chose their emotion before running. For example, if the Wolf says, "Wolf eats ...sadness", a player might say, "I felt sad when I lost my favourite toy" before they can run. This encourages emotional awareness and storytelling.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Was it easy or difficult to choose and express an emotion? Why?
- How did it feel to show your emotion in front of others?
- Which emotions did you recognize in others, and how did you know what they were feeling?
- Did anyone surprise you with how they expressed an emotion?
- How can this game help us understand our friends better when they feel something strong?

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3.2 CREATIVITY

3.2.1 Reverse hide and seek

Brief description, and rules of the game

Instead of 1 person looking for everyone who is hiding, now only 1 person has to go and hide. The others have to go and find this person. When they know where that person is hiding, they should try to hide with that person unnoticed. The one who remains last is lost.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Creativity

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving
- Valuing people and nature
- Flexibility
- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 -10 years old	At least 4 children	1 round = 10-20 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Setup:

1. One person hides while the others count.

Gameplay:

2. Then everyone else goes to find that person.
3. When someone finds the hidden person, they join them in the hiding spot without saying anything.
4. The group in the hiding spot keeps growing.
5. The last person to find the hiding spot loses.

So, it's the opposite of regular hide-and-seek.

Winning the Game:

- In Reverse Hide-and-Seek, the winner is everyone who finds the hiding spot early and joins the group.
- The last person to find the hiding spot loses.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Best Outdoor Environment for Reverse Hide-and-Seek

- Lots of hiding spots: bushes, trees, walls, playground equipment, corners of buildings.
- Clear boundaries: a defined area like part of a playground, garden, or park.
- Safety: avoid streets, water, etc.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

The game supports the development of creativity by continuously engaging children in original, flexible, and adaptive thinking. The child in the hiding role must choose a spot that is not obvious yet capable of accommodating multiple players, requiring the use of spatial imagination and the consideration of several possible solutions. The seekers must reflect from different perspectives on where their peer might be hiding, which promotes divergent thinking and the exploration of alternative possibilities. As players join the hiding spot, they must adapt to the constantly changing space and group size, reorganize the available area, and respond creatively to new constraints. Through this process, improvisation, flexibility, and collaborative creative problem-solving are strengthened, while children are able to experiment with different ideas and solutions in a safe, playful environment.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, learners:

- Generate multiple ideas for hiding spots rather than relying on obvious solutions.
- Demonstrate originality by choosing unusual, clever, or unexpected locations.
- Adapt their ideas when the situation changes, showing flexibility if their first solution does not work.
- Use spatial and social awareness creatively when joining a hiding group without drawing attention.
- Combine and refine ideas collaboratively to maximize how many players can share a hiding space effectively.
- Show willingness to experiment and take safe creative risks in a playful environment.

Suggested use, and practical examples

This game can easily be played during a (multi-day) trip to a park, forest, or similar outdoor area. For safety reasons, it should be played in a familiar and safe environment, such as a well-known park or playground. Young children (around six years old) should always be paired up or supervised by adults to prevent anyone from getting lost.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- None.

Guiding questions

Helping questions before the game:

- What would be a good hiding spot where several people could fit without being noticed?

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Helping questions during the game:
(Only use if it doesn't disrupt the game, or in a second round)

- What can you do so that nobody sees you when you join the group?
- What can you do so that nobody sees you when you know where the person is hide and that you are going to the hiding spot?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: The child doesn't know where to look.
  Tip: "Try looking carefully around. Check places where someone could easily hide, like behind trees, bushes, or playground equipment."
- **Challenge**: The child feels overwhelmed searching alone.
  Tip: "You can work together with a friend. Team up and search different areas at the same time."
- **Challenge**: The child is rushing and missing clues.
  Tip: "Move slowly and stay quiet. Listen carefully for sounds or movements—it will help you find them."
- **Challenge**: The child doesn't know where to start.
  Tip: "Think logically. Where would the first player likely hide? Start near the starting point or maybe a little farther away."
- **Challenge**: The child keeps checking the same spots.
  Tip: "Divide the area into zones. Check each zone one by one so you don't miss anyone."
- **Challenge**: The child isn't learning from others.
  Tip: "Watch how other players hide or search. You can use their ideas to improve your own strategy.".

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- Audible cues: The hider whistles or calls out every 30 seconds (e.g., "Here!").
- Markers: Leave coloured ribbons or small objects along the path.
- Small, familiar area: Play in a fenced playground or a small grassy field.
- Teams: Children search in pairs to help each other.
- Hints: Give regular "warmer/colder" clues.
- No time pressure: Everyone can search at their own pace.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- Audible cues: The hider may only make a sound once per minute.
- Markers: Fewer ribbons, only at the start and halfway.
- Larger area: Use a park or a play forest with clear boundaries.
- No fixed teams: Children search individually but can cooperate if they meet.
- Hints: Only one hint after 5 minutes of searching.
- Time limit: Set a 10-minute limit to find the hider.

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Experts (9–10 years old):

- No sounds: The hider stays completely silent.
- No markers: No visual clues.
- Strict time limit: Maximum of 6 minutes to find everyone.

Debriefing and reflection questions

Helping questions after the game:

- Which hiding spot do you think was the best? Why?
- Did you see someone handle a tricky situation creatively? What did they do?
- How would you do it differently next time?

What would you change in the game to make it even more fun or exciting?

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3.2.2 Melting Icebergs

Brief description, and rules of the game

Melting Icebergs is a movement-based learning activity focused on creative problem-solving, in which students are challenged to find new and imaginative ways to fit safely onto an increasingly smaller surface. The central question of the game is not who stays in and who is eliminated, but rather: How can we creatively organise ourselves so that everyone can fit? Students experiment together with body positions, spatial arrangements and movement strategies, while experiencing that creativity often emerges from shared thinking, cooperation and repeated trial and error. The activity emphasises effort, experimentation and collaboration rather than competition or success.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Creativity

Complementary/ Secondary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving
- Flexibility

Age group	Student number	Duration
8-10 years old	whole class working in small groups (8-8 students per group)	25-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparing the Playing Area: The teacher places a large carpet, blanket or sheet on the floor in the classroom or outdoors. This represents the “iceberg”. The students gather around the carpet. The teacher introduces the story framework of the game: “This iceberg is slowly melting. Your task is to make sure that as many people as possible can fit on it, even as it becomes smaller and smaller.” It is important to emphasise that there is no elimination, there are no ‘wrong’ solutions, effort and trying new ideas are what matter most.
2. Game Process – Finding Creative Solutions: The students step onto the carpet. From time to time, the teacher signals “melting” (e.g. by clapping or using a sound signal), then folds part of the carpet, or replaces it with a smaller one. After each round, students must reorganise themselves in a new way so that everyone fits on the carpet, no one steps off, they support each other safely. Students naturally begin to crouch or sit down, lean on each other’s shoulders, invent and test different body positions and arrangements.
3. Strengthening Conscious Creative Thinking: The teacher may briefly pause the game and ask reflective questions such as: “What was your idea?” “What helped everyone fit on the carpet?” “What could we try next time?” These questions help students become aware of their creative thinking processes and support metacognitive reflection.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game requires a spacious and safe area. It can be played in the classroom, in the gym, or outdoors (e.g. schoolyard, grassy area). The teacher should ensure that the surface is non-slip, the carpet or blanket is an appropriate size, sufficient space is available for safe movement.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

During Melting Icebergs, creativity develops as students invent new body positions, try unusual spatial arrangements, create strategies together, respond flexibly to changing conditions. The activity demonstrates that creativity is not individual "genius", but rather the result of shared idea generation, experimentation, adaptation and cooperation.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the game, students become more willing to try new solutions, recognise the power of collaborative thinking, handle problems more flexibly, experience that their ideas matter and contribute to success.

Suggested use, and practical examples

- In Physical Education lessons, the game works well as a creative warm-up or main activity. In addition to physical movement, creative problem-solving plays a central role, as students organise movement and positioning based on their own ideas rather than predefined exercises. This helps make PE lessons more reflective, cooperative and thinking-oriented.
- In class teacher sessions or community-building activities, the game supports cooperation, communication and attention to others. Students experience that every idea counts in achieving a shared goal, and that creative solutions often emerge through dialogue. It is especially useful when forming a new class community.
- During school trips, the activity is easy to implement, requires minimal equipment and works well outdoors. Stepping out of the usual learning environment encourages students to experiment more freely, remain physically active and create positive shared experiences that strengthen group cohesion.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- 1–2 large carpets, blankets or sheets
- a signal tool (e.g. clapping, bell)
- a safe, spacious area

Guiding questions

- How did you manage to make sure everyone fit on the carpet?
- Which idea worked best?
- Was there a solution you did not think of at first?
- What did you learn about working together?

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Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students give up too quickly.
  Tip: Emphasise that there is no time limit. Introduce "one more idea round" before stopping.
- **Challenge**: Dominant students take control.
  Tip: Encourage quieter students to share ideas as well. Allow a different student to suggest a solution in each round.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): At beginner level, creativity appears in trying out ideas together and in safe experimentation. Students can explore at a calm pace how to create different body positions and spatial arrangements, while experiencing that every idea can be valuable. The "melting" happens more slowly, a larger carpet can be used, and more time is provided for thinking and discussion. The emphasis is on shared thinking, paying attention to one another, and trying out basic problem-solving strategies in a safe and supportive environment.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At advanced level, creativity is reflected in quick adaptation and the conscious search for original solutions. Students invent increasingly complex body positions and spatial combinations while responding flexibly to changing conditions. The space is reduced more quickly, leaving less time for organisation, and problem-solving without speaking can be introduced, encouraging new forms of communication. Predefined "creative challenges" (e.g., only sitting positions are allowed) may also be applied, enhancing flexibility, cooperation, and complex thinking.

Experts (9–10 years old): At expert level, creativity emerges as innovative collaboration, where students spontaneously develop new systems and strategies under continuously changing conditions. The reduction of space may happen at an unpredictable rhythm, and multiple consecutive challenges can be combined (e.g., no speaking and only specific body parts may touch the carpet), requiring students to think flexibly and act in close coordination at the same time. This level demands a high degree of trust, body awareness, strategic thinking, and rapid creative adaptation from all members of the group.

Debriefing and reflection questions

At the end of the game, the teacher initiates a short, guided discussion to help students reflect on their thinking processes, creative solutions and cooperative experiences. The teacher reinforces creativity, collaboration and the courage to try ideas, rather than focusing on success or failure. Possible closing questions:

- What solution did you come up with to make sure everyone fit on the carpet?
- Was there an idea that seemed strange at first but worked well in the end?
- How did you help each other during the activity?
- What happened when very little space was left?
- What new body position or arrangement did you try?
- Who shared an idea that helped the group move forward?
- What did you learn about yourself during this game?
- What would you do differently if we played again?

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3.2.3 Mill/Nine Men's Morris

Brief description, and rules of the game

Mill is a traditional two-player strategic board game played on a special board consisting of lines and connecting points. Each player has nine identical pieces of the same colour. The aim of the game is to place three of one's own pieces in a straight line (horizontally or vertically). This formation is called a mill. During the game, students engage in creative thinking as they gradually develop their own solutions step by step. They experiment with different ideas, observe which strategies work effectively, and adjust their approach when necessary. Creativity is reflected in the learners' willingness to try new solutions, recognise connections and patterns, and make decisions based on their own thinking. Although the rules of the game are fixed, students can develop a variety of different solution strategies. In this context, creativity is expressed primarily through flexible thinking, the recognition of new patterns and the continuous modification of strategies.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Creativity

Complementary/ Secondary Skill Focus

- Problem solving
- Flexibility
- Critical thinking

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	Pair work or whole-class activity using multiple parallel game boards	5-10 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparation: The teacher prepares a large Mill board, which can be placed on the floor (using adhesive tape or chalk), on a table (drawn or printed), or outdoors by drawing it on the playground surface. Each player receives the same number of game pieces (e.g. discs, bottle caps or stones) in two clearly distinguishable colours. The teacher briefly introduces the narrative frame of the activity: "This game is not only about winning, but also about trying out new ideas."
2. Game Process: The game follows the traditional rules of Mill, with the emphasis placed on decision-making. Players take turns placing their pieces on free points on the board. During this phase, placed pieces cannot be moved. If a player forms a mill, they may remove one of the opponent's pieces, provided it is not part of another mill (unless all opponent pieces are in mills). Once all pieces have been placed, players take turns moving one of their pieces to an adjacent point along the lines. The goal remains to form new mills and gradually remove the

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opponent's pieces. When a player has only three pieces remaining, a special rule applies: the player may "jump", meaning they can move a piece to any free point on the board. The game ends when one player has only two pieces left and can no longer form a mill, or is unable to make a legal move because all their pieces are blocked. Before each move, students are given a short thinking time. The teacher may encourage them not to always choose the most familiar solution. Success is not measured only by whether a mill is formed, but also by how creatively students reach that outcome.

3. Incorporating Creative Variations: To strengthen creativity, the teacher may introduce additional rules, such as "free move", allowing one player per round to place a piece in an unusual position; "swap move", where two pieces may exchange places; "surprise round", during which the player explains why they chose a particular move. These variations do not overcomplicate the game, but they open up new directions of thinking.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game can easily be implemented in the classroom using table versions, in the gym using a large-scale board, outdoors using a chalk-drawn playing area. A larger board allows students to physically step into the game, which further enhances creative and embodied thinking.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

Mill develops creativity by allowing multiple strategies to be explored, not penalising experimentation, encouraging unexpected moves, supporting the recognition of new patterns. Students experience that mistakes are learning opportunities, the same situation can be solved in different ways, their ideas are valuable even if they do not lead to immediate success.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the game, students become more willing to try new solutions, think more flexibly, are able to justify their decisions, recognise their own creative thinking processes. They understand that creativity is not about speed or technical skill, but about trying out ideas and developing them further.

Suggested use, and practical examples

- In language lessons, the game supports the verbalisation of thinking processes. After a move, students briefly explain their decision, strengthening awareness and expression of creative thinking as well as logical reasoning.
- In mathematics lessons, the game can be used to develop pattern recognition and systems thinking. Students observe recurring arrangements and explore how the same goal can be reached through different paths. The focus is not on calculation, but on the creative interpretation of structures.
- In clubs or gifted education, students can design new versions of the game by modifying board size, winning conditions or the number of moves. This approach strengthens creativity as constructive and systems-based thinking.
- For students with learning difficulties, a simplified, large-scale and highly visual version of the game is particularly suitable. Creativity emerges as students work at their own pace, gradually building strategies through experimentation.

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Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Mill board (drawn or printed)
- Game pieces in two colours
- Optional: timer, rule cards for creative variations

Guiding questions

- Why did you choose that move?
- What other solution could you have tried?
- Was there a move that surprised you?
- What would you try differently next time?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students always use the same strategy.
  Tip: Ask them to consciously try a different approach in one round.
  Trick: Introduce a "forbidden move" by temporarily excluding a familiar solution.
- **Challenge**: Fear of making mistakes
  Tip: Emphasise that this is an experimental game.
  Trick: Reward the "most interesting idea" rather than the winner.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): At beginner level, creativity appears in shared thinking and the safe exploration of ideas. Students can plan moves together, discuss possible solutions, and experience that the same situation can be approached in different ways. The emphasis is on discovering new patterns and connections without focusing primarily on "right" or "wrong" answers. More thinking time can be provided before each move, and shared move planning can be introduced, where pairs or small groups discuss options collectively. This supports pattern recognition, basic strategic thinking, and flexible problem-solving.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At advanced level, creativity is reflected in independent strategy-building and the conscious use of alternative rule interpretations. Students develop their own solution paths, recognise their opponent's patterns, and flexibly adjust their plans as the game progresses. Creative rule variations (e.g., "free move", "swap move", "surprise round") can be introduced to open new directions of thinking. Players explain their strategic decisions independently, briefly justifying why they chose a particular move. This level requires deeper critical thinking, conscious pattern recognition, and more complex problem-solving.

Experts (9–10 years old): At expert level, creativity emerges as complex strategic thinking and innovative approaches. Students think several moves ahead, construct alternative scenarios, and deliberately experiment with unconventional solutions. Rule variations can be combined or even modified by the players themselves, creating further space for individual and collaborative strategic innovation. Decision-making becomes more detailed and reflective, and players continuously adapt to new situations during the game. This level demands a high degree of flexibility, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving.

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Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which move are you most proud of, and why?
- Was there a situation where more than one solution came to mind? How did you choose?
- When did you have to change your original plan? Why?
- Did you recognise a new pattern or connection during the game?
- What did you learn from an idea that did not work?
- Did you try a strategy you had never used before?
- What would you do differently in a future game?
- How did it help your creative thinking that there was no single "correct" solution?

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3.3 PROBLEM-SOLVING

3.3.1 Pisa Tower

Brief description, and rules of the game

"Pisa Tower" is a dexterity game where players take turns placing figures on a wobbly tower. The tower tilts more and more, and the goal is to keep all figures from falling. The first player to make a figure fall loses the game!

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Resilience

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 -10 years old	2-6 children	15-20 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Preparation:

1. Each player chooses a colour and takes their set of building blocks (usually 3 per player).
2. Place the Pisa Tower base in the centre of the table.
3. Decide who goes first.

Gameplay:

4. Players take turns rolling the die. The dice determines which level of the tower you must place your block or figure on.
5. On your turn, you carefully place one of your blocks on the leaning tower.
6. The goal is to place the blocks without making the tower collapse.
7. Some editions include special rules, like moving previous blocks or using tools to stabilize the tower.
8. Players must strategize, balance, and sometimes negotiate who places next.

Winning the Game:

9. The game continues until the tower collapses.
10. The player who placed the last block before the collapse loses.
11. In some versions, the player with the most successfully placed blocks wins.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Set up tables or mats on the floor where small groups of 2–6 players can comfortably sit around the tower.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

'Pisa-tower' develops problem-solving skills because players must constantly analyse and evaluate how to place their blocks to keep the tower stable, especially when the dice determines which level they must use. They need to develop strategies, anticipate the consequences of their choices, and find (creative) solutions if the tower starts leaning.

In doing so, they need to consider aspects of stability and balance. Additionally, they must also think about how to make things more difficult for their opponent without getting themselves into trouble.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of playing the game, learners:

- Understand which spots on the tower are more stable and why stability matters when placing figures.
- Develop the ability to plan ahead by thinking several moves in advance to prevent the tower from collapsing.
- Learn to adapt strategies when the tower starts to tilt, adjusting placement based on changing conditions.
- Gain insight into cause and effect by evaluating why a figure fell and how to prevent similar outcomes in the future.
- Understand the importance of pausing, thinking, and weighing options before acting rather than acting randomly.
- Acquire the ability to experiment with different placements and compare which is most stable.
- Learn to adjust their approach when the tower becomes unstable, showing flexibility in strategy.
- Develop predictive thinking by anticipating the consequences of their moves and minimizing risk.
- Build reflective skills by analysing previous successes or failures and modifying strategies accordingly.

Suggested use, and practical examples

This game can be played during a science lesson focused on stability and balance, allowing students to experiment weight distribution.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

Game: Pisa tower

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Guiding questions

Before the game (preparing and planning strategies):

- What do you think will be the biggest challenge when building the tower?
- How could you best place the blocks to keep the tower stable?
- What would you do if the dice tells you to place a block on an unexpected level?
- What strategies can you come up with to work together and prevent the tower from collapsing?

During the game (adapting):

- What is going well, and what is causing the tower to lean?
- Which choices by you or your teammates affect the tower's stability?
- Can you think of another strategy if something isn't working?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students don't know where to place their figure.
  Tip: Look at the tower from all sides and find a spot that looks stable. Use the edges wisely: place figures on the edges to distribute weight evenly. Placing pieces in the middle can make the tower unstable.
- **Challenge**: Students lose track of the overall balance of the tower
  Tip: Don't focus on just one spot-look at the entire tower. Ask yourself: "If I place it here, what happens to the other side?". Build in layers: think not only about this turn but also about how your next moves will unfold.
- **Challenge**: Students make quick decisions without thinking
  Tip: Take a moment to think before placing your figure. Stability is more important than speed: don't rush. Choose a move that makes the tower more stable.
- **Challenge**: Students feel uncertain about risky moves
  Tip: Taking risks is okay, but think smart: if you choose a tricky spot, know why you're doing it. Sometimes it earns extra points! Anticipate the next moves: try to predict how the tower will change and whether the risk is worth it.
- **Challenge**: Students lose focus during longer turns
  Tip: Stay focused and watch what others are doing. Their choices can help you make better decisions. Pay attention to your opponent's moves: if they make the tower unstable, you can take advantage with a smart move.
- **Challenge**: Students get frustrated when the tower falls
  Tip: Stay calm: take a deep breath and keep a clear mind. Panicking makes it harder to think. Analyse the problem: figure out what went wrong and learn from it. How can you do better next time?
- **Challenge**: Students struggle with time pressure (at higher levels)
  Tip: Stay calm even when the clock is ticking. Choose a spot you can reach quickly and that looks stable. Remember: stability is more important than speed. A safe move is better than a rushed mistake.
- **Challenge**: Students don't understand the scoring system (in advanced mode)
  Tip: Remember: a risky move can earn extra points, but only if the tower stays standing. Think carefully about whether the risk is worth it and plan ahead.

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Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- No time limit per turn; children can take their time to think.
- Allow children to discuss with a partner to choose a placement together (encourages collaboration).

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- Add a limited time per turn (e.g., 1 minute).
- Introduce a turn rule: You may not place two figures in a row on the same level of the tower.

Experts (9–10 years old):

- Strict time limit per turn (e.g., 30 seconds).
- Add extra rules such as: A rule that you cannot correct your move if the tower tilts. The placement must be correct immediately.
- Extra challenge: Introduce a points or penalty system:
  - Basic rule: Each successful placement = 1 point.
  - Risky placement: A move is considered risky when the figure is placed on top or at the edge of a leaning tower, clearly reducing stability.
- **Extra points:**
  - +2 points if the tower remains standing for at least one full turn after a risky placement.
  - +3 points if the tower remains standing for two full turns after a risky placement.
  - Penalties:
  - 1 point if the tower falls during your turn.
  - 2 points if the tower falls because of a risky placement that does not hold.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which strategy worked best and why?
- What did you learn about teamwork and discussing solutions to problems?
- How would you act differently if you played again?
- What does this teach you about coping with setbacks and persevering through challenges?

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3.3.2 Guess Who?

Brief description, and rules of the game

Guess Who? is a two-player board game in which both players have an identical board filled with illustrated faces of different characters. Each player secretly chooses one character as their mystery person. The goal is to be the first to guess which character the opponent has chosen by asking smart yes/no questions and eliminating possibilities.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Flexibility

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2-4 children	1 round: 5 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Setup:

1. Each player sets up their own board with all the face cards standing upright.
2. Both players draw a card from a separate pile or secretly choose one character to be their mystery person; this card is kept hidden from the opponent.

How to play:

3. Players take turns asking yes/no questions about the opponent's mystery person, such as: "Does your person wear glasses?", "Is it a man?", "Do they have a hat?"
4. Based on the answer (yes or no), the player flips down all characters on their board that do not match the answer, narrowing the possibilities.
5. You may continue asking questions until you want to make a guess.

Guessing and winning:

6. When you think you know your opponent's mystery person, you can make a guess. If you guess correctly, you win the game. If you guess incorrectly, you usually lose immediately (depending on the edition, but this is the standard rule).

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Set up tables or mats on the floor where small groups can comfortably sit. This makes it easy for everyone to ask each other questions.

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

Playing Guess Who? actively engages learners in a structured form of problem-solving that mirrors real-world reasoning. Each turn demands a tactical approach to narrowing down possibilities, interpreting clues, and adapting strategies—all essential components of problem solving.

- Deductive reasoning is sharpened as players use clues to systematically eliminate options. Each question helps rule out entire categories, training learners to think in terms of exclusion and logical constraints.
- Strategic thinking is reinforced through the selection of optimal questions. Players must decide which attributes will yield the most informative answers, learning to prioritize high-impact queries that reduce uncertainty.
- Critical thinking is developed by analysing responses and their implications. A single answer can shift the direction of the game, prompting players to reassess assumptions and refine their approach in real time.
- Decision-making under uncertainty is practiced, as players often work with incomplete information. They learn to make calculated guesses, balancing risk and logic while continuously updating their mental model.
- Adaptability is cultivated through the dynamic nature of each round. New characters and fresh clues require learners to adjust their tactics, encouraging flexible thinking and resilience in the face of changing conditions.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the game, learners are:

- Able to think deductively in accordance with their age characteristics and, based on given clues (with simple assistance), systematically narrow down possible options.
- Able to ask relevant and specific questions that help gather the most useful information while reducing the number of possible answers.
- Able to analyse answers and their implications critically, adjusting strategies as new information becomes available.
- Able to make informed decisions based on partial or limited data and refine their approach as they progress.
- Able to adapt thinking and tactics to new challenges and clues presented in each round.
- Able to demonstrate patience and persistence by engaging in careful thought and multiple attempts to solve the puzzle.
- Able to collaborate effectively by discussing strategies and communicating clearly to agree on the best questions to ask.

Suggested use, and practical examples

Step 1: Start with broad questions

“Is your person a man?”

- Yes → cross out all the women.
- No → cross out all the men.

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Step 2: Check hair colour

“Does your person have blond hair?”

- Yes → keep the blond ones.
- No → cross them out.

Step 3: Look for accessories

“Does your person wear glasses?”

- Yes → keep the ones with glasses.
- No → cross them out.

Step 4: Notice facial hair

“Does your person have a beard or moustache?”

- Yes → keep the ones with facial hair.
- No → cross them out.

Step 5: Another distinctive feature

“Does your person wear a hat?”

- Yes → keep the ones with hats.
- No → cross them out.

Step 6: Make your final guess

“Is your person Richard?”

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Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Board game 'Guess Who?

Guiding questions

Helpful questions before the game (preparation & strategy)

- How can you ask questions in a way that helps you quickly gather a lot of information about the opponent's mystery character?
- Which category do you think is most useful to rule out first (e.g., gender, hair colour, accessories like glasses or hats)?
- What could you do if you are unsure about the answer or if the information seems unclear?

Tips for asking questions

- Start with broad questions that eliminate roughly half of the characters (e.g., gender, hair colour, glasses).
- Ask questions that split the remaining options roughly in half. This rules out many possibilities at once.
- Think in opposites. Framing a question to separate two big groups (e.g., "Does my person have short hair?" vs "Does my person have long hair?") helps narrow the field quickly.
- Pay attention to combinations of features (clothing + hairstyle) to eliminate faster.
- Watch what others are asking. Good example questions from other players can inspire your next move.
- Keep track of answers. Remember what's already been ruled out so you don't repeat questions and can combine clues effectively.

Helpful questions during the game (process guidance)

- Which questions have helped you eliminate many characters, and which ones have not been useful?
- Can you try a different strategy to narrow down the possibilities more quickly?
- What do you think another player might ask if they were in your position?
- Can you combine information from multiple answers to rule out additional characters?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Difficulty asking effective questions. Problem: Students ask questions that are too specific (e.g., "Does my person have a blue hat?"), which eliminates very few options.
  Tip: Provide examples of broad, strategic questions beforehand (e.g., "Does my person wear glasses?"). Use a short activity where students brainstorm good questions together. Encourage thinking in groups and opposites (e.g., "short hair" vs. "long hair").
- **Challenge**: Losing track during the game. Problem: Students forget which answers have already been given and repeat questions.
  Tip: Allow students to use a note sheet to keep track of answers. Show an example of how to make a list and cross out eliminated options. Remind them to use combinations of features (e.g., clothing + hairstyle).

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- **Challenge**: Guessing too early. Problem: Some students make a guess before they have enough information, which often leads to mistakes.
  Tip: Explain that patience and strategy are important. Set a rule: at least three questions must be asked before guessing. Be patient. Don't guess too early — sometimes asking one or two more targeted questions prevents a wrong guess. After the game, discuss why asking one more question can be better than guessing too soon.
- **Challenge**: Difficulty with logical reasoning. Problem: Students struggle to combine answers and draw conclusions.
  Tip: Provide an example situation: show how to move from a series of answers to a logical choice. Use think-aloud moments: play one round together and explain your reasoning step by step. Encourage students to ask themselves after each question: "Which options can I eliminate now?" Think logically. Use the answers you've collected to focus only on the remaining candidates.
- **Challenge**: Lack of confidence or hesitation. Problem: Some students hesitate to ask questions or doubt their choices.
  Tip: Create a safe, playful environment where making mistakes is okay. Encourage teamwork: let students play in pairs so they can discuss ideas. Praise smart questions, not just correct guesses.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- For younger children: Let students play in pairs. Two children can work together to guess the mystery character. They can discuss possible questions, combine ideas, and help each other decide what to eliminate.
- They may only use simple and visible characteristics:
  - boy or girl
  - glasses or no glasses

You can give them a list of example questions to help them, such as:

- "Does your person wear glasses?"
- "Is their hair blond?"

This way, they learn that broad questions can eliminate many cards at once. They also discover that it's best to reason from broad to specific.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- You can choose to allow a maximum of 10 questions.

They must write down their questions in advance.

- This teaches them to plan instead of choosing impulsively.

- A Required Question Order

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They must begin with questions that eliminate many characters at once. For example, they follow this sequence:

- Gender (usually eliminates about half of the group)
- Hair (hair colour or hair length)
- Accessories (glasses, hat, moustache)
- Clothing (bright colours, sweater, shirt)

Only after these broad questions are they allowed to ask more detailed ones.

Experts (9–10 years old):

- Smart Halving Questions

Teach students to ask questions that eliminate about half of the characters at once.

Examples:

- "Is your person wearing something on their head?"
- "Does your person have dark hair?"
- "Does your person wear glasses or a moustache?" (a question about multiple features at once)

- Forbidden Questions
  - Ban simple, low-impact questions such as:
  - "Does your person have blue eyes?"
  - "Is it Rob?" (except on the final turn)
  - Students must think about why these questions don't help much.
- Colour-Coding and Clustering
  - Before starting, have students create a chart where they group characters based on: hair – gender – accessories - face shape

They must plan their first three questions before the round begins.

- Competition: As Few Questions as Possible

Maximum of 7 questions

- +1 point for any question that eliminates more than 4 characters
- –1 point for any question that eliminates fewer than 2 characters.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which strategy worked best to find the answer? Why?
- Which questions were less effective and what would you do differently next time?
- Did you discover new ways of thinking during the game that you can use for other problems?
- How can you better plan which questions to ask first?

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3.3.3 Marco-Mikado

Brief description, and rules of the game

Everyone knows the Mikado game, those little sticks that you drop and have to try to catch, without the other sticks moving. We will play this game with branches from the forest. Let the children take branches of different lengths and thicknesses from the forest and put them in a pile. Now each child gets to take a branch from the pile, without the other branches moving. If the branch does move, the child is out and has to wait for his/her turn. Who has collected the most branches at the end?

A Mikado to play in nature. You combine play, creativity, cooperation and important skills such as problem-solving and resilience.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Resilience
- Creativity
- Emotional awareness (emotional regulation and communication)

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2+ children	10-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Gathering sticks (collaborative & problem-solving):
   - Let the children find their own sticks in a park, forest or garden.
   - Provide guidelines for length (e.g. about 30-40 cm) and thickness (e.g. about finger width).
   - The longer the sticks, the harder to find and the more challenging the game becomes.
   - The straighter the sticks are the easier the game becomes, the curvier the more challenging.
   - You can ask for X number of straight and x number of crooked ones to collect
   - They have to find at least 20-30 suitable sticks.
     - As a teacher choose a challenging number to collect.
     - The smaller what needs to be collected the more you can ask.
   - Have them reflect on what constitutes a "good" stick: straight, smooth, solid?
   - Problem-solving: What do we do if there are too few sticks? Or if they are all crooked
2. Marking sticks (creativity & problem-solving):
   - Have the children mark the sticks with rubber bands, colourful wool or string, washi tape, chalk or natural pigments. Colour or number of rings determine the value.
   - Determine together a point system as in traditional Mikado (e.g. one stick with lots of tape = 50 points, others 10, 20, 30).

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- So, they make their 'own' Mikado set.

3. Game flow:

Game rules (age appropriate)

1. Throw all sticks loosely in a heap on the ground.
2. Teacher or students can also lay the sticks on top of each other.
3. One by one, players try to remove a stick from the heap without other sticks moving.
4. Does another stick move? Then the turn is over.
5. Player with most points wins.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: The game is preferably played outdoors as it requires that outdoor space in nature in addition to collecting natural materials. Of course, the game can be played as big or small as you like. However, the bigger the collected branches become the more focused work can be done on the central skills here. Ensure the room is quiet enough to allow for thoughtful discussion and explanations during gameplay.

Outdoor: If played outside choose a quiet corner of the forest, park or playground where students can stay focused and avoid interference (other people, wind.) A natural setting can encourage focus on the game and deeper reflection-based choices.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

Macro Mikado is a playful and creative way to stimulate problem-solving thinking. In this game, the students search for and make sticks and branches themselves, devise their own value system and draw up the rules of the game together. This active involvement challenges them to think, make choices and work together.

While gathering materials, children learn to assess which branches are suitable, how to play safely and how to identify differences. When devising a value system, they have to argue why a particular stick is worth more or fewer points, which encourages logical reasoning and evaluation. Drawing up rules requires analytical thinking: what happens if a stick moves, how do we determine who wins, and what do we do when in doubt?

During the game itself, children are also challenged to think strategically: which stick yields the most points without moving others? In addition, they learn to deal with conflicts and work together, for example when they disagree about a rule or scoring.

Key areas for problem-solving thinking development:

- Creative and practical thinking when collecting and creating game materials
- Logical reasoning when devising a value system
- Analytical thinking when drawing up and adapting game rules
- Strategic thinking during the game itself
- Collaboration and conflict resolution in a group setting

By asking open questions and encouraging children to reflect on their choices and experiences, you strengthen their problem-solving skills in a playful and meaningful way.

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What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

Throughout the different phases of the game, this skill is emphasized. E.g. when preparing Macro-Mikado, they must collect sticks. How, which, why, where are central questions to solve here. Also, within indicating points and devising a system which stick (and why) gets which rating requires this skill emphatically.

Suggested use, and practical examples

The game can be played inside the classroom but preferably outdoors. The more the children develop the materials for this game themselves, the more involved the students' play attitude will be.

- Practical example:

Children collect 19 sticks and branches with a length of at least 160 cm each.
They randomly paint the sticks and branches with red, yellow and blue bands and make some sticks completely in one colour.

- The game in arrangements:

Pick up the sticks dropped randomly on the ground, without moving the other sticks. The sticks each have a different value. The player with the most points, wins.

- Example of numbers and valuation of the sticks:

1	stick	Totally red	Points:	20
3	sticks	With yellow band		10
3	sticks	With yellow and red band		5
6	sticks	Red, yellow and blue band		3
6	sticks	Red and blue band		2

- The game rules when starting:

A pair of random players form an upright bundle with all the sticks and hold them with both hands. Then they suddenly release the sticks so that they randomly fall to the ground.
If any sticks have ended up completely loose from the fallen pile, up to 3 sticks may be placed on the pile to make the game a little more difficult.

- The game:

Players take turns trying to pick up a stick from the pile, without moving any of the other sticks. If they succeed, he or she may try to pick up another stick. If a stick in the pile moves while picking up a stick, the turn goes to the next player.
The best way to pick up a stick is to gently press on one end of the stick; the other end then rises slightly.

- The end of the game:

When all sticks have been played away, the points are counted according to the scoring table. The player with the most points is WINNER.

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Materials and tools needed for implementation

- branches of various sizes and shapes (straight, crooked)
- for value marking
- various colours of paint and brushes or various colours of adhesive tape or string
- outdoor places like forest, park or playground

Guiding questions

- Reflecting on their choices
- Creative thinking
- Working together
- Applying maths
- And evaluate

Below are guiding questions divided into four phases: preparation, game design, the game itself and reflection.

1. Preparation: Finding branches
    - What do you pay attention to when choosing a good stick?
    - What makes a branch sturdy or fragile?
    - Which branch do you think is special? Why?
    - Can you find a stick that is as long as your arm? Or as thick as your thumb?
    - Which is useful for play: thick or thin branches? Long or short?

Have them gather consciously and attentively. Possibly in pairs or groups.

2. Game design: make up value system
    - How will you determine how many points each stick is worth?
    - Can you think of a system using colours, lengths or shapes?
    - Which stick do you think should be worth the most? Why?
    - How do you guys make sure it stays fair for everyone?
    - What do you do if two sticks are almost the same?
    - Could you also give minus points? When then?

Encourage children to create their own rules and system. Have them draw or write it down if necessary.

3. During play
    - How can you properly agree on who's turn it is?
    - What do you do if you accidentally move another stick?
    - What was a difficult choice during your turn?
    - Can you predict which stick yields the most?
    - How can you play carefully but smartly?
    - What makes this version of Mikado different from the classic one?

You can occasionally share observations: ‘I see you guys are helping each other well.’ / ‘Your system works really well!’

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Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- Before the game: Have children think of strategies to find good sticks, how to decorate them, how to distribute points.
- During the game: Which stick is the smartest to grab first? How can you lift something without moving others?
- After the game: Reflect. What worked/not worked? What strategies did they use? Would they do something differently next time?

Difficulty level tailoring

Creative extensions:

If you want to extend the activity, you can ask:

  - ‘Can you name your Mikado set?’
  - ‘Can you make up a story to go with it - for example, a “magic stick” or “dangerous stick”?’
  - "What if each stick had a power? What would it do?"
  - ‘How would you explain or present this game to someone else?’

- Cooperative Macro-Mikado: Play in pairs, with children discussing which stick to take.
- Add time pressure: One minute to collect as many points as possible.
- Nature-Mikado 2.0: Add elements such as leaves as “bonus” or pebbles as “punishments”.
- Other variants:
  - Normal Mikado
  - Mini Mikado: with toothpicks
  - Giant Mikado: with sticks of 100 cm
  - XXL Mikado: with sticks and branches of 200 cm
  - Scouting Mikado: with pioneer poles of various lengths that you must lift as a team
  - Chinese Mikado: with Chinese sticks
  - Floating Mikado: woven in metal wire.

Beginners (6-7 years old): At the beginner level, problem-solving focuses on basic decisions and simple logical steps. Children decide together which stick to take, while the teacher guides them to recognize which moves might cause other sticks to shift. More time is allowed for thinking through each decision and following the rules, helping students gradually become familiar with the foundations of strategic thinking.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At the advanced level, problem-solving requires faster thinking, independent decisions, and planning ahead. Children apply their own point systems, evaluate which stick can yield the most points without moving others, and adjust their strategies during the game. Disagreements are resolved cooperatively, and students refine their strategic decisions as they observe outcomes and adapt their choices.

Experts (9–10 years old): At the expert level, problem-solving emerges as complex strategic planning. Children think multiple steps ahead, combine different rule variations, and adapt quickly to changing conditions. They justify their decisions, manage conflicts independently, and continuously assess risks and opportunities to maximize success.

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Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which was the hardest for you to match with a situation?
- Did someone else's explanation or example help you to it differently?
- How did it feel when your branches were challenged or picked by another player?
- How would you play the game differently next time?
- What worked well about your value system?
- Which stick did you like best or most special? Why?
- Was it distributed fairly?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What did you learn about working together / making rules / making choices?
- Could you explain this game with your family or friends?

You can also have the children draw or write about their "favourite stick" or their system

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3.4 CRITICAL THINKING

3.4.1 Dixit

Brief description, and rules of the game

"Dixit" is a creative card game where players use abstract illustrations to create stories or hints. The storyteller selects a card and gives a cryptic clue, while other players choose cards that match the hint. Everyone then votes on which card they believe belongs to the storyteller, and points are awarded based on correct or misleading choices.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Critical thinking

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Empathy
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Emotional Awareness

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	3-6 children	30-50 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Setup:

1. Each player receives 6 cards.

Gameplay:

2. 1 player chooses a card (without showing it) and says a word, sound, or story that, in their opinion, fits the image on the card. This person is the storyteller.
3. The other players choose a card from their hand that they think also matches the description.
4. All chosen cards are shuffled and laid face up on the table. The players (except the storyteller) then vote for the card they think belongs to the storyteller.

Scoring:

5. If everyone or no one guesses the storyteller's card: the storyteller gets no points, but the other players each receive 2 points.
6. If only some players guess the correct card: the storyteller and the correct guessers each receive 3 points.
7. Players receive 1 extra point for each vote cast for their own card.

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Winning the Game:

8. The first player to reach a certain number of points wins.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Set up tables or mats on the floor where small groups of 3–6 players can comfortably sit around the cards

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game promotes critical thinking because it engages students in analysing, interpreting, and evaluating-core aspects of critical thinking. This happens in several ways:

1. Interpreting abstract and metaphorical images
   - The cards in Dixit are intentionally vague and symbolic. Students must think about what an image could mean and how that meaning connects to a given word, phrase, or story.
   - This involves weighing multiple possible interpretations and selecting the most appropriate one.
2. Reasoning and making connections
   - To make a good choice, students need to connect concepts:
   - How does this card fit the storyteller's hint?
   - Which cards are others likely to choose?
   - This encourages logical thinking and perspective-taking.
3. Evaluating and strategizing
   - Students must not only assess their own interpretation but also anticipate how others will think.
   - They ask themselves questions like:
   - "Is my hint too easy or too hard?"
   - "Which card will most players pick?"
   - This requires strategic and reflective thinking.
4. Problem-solving in a social context
   - The game includes a competitive element: scoring points by making accurate choices.
   - Students must analyse information, compare options, and make decisions under uncertainty.

Conclusion: Dixit promotes critical thinking because students interpret information, consider multiple perspectives, make connections, and develop strategies based on ambiguous and limited clues.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, learners:

- Understand the value of ambiguity and open-ended thinking, recognizing that multiple interpretations can coexist and that uncertainty is part of the creative process.
- Understand the importance of strategic thinking, as predicting other players' choices adds an extra layer of complexity to their decision-making process.

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Suggested use, and practical examples

- When this game is played on the playground, it can be played as a “market version”: all players place their chosen card on the ground, including the storyteller. Then, the students must look at all the cards and stand by the card they think is the correct one.

Points = the number of students standing by a card.

- The story with this card can be:

  - Listen carefully, and you will hear something.
  - The sea whispers secrets.
  - I hear something you cannot hear.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Dixit cards

Guiding questions

Guiding Questions – When Choosing a Card

- Why did you choose that particular card for this description?
- What do you think the other players will think when they see your card?

Guiding Questions – When Voting

- What makes you think this is the storyteller’s card?
- Which other cards did you consider? Why?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Limited creativity, too little variety in ideas or difficulty making connections.
  Tip: Before the game starts, you can have a kind of “warm-up” or exploration phase.
  In a group, let the children collect all kinds of stories or sounds for a specific card, so that during the game they have a broader range of inspiration. You can also turn this into a mini-game: students vote for the person who told the most fun story for a given card.
  Everyone chooses a card from their own stack and tells what they think could go with that card (or sound). This gives the students inspiration for all the possibilities.
- **Challenge**: Students have difficulty choosing.
  Tip: The storyteller can give an extra word, or you can start with a sound first, then a word, and finally a full story.

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- **Challenge**: Sometimes students take a long time to decide.
  Tip: You can introduce time pressure, for example with a song, a countdown clock, or an hourglass. When time is up, they must go to their chosen card.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): No Scoring: Let each child choose a card that fits a simply told story. Afterwards, they explain why they chose that card.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): Limit the Choices: For example, only lay out 3 cards per round to make it easier.

Experts (9–10 years old): Play Cooperatively: Work together to choose the correct card that fits a story.

How to play cooperatively:

- One student places 4 cards in the middle and tells a story that fits one of the cards.
- The others listen carefully.
- They must guess which card the storyteller is talking about. The storyteller counts to three, and the other students point to their chosen card at the same time.
- If everyone is correct, the group earns the card as a point. They should try to earn as many points as possible together. If someone is wrong, the group gets no point.
- All cards are then removed, and the next student becomes the storyteller.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Why did you think this was the correct card?
- What made it misleading or clever?
- What made that description good or difficult?
- What else could the storyteller have said to make it better or vaguer?
- Why did almost everyone get it right, or why did almost no one get it right?
- What does that teach us about how we think or interpret?
- What makes a description “clever” in this game?
- How can you better put yourself in someone else’s shoes?
- What does this game tell us about how different people interpret images?

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3.4.2 Werewolves

Brief description, and rules of the game

The game Werewolves is a popular social deduction game in which players assume different roles and try to figure out who the werewolves are before they gain the majority. It provides an excellent opportunity to train skills focusing on critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation and communication.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Critical thinking

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Resilience
- Problem-solving
- Empathy
- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication

Age group	Student number	Duration
8 + years old	Whole class: minimum 3 students - maximum 28 students	10-45 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. In a cursed village, nothing is what it seems... or rather, no one is what they seem! Are you a master of lies and deceit? No one can fool you. Then Werewolves is definitely a game for your class. Slip into one of twelve different roles and be on your guard: who is the treacherous werewolf? And who is the innocent villager? Unmask them quickly, because before you know it, your chance will be over!
2. At the start of the game, a narrator is chosen, the game leader. The Game Leader does not play and is responsible for keeping the game on track. This can be either the teacher or a student.
3. The game leader puts together a game based on the number of players and their experience with werewolves. To start the game, the leader hands each player a card. Each player then looks at their character card. This character card is secret, and you don't show it to anyone!
4. The card shows your role. Are you a Civilian? Then try to unmask all the werewolves. Are you a Werewolf? Then try to eat all the civilians.
5. There are several scenarios you can play, good for hours of fun. It is an interactive game with a lot of suspense because: how much can you trust your friends.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Can be played in the everyday setting of the classroom. Set up a desk of cards of a minimum with 3 different roleplaying cards. Ensure the (class-)room is quiet enough to allow focus and thoughtful discussion and explanations during gameplay.

Outdoor: If played outside, choose a quiet corner of the playground where students can stay focused and avoid interference. A natural setting can encourage focus on the game and deeper individual reflection-based choices.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

The game Werewolves is an excellent way to stimulate critical thinking. In this role-playing game, players must listen carefully, observe, reason and communicate strategically to find out who the werewolves are – or to hide their own role. The game challenges children to analyse information, form hypotheses and make decisions based on limited or unreliable data.

During the game, children learn to evaluate others' statements: Does what that player is saying make sense? Does it match their behaviour? They also have to determine their own strategy: Do I tell the truth or mislead others? This promotes the ability to critically reflect on information and intentions. In addition, they learn to deal with uncertainty and assess risks, which is essential for critical thinking.

Important areas for development in critical thinking:

- Analysing information: children learn to assess the statements and behaviour of others.
- Reasoning and hypothesising: who could be a werewolf and why?
- Strategic communication: consciously considering what to say and what not to say.
- Dealing with uncertainty: making decisions without complete information
- Reflection and evaluation: after the game, thinking about what worked and what didn't.

By guiding the game with specific reflection questions such as ‘Why did you think that player was a werewolf?’ or ‘What could you have done differently?’, you help children further develop their critical thinking skills in a playful and social way.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

- Develop critical and problem-solving thinking, empathy and decision-making skills.
- Learn to cooperate with others in various situations.
- Dealing with uncertainty and making strategic choices.
- Developing strategy to overcome challenges.
- Gaining insight into social dynamics and group interactions.

Werewolves develops critical thinking skills as follows:

- Communication

Clear and convincing communication is essential in Werewolves. Players must both listen to others and speak convincingly themselves to defend their own point of view or cast doubt on others. During the game, accusations are often made, and you need to be able to properly support your own arguments to convince others that you are right. This reinforces skills in debate, argumentation and public speaking.

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- Critical and strategic thinking

Players must constantly analyse who might be a werewolf and why. They must think logically and evaluate suspicious behaviour or statements, while also seeing through deceptions and bluffs. This requires the ability to recognize patterns, test assumptions and make strategic choices based on limited information. This encourages critical thinking and the ability to make decisions under pressure.

- Problem-solving ability

Werewolves offer a constantly changing scenario, in which players must constantly try to gather new information and solve problems, such as identifying the werewolves without eliminating too many innocent villagers. This helps players think solution-oriented and find creative ways to tackle complex problems.

- Decision-making

Making decisions is crucial in Werewolves. Whether it's voting someone out of the game or choosing who you trust, every choice has consequences. It is important to decide quickly based on incomplete information, which promotes decision-making skills. In addition, players must defend their choices, which helps them develop assertiveness.

Suggested use, and practical examples

The game can be played as a short snack between lessons or as a full-fledged game out-door. Playing as a snack ensures that all children understand the game well when you eventually play it outside.

1. Start in a short game as a snack with a limitation to different roles. So gradually expand the game after repeated play to all roles
2. Choose simple roles:

   Limit the number of special roles. Novice players quickly get confused if there are too many roles. Start with:

   - Werewolves
   - Citizens
   - Seer
   - Witch (optional)
   - Hunter (optional)

3. Use pictograms or cards with pictures to make the roles visually clear.
4. Narrator plays neutral role:

   The narrator is like a ‘game leader’ or ‘storyteller’ and should speak calmly and clearly, with plenty of pauses. You (or a student) can take on that role.

5. Use a calm voice and possibly music or sounds to enhance the atmosphere.
6. Shorter rounds:

   Limit the number of nights/days. Young children often have a shorter tension arc. Max. 15 minutes per game is ideal.

7. Dropouts stay involved:

Don't let children who "drop out" stay in their seats in silence. Examples:

- They can form an audience and be ‘the judges’.

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- Let them guess who they think the werewolves are.
- Or let them vote as a ghost (without affecting the game).

Practical example:

Simple basic game in group 1&2

Roles:

- 2 werewolves
- 1 seer
- all other students: civilians

Game flow:

- Narrator tells a short story: 'Wakkerdam is a quiet village... until werewolves show up!'
- Night 1: Everyone closes their eyes. The werewolves choose a victim. Seer may appoint one person.
- Morning: Seer reveals who died, children deliberate and vote.
- Repeat until werewolves or civilians win.

Duration: approx. 10-15 minutes

Additional tips for school

- Use chairs in a circle - that way everyone has an overview.
- Work with hand gestures instead of talking during the night - less noise.
- Provide time for evaluation 'What did you like?' 'What was exciting?' 'What would you do differently next time?'
- Use cards or bracelets - to keep roles secret but easy to remember.?

Materials and tools needed for implementation

The game is available in several versions (easy to difficult) from different manufacturers. Depending on the version and difficulty level, you will need the following materials:

- 3 to 16 role cards
- from the narrator (game leader) to the werewolf, to act as the seer or 'the squeaky girl'

You can also find the game rules online for free at various sites with all the supplies (role cards, role tokens, etc.).

Guiding questions

Questions are role- and phase-specific. Especially the game leader can steer the game towards the central skill critical thinking. For example:

Night phase (Provide a mysterious, calm tone)

1. Seer
   - Seer, wake up.'
   - Who do you want to investigate this night?'
   - (Answer yes/no to whether that person is a werewolf.)
   - 'Seer, close your eyes.'

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2. Witch (if in the game)
   - ‘Witch, wake up.’
   - "The victim of the werewolves is.... Do you want to save him/her?"
   - "Do you want to use your poison? On whom?"
   - ‘Witch, close your eyes.’
3. Cupid (if in the game)
   - ‘Cupid, open your eyes.’
   - ‘Who do you bind with the arrow of love?’
   - "Thank you, Cupid. Close your eyes."

Day phase (Tone gets livelier)

1. Morning begins
   - "The sun is rising over Wakkerdam.... Everyone wakes up."
   - ‘Unfortunately, [name] was attacked last night and died.’
   - (If someone is out of the game: ‘Last words?’)
2. Discussion and voting
   - ‘What do you guys think, who is suspicious?’
   - ‘Who wants to say something?’
   - ‘Have you noticed any suspicious behaviour?’
   - ‘Who do you guys think is a werewolf?’
   - "Time to vote. Who do you guys want to vote for?"
3. After voting
   - By majority vote, [name] is banished from the village.’
   - ‘Last words, [name]?’
   - "Was he/she a werewolf...? We'll find out in a moment..."

General critical thinking guiding questions to steer the game

- ‘Who was remarkably quiet or, on the contrary, loud?’
- ‘Who tries to divert attention from themselves?’
- ‘Who always votes with the majority?’
- ‘What if the werewolves are among your best friends?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

Tips for all players

- Listen carefully to each other!

This is one of the most important aspects of the game, but also something most quickly underestimated/forgotten. All too often, players - unconsciously - give away information they can only know when they have a special role.

- Pay close attention during the night (phase)

Listen if you hear players suddenly fall silent when a role is called. Resp. see if you notice someone moving more when a role is called.

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- Make the final observation.

Just before the day phase ends, make a good comment. For example, I think we should hang X... or I don't think we should look for suspicion in this or that one.... Chances are that players will (unconsciously) take this into account when casting their votes and follow you in your 'suggestion'. But beware: if the group (re)knows this trick, it soon works against you again :-)

- Watch each other closely during the day phase.

Also pay close attention to how players behave during the day. Does a player suddenly play differently (quieter, or more present) than in previous rounds? Then that player might just have a different/special role!

- From those killed at night the most can be learned.

A lot can be learned from who is killed at night. After all, who gets hanged during the day can still be fairly random, but those killed at night are usually with clear intentions and reasons. Take advantage of that!

- Voting says more than you think.

When casting (daytime) votes, pay close attention to who is voting for whom. For example, Werewolves will usually not vote for each other.

And if, for example, a player A has already nominated player B twice in a row, and player A is killed at night, this could well indicate an action by the Werewolves (resp. player B) to keep someone quiet who was on the right track!

Tips for (novice) Werewolves

- Take One For The Team

As Werewolves, you always win the game as a group, regardless of whether or not you (as wolf) are dead at the end. So, it can (sometimes) be attractive to sacrifice yourself as a wolf, thus making other wolves less suspicious. The civilians often only have so many chances to guess correctly before they lose: if, with your sacrifice, you can take 1 or more off that, the Werewolf group wins in the end!

- Take One From The Team.

As a wolf, also dare to take votes against a fellow wolf. That is: if you can't reasonably divert any more attention towards someone else, of course. Always sparing your fellow wolves is incredibly conspicuous. And riding along increases the trust others have in you, because after all, you did vote along. Sometimes you have to sacrifice 1 wolf in order for the group to survive (see previous tip).

- Divide and conquer.

If two citizens accuse each other of being Werewolves during the day, you can choose to kill one of them at night. Chances are this will cause the other to be seen as a wolf, and get the game worked out!

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- Don't be too eager.

As Werewolves, when the daytime votes go in the wrong direction for civilians, don't jump on top of them a masse. As nice as it is to see this happen as a wolf: it quickly gets noticed! And if you are later unmasked as a wolf, it becomes a lot easier for the citizens to figure out who else is werewolf then.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): At the beginner level, critical thinking focuses on evaluating basic information and making simple inferences. Players use the simplest roles (civilian, werewolf, seer) so they can easily track who says what and how they behave. The teacher or a more experienced player can guide attention with questions such as, “Why do you think that player is a werewolf?” or “What did you notice about their behaviour?” This helps children practice making basic observations, comparing information, and drawing simple conclusions.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At the advanced level, critical thinking appears in more complex situations and faster decision-making. Players encounter additional roles (e.g., witch, hunter) and more complex dynamics, requiring analysis of multiple pieces of information and logical reasoning. They must consciously decide when to tell the truth and when to mislead others, while continuously evaluating the statements and behaviour of their peers.

Experts (9–10 years old): At the expert level, critical thinking emerges as complex strategic planning and flexible, real-time evaluation. Players use combinations of advanced roles (e.g., jester, custom house rules), think several steps ahead, and adjust their strategies continuously based on the unfolding game. They independently analyse situations, draw conclusions, and plan their communication deliberately, while managing uncertainty and unexpected twists.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Analysis of choices: What arguments did you and others use to determine who the werewolves might be? Were these convincing? Why or why not?
- Reflection on assumptions: Did you make assumptions about others during the game? Which ones were they, and did they turn out to be correct or incorrect?
- Evaluation of information: How did you deal with conflicting information or deception? How did you determine what was true?
- Learning from mistakes: Which moments in the game would you have wanted to handle differently afterwards? What would you do differently next time?
- Logical reasoning: How logical did you find the reasoning of others? How did this influence your own thinking?

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3.4.3 Nine Stones

Brief description, and rules of the game

Nine Stones is a playful, team-based game where students use imagination, problem solving, and exploration while competing. The attacking team tries to knock down and rebuild the “castle,” while the defending team chases them and attempts to tag them with the ball. The game encourages creativity in finding new strategies and fosters curiosity and openness as children experiment with different ways of cooperating, moving, and achieving their goals.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Critical thinking

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving
- Creativity
- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness

Age group	Student number	Duration
9-10 years old	whole class working in small groups (min. 6 players, ideally 8-12 players)	20-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparing the Play Area: Stack 9 stones, plastic cups, or building blocks in the centre of the play area to create the "castle." Mark a throw line 9 steps away from the castle.
2. Dividing Teams: Split players into two equal teams: attackers and defenders.
3. Gameplay:
   - Attackers take turns throwing the ball to knock down the castle.
   - Once the castle is down, attackers start rebuilding it.
   - Defenders retrieve the ball and try to "tag" (lightly hit) attackers with the ball.
   - Attackers can move within the play area while trying to rebuild the castle.
4. Winning: Defenders win if they tag all attackers before the castle is fully rebuilt. Attackers win if they rebuild the entire castle before all team members are tagged.
5. New Round: The winning team becomes the attackers in the next round.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game requires a spacious indoor (gym) or outdoor (schoolyard) area with a clearly marked play zone using chalk or tape.

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

Nine Stones develops critical thinking by putting children in dynamic, problem-solving situations where they must analyse, evaluate, and make decisions quickly. Attackers need to consider how to rebuild the castle efficiently while avoiding being tagged, requiring them to plan and adjust strategies in real time. Defenders must observe patterns of movement, anticipate the attackers' choices, and decide how to act collectively, which strengthens analytical reasoning and situational awareness. Both teams are encouraged to test different approaches, assess outcomes, and learn from both successes and failures. Throughout the game, students practice weighing options, predicting consequences, and adapting to changing conditions, all of which are fundamental elements of critical thinking.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, learners:

- Can identify effective strategies.
- Can compare alternative approaches and make informed decisions under pressure.
- Demonstrate flexible thinking by adapting plans when circumstances change.
- Learn to consider multiple perspectives while solving problems.
- Engage in reflective thinking by observing the results of their own and others' actions.
- Evaluate what worked well and what could be improved and apply these insights in subsequent rounds.
- Strengthen their ability to think logically, anticipate outcomes, and collaborate effectively.
- Maintain critical awareness of both their own and others' strategies.

Suggested use, and practical examples

- As a team-building activity in Physical Education lessons, the game can be effectively used as it simultaneously requires physical activity, strategic thinking, and cooperation. Students do not compete based on individual performance; instead, they coordinate their movements, decisions, and communication in order to achieve a shared goal. During the game, roles such as builders, defenders, or distractors naturally emerge, which supports the development of responsibility and attentiveness to peers. Thus, in Physical Education lessons, the activity not only contributes to the development of physical endurance and coordination but also strongly promotes social learning and creative problem-solving.
- During school trips, the game serves as an ideal community-building activity, as it requires minimal equipment, is easy to implement outdoors, and quickly engages students in a shared experience. By stepping outside the usual classroom environment, students have the opportunity to experience the joy of cooperation in a new and more relaxed setting. Joint strategy-building and playful competition strengthen the sense of belonging, while students remain physically active, connect freely with one another, and create positive shared experiences that contribute to long-term class cohesion.
- On sports days, the game offers an alternative to traditional competitive events, as it rewards not only speed or physical skill but also creative thinking and teamwork. It allows students with diverse abilities to participate as equal contributors in a shared activity. Success is not determined by the performance of a single "strongest" or "fastest" student, but by the team's

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ability to adapt flexibly, pay attention to one another, and make collective decisions. This makes the game particularly well suited for inclusive and accessible sports events.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- 9 small, stable stones, cups, or building blocks
- 1 soft ball (e.g., foam ball)
- chalk or tape to mark the play area

Guiding questions

- What patterns do you notice in how the other team moves, and how can that help your team plan?
- If one approach isn't working, what alternative strategy could you try next, and why?
- Which part of the game is most challenging right now, and how could you adapt your plan?
- What do you think will happen if you change the way you rebuild or defend the castle?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Safety risks during movement and throwing
  Tip: The teacher should choose a soft ball and use light, non-injurious materials for building the tower (e.g. plastic cups or building blocks).
  Trick: Using colourful, highly visible materials is not only safer but also more motivating and provides visual support that helps students follow the game more easily, especially younger children or those who are more easily distracted.
- **Challenge**: The game becomes predictable over time
  Tip: With more advanced groups, the teacher can introduce changing conditions that encourage students to rethink their strategies.
  Trick: For example, a time limit for rebuilding the tower can be introduced; or a scoring system that rewards not only winning but also creative solutions; or playing with multiple balls, which increases complexity and requires a higher level of cooperation.
- **Challenge**: Uneven participation within the team
  Tip: The teacher should deliberately draw attention to the fact that every team member plays an important role in achieving collective success.
  Trick: Temporary role assignments can be used (e.g. "builder", "observer", "defender"), with roles rotating each round so that every student has the opportunity to try out different responsibilities.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): The game is played with smaller teams and a simplified castle (fewer stones or cups). Attackers focus on knocking down and rebuilding with guidance from the teacher, while defenders observe and tag carefully. Children are encouraged to verbalize their decisions ("I will rebuild here because…") and reflect briefly on what worked or didn't. This level develops basic critical thinking by helping students notice patterns, evaluate immediate options, and make simple strategic choices while feeling safe to experiment.

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Advanced learners (8-9 years old): Teams are larger, and the castle is full-sized. Attackers and defenders are encouraged to plan multiple moves ahead, considering not only immediate consequences but also possible reactions from the other team. Children discuss potential strategies with teammates, test hypotheses during play, and adapt in response to opponents' actions. This level strengthens analytical reasoning, situational awareness, and flexible problem-solving, while fostering collaboration and critical reflection on outcomes.

Experts (9–10 years old): The game is played with full teams in larger play areas, with added complexity such as time limits, multiple castles, or variable rules (e.g., certain zones cannot be crossed, or only certain players can rebuild). Attackers and defenders must coordinate advanced strategies, anticipate counter-strategies, and make split-second decisions. Children are encouraged to observe, analyse, and critique their own strategies and those of opponents, discussing what worked and why. This level intensively develops critical thinking, strategic planning, and adaptive decision-making under dynamic conditions.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which strategy worked best for your team, and why do you think it was effective?
- What unexpected outcomes happened during the game, and what did you learn from them?
- If you could play again, what would you do differently to make better decisions?
- How did your team's choices influence each other, and what does that teach about planning and collaboration?

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3.5 RESILIENCE

3.5.1 Hopping Cats

Brief description, and rules of the game

In this tactical board game played on a 6×6 grid, the goal is to line up three cats of the same colour (small or large) horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. Cats can “bounce”: small cats may only push other small ones, while large cats can move any other cat—provided the square behind them (in the same direction) is empty.

When a trio of small cats is formed, they are removed from the board and replaced—one by one—by large cats from the same player.

The final goal is to create a line of three large cats of the same colour.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Resilience

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness
- Empathy

Age group	Student number	Duration
6+	whole class / in pair (2 children)	10-15 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Each player chooses a colour and places 8 small cats in front of them. The 8 large cats of the same colour are kept in a separate pile.
2. The starting player places one small cat on any empty square of the board.
3. Players take turns placing small cats on empty squares.
   If any of the eight neighbouring spaces is already occupied by another cat, and the square directly behind it (in the same direction) is free, the cat “bounces” to that space.
4. When three small cats of the same colour form a line, they are removed from the board. Later, three large cats will enter the game in their place, one at a time.
5. Large cats can push any other cat, while small cats may only move other small ones. It is allowed to move one's own cats as well as the opponent’s.

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6. The game ends when a player forms a line of three large cats or successfully places all 8 large cats on the board. That player wins the game.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game is primarily designed for indoor play, with the board and cat tokens placed on a table.

However, one of the game variations can be played outdoors:

A large game board is marked on the ground using chalk or ropes, and students themselves take on the role of the cats. They wear headbands displaying cats of specific colours and sizes, making it easy to see who represents which piece.

This version brings movement and physical engagement into the experience while preserving the core logic and objectives of the game.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

Throughout the game, children must continuously adapt to changing situations:

Cats may be pushed out of a line, re-enter the board later, or undergo transformation (small kittens becoming large cats). A carefully built position can suddenly shift due to a single bounce, requiring players to reassess their strategy and respond flexibly to the new board layout. This dynamic gameplay supports the development of adaptability and perseverance.

During the game, children:

- Experience what it feels like when a cat is pushed out of a trio or removed from the board.
- Discover that setbacks are not final – cats can return, and new opportunities emerge.
- Learn how to build patiently, step by step, even when facing obstacles.
- Practice decision-making in changing circumstances.
- Learn to accept when another player's move disrupts their plan and adapt by finding a new strategy.

The game supports the development of resilience by offering a playful environment where children can explore how to recover from unexpected changes, how to rethink their approach, and how to find new motivation to continue – all within a joyful, creative, and safe setting.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, learners:

- Respond with greater flexibility to unexpected situations – for example, when a well-planned setup suddenly changes, or a move does not bring the intended result.
- Learn that failure is not the end of the game, but the starting point of new possibilities – within the game's logic, cats can "return", and positions can be reimagined.
- Practice problem-solving under pressure, as each move creates a new situation requiring fresh thinking.
- Develop emotional regulation skills, especially when another player's action sets them back or breaks up a nearly completed trio.

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- Strengthen their perseverance, as they must rebuild and re-enter the game multiple times, even when faced with difficult positions.
- Begin to accept change as a natural part of the game and learn that adaptability helps them move forward.

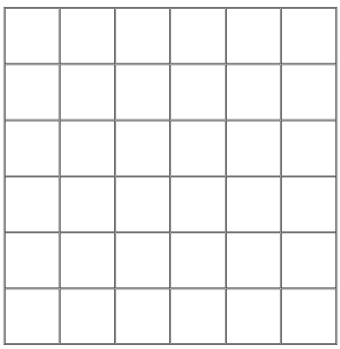
Suggested use, and practical examples

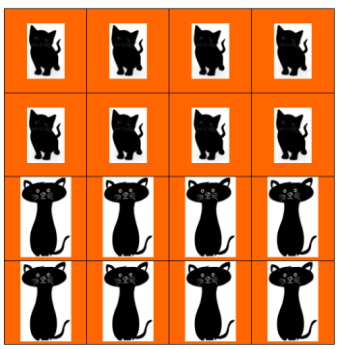
- Can be played in pairs or small groups, in a classroom setting, on a carpet or table, where children take turns thinking, planning, and making moves.
- Can also be realized as a live board game – for example, in a schoolyard or gym – where the students themselves become the cats by stepping on the giant game board squares. This version is especially suitable as a movement-based, body-awareness developing, and community-building activity.
- Can be integrated into visual arts lessons, where children design their own cats, puppets, or the game board – this fosters attachment to the game and encourages creative self-expression.
- Can be linked to math-logical tasks (e.g., sequences, spatial orientation, combinatorics) through analysis of the game rules and playing field.
- In physical education classes, the “landing” actions can be incorporated as movement exercises requiring balance and rhythm, especially in the live board game version.
- Can be used as a complex activity during thematic weeks or social skills development days – for example, during “emotions week,” “cooperation day,” or “stories and games” themes.
- An excellent tool for developing communication and cooperation: during the game, students must not only pay attention to each other's moves but also practice patience, rule-following, and empathy.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

The game requires a 6×6 square grid game board. Additionally, 8 small cat figures and 8 large cat figures are needed in two different colours – these can be made as tile-like pieces, slightly smaller than the squares on the board. The figures can be either drawn or photographic cats, even using the children’s favourite pets – this adds a more personal experience and increases engagement.

If the game is played as a live board game (e.g., in the schoolyard), the students themselves represent the cats. In this case, it is recommended to use headbands or markers in two different colours, to which the cat figures can be attached, so that everyone can clearly see who is playing which role (small cat or large cat). The game board can be created by drawing on a carpet, chalking it on asphalt, or arranging gym equipment, depending on the available space and materials.





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Guiding questions

- Where would it be wise to move now?
- What consequences will this move have?
- What other options do you have?
- How could you defend against your opponent?
- Do you consider defence or creating your own trio more important at the moment?
- What is the worst-case scenario that could happen to your cats right now? Is there a positive side to it? For example, if a cat falls off, it can be placed in a completely new spot afterward, which might create a good new opportunity for you!
- What strategy should you choose if you have only two cats left in the game?
- Can you manage to keep your next move a secret from the other player?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Uncertainty about the rules.
  Tip: Discussing the rules together beforehand helps orientation and prevents misunderstandings or conflicts.
- **Challenge**: Disappointment when a cat is knocked out of the row or removed from the board.
  Tip: It's important to recognize that this is part of the game, and it can happen that your own or others' cats leave the playing area. This can also open up new opportunities.
- **Challenge**: Difficulty adapting to changing situations.
  Tip: Replanning and continuously adjusting strategies promote flexible thinking and quick adaptation to the situation.
- **Challenge**: Tension or resentment if someone moves another player's cat.
  Tip: Accepting this as part of the game's mechanics, along with humour – such as pretending the cats are "meowing" – can reduce tension and ease cooperation.
- **Challenge**: Falling behind or difficulty reconnecting with the game.
  Tip: Jointly assessing the situation and discussing the next moves help players get back on track and stay motivated to continue.

Difficulty level tailoring

- Simpler version: using only the small cats is recommended, making the game easier to understand and quicker to learn.
- Joint decision-making: two players can play together, discussing their moves collaboratively, which supports communication and teamwork.
- Live game version: on a large game board drawn in the schoolyard or outdoors, children represent the cats themselves, making the moves clearly visible and adding an exciting physical activity element to the game.

Expandability of the game: the rules can be flexibly adapted for multiple players or a larger board, such as an 8x8 grid, thereby increasing complexity and tactical possibilities.

Beginners (6-7 years old): At the beginner level, resilience develops through basic challenges. Using only small cats makes the game simpler and easier to follow. Children experience that a bounce or a disrupted trio is not a final failure and practice adapting flexibly to changing situations. Shared decision-making allows them to discuss moves, support each other, and practice basic emotional regulation

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and patience. At this level, they begin to understand that change is a natural part of the game and that every setback can open up new possibilities.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At the advanced level, resilience is linked to more complex problem-solving and tactical planning. Children use both small and large cats and respond quickly to changing situations. They learn that a well-planned strategy can be disrupted and that every move may present a new challenge requiring fresh thinking. Cooperation can reach a strategic level: players discuss options, plan moves together, and practice emotional regulation when another player disrupts or breaks up an almost completed trio.

Experts (9–10 years old): At the expert level, resilience is combined with complex strategic thinking, rapid adaptation, and independent decision-making. Children think several steps ahead, combine small and large cats, and plan strategies considering the whole board. Unexpected bounces and opponent moves require quick restructuring, teaching players to stay calm, flexible, and motivated. They understand that failure is not the end of the game but opens new possibilities, strengthening perseverance as they rebuild and re-enter the game multiple times while adapting to changing situations.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- What was the biggest challenge for you during the game?
- What strategy did you use, and why?
- Which move was your most successful?
- Did you often miss a situation? What helped you get past those momentary feelings?
- What would you do differently next time?
- How were you able to adapt to your opponent’s moves? How well could you think ahead?
- How did it feel to create a trio, and how about when the other player ruined your plans? Were you able to come up with a new plan easily? Did the pace of replanning speed up?

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3.5.2 Black-and-White Tag Game

Brief description, and rules of the game

Starting from the centre of the playing field, starting lines are marked approximately 1 meter away in both directions, and boundary lines are marked about 10 meters away. (The starting positions can be adjusted according to the available space.).

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Resilience

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness (emotional regulation and communication)
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- Problem-solving

Age group	Student number	Duration
6+	class size	5-10 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Two teams are formed, named BLACK and WHITE. The teams take their positions behind the starting lines, facing each other. After the teams are formed, the opponents line up facing each other along the dividing strip between the two halves of the field, placing one foot slightly forward, ready to run.

The game leader's task is to call out the team names irregularly, for example: "White!"

Then the WHITE team chases the BLACK team, but they may only run up to the boundary line of the opposing half. Thus, any "black" player who crosses the boundary line is safe. The white team members who manage to catch black players on the black team's side bring them over and add them to their own team as whites.

If the game leader calls "Black!", then naturally the white team must run away from the black team. (Besides calling "Black" and "White," the game leader may sometimes call other colour names to confuse the teams.)

The game is won by the team that manages to absorb all the players of the opposing team into their own.

A more difficult variation is played when the two halves are separated not by a strip but by a single line. This requires faster reactions to the calls: "Black!" or "White!"

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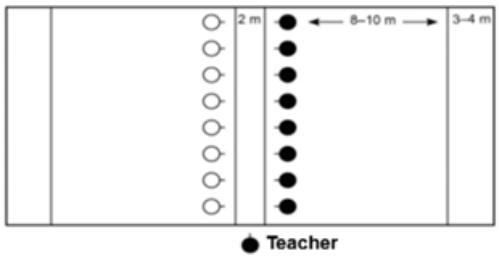
Game Rules:

1. Roles alternate between chaser and runner, based on the game leader's decision.
2. The called team becomes the chaser.
3. Tagging is only valid before the boundary line.
4. If a runner steps out of bounds at the sideline, it counts as if they were tagged.
5. If a runner has already stepped into their safe zone with one foot, a tag is no longer valid.
6. A chaser may tag multiple runners in a single round.
7. The team that absorbs all members of the opposing team wins.



Playing area

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game can be played indoors in a gym or outdoors, during physical education lessons or leisure activities.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

During the game, children encounter constantly changing situations: sometimes they are chasers, other times runners, or they may even switch to the opposing team. The game requires quick adaptation, immediate reaction to decision-making situations, and the ability to accept changes that occur during the game – for example, suddenly "losing" a teammate or moving to the opposing team themselves.

During the game, children:

- Process experiences of failure (e.g., being caught or failing to catch anyone).
- Learn to rebuild their motivation when they return to the game or take on a new role.
- React quickly to changing situations (e.g., unexpected team name calls).
- Experience the balance between risk-taking and self-control (e.g., how far they dare to advance while in danger).
- Reframe defeat as not an end but the beginning of a new role.

From the perspective of resilience, the game is particularly effective in normalizing mistakes and providing opportunities for quick processing and moving past them - all within a playful, safe environment.

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What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, students:

- Become capable of flexibly adapting to unexpected or rapidly changing situations.
- Learn to re-engage after failures or difficulties (e.g., being caught, switching teams).
- Develop emotional self-regulation, especially during more tense game moments.
- Develop a more positive attitude toward mistakes and experience that they can be learning opportunities.
- Practice decision-making even under uncertain conditions.
- Strengthen their cooperation skills and the sense of belonging to the community.

Suggested use, and practical examples

The Black-White Tag Game is a competitive, dynamic game played with two teams, featuring rapid changes and unpredictable role switches. It requires a large playing area and can be played on a sports field, in a gym, or outdoors. During the game, children get used to frequently adapting to new situations and must pay attention both to the game leader and to each other.
It is recommended to play the game regularly throughout the school year, gradually increasing the difficulty. The number of players and the size of the available space also affect the game's dynamics. Rules can be modified to suit specific goals.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

None.

Guiding questions

Due to the active nature of the game, there is no opportunity to ask questions during play, except for questions aimed at understanding the rules

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students have difficulty understanding the rules.
  Tip: Provide visual examples demonstrating key movements and typical situations during the game.
- **Challenge**: Not all children are motivated.
  Tip: Create exciting names for the main actions of the game that spark their imagination, helping them engage more easily.
- **Challenge**: Children have trouble keeping up with the changing roles.
  Tip: Simplify the game by removing the misleading colour calls, using only "Black" and "White" as cues.
- **Challenge**: Some players become overly excited, which can create safety risks.
  Tip: Temporarily ask the overexcited player to observe the game from outside for a while.
- **Challenge**: Children struggle to cope when they are caught or have to switch teams.
  Tip: Emphasize that failure or role change is not final, but an opportunity for learning and growth.

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Difficulty level tailoring

The Black-and-White Tag Game can be played in multiple versions with varying difficulty levels. Based on the group composition and prior knowledge, the teacher can modify the rules to make the game easier or more challenging.

Beginners (6-7 years old): This version is recommended for 6-8-year-olds and whole classes. A central dividing strip marks the two teams' sides of the playing field. The teacher forms the teams. The team colours are clearly displayed on each side, making the players' positions obvious. At the start of each round, the teacher announces the chasing team's name and raises a flag of the same colour. The start of each round is signalled simultaneously with an audible and visual cue. The game leader provides continuous positive reinforcement and allows children to share their opinions at the end of the game. Initially, only black and white colours are used; later, other colours can be introduced as a misleading element.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): This version is recommended for 6-10-year-olds and whole classes. Visual cues can be omitted as needed; rules are explained verbally. Team leaders can be selected by drawing lots, which also determines the team names and which team starts. The teacher leads the game. In addition to the basic rules, different game modes can be tried, for example:

- "Prisoner capture" mode, where every caught player joins the chasing team.
- "Elimination" mode, where caught players wait outside the playing area until the next round.
- Multi-round point-scoring game, with fixed team compositions; points are tallied by the game leader based on caught players.
- Players can start from different positions (cross-legged sitting, lying on the stomach, kneeling, lying on the back).

After the game, the teacher invites children to share which situations made the game more exciting for them, highlighting good solutions and different play styles.

Experts (9–10 years old): This version is recommended for 8-10-year-olds, played with a whole class. The playing field is marked only by a dividing line instead of a strip, requiring faster reactions. Besides team leaders, a game leader can be appointed from among the students. All versions from previous levels can be played here as well, with additions such as players lining up back-to-back and having to suddenly turn to chase the opposing team. It is important that the game mode is chosen together with the group, allowing opportunities to try new variations.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- What feelings did you have when you were caught or had to switch teams?
- How did you manage to rejoin the game after being caught or experiencing failure?
- What strategies did you use to respond quickly to the game leader's calls?
- How did teammates support each other during the game?
- What did you learn about handling unexpected situations and changes?
- What would you say to a friend who feels disappointed during the game?
- In what ways did you change by the end of the game regarding perseverance or cooperation?

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3.5.3 Nest Tag Game

Brief description, and rules of the game

The students pair up, standing facing each other while holding hands, and are scattered around to form "nests." One player is designated as the "tagger" and another as the "runner." The tagger starts chasing the runner, who can hide in any of the nests. Upon entering a nest, the runner grabs both hands of the player standing opposite them, causing the player behind them to be pushed out of the nest. That player must then run and becomes the new runner. Roles switch when the tagger touches the runner before they manage to enter a nest.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Resilience

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation, and communication
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- Problem-solving

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 +	minimum 10 and maximum 30 children	5-15 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Game rules:

1. Tagging can be passed back.
2. Tagging is only valid outside the nests.
3. Hiding in the nest must not be obstructed.
4. It is not allowed to return to the same nest twice in a row.
5. Occasionally, the partner facing the previous runner, whose hands haven't been grabbed yet, might mistakenly start running; in that case, this player becomes the new tagger.
6. When the number of players is odd, the game can be played with two runners and one tagger.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

It can be played in the gym or outdoors, during physical education classes, music lessons, or leisure activities.

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

In the game, children continuously switch between different roles: sometimes they are runners, sometimes taggers, or players pushed out of the nest who must quickly adapt to their new situation. This dynamic promotes quick adaptability and flexibility to unexpected events, such as suddenly having to take on a new role.

During the game, children:

- Experience rapid changes in situations and learn the importance of responding appropriately.
- Learn to manage disappointments like being tagged or pushed out of the nest.
- Develop the ability to refocus and find motivation to continue playing.
- Enhance their social skills, especially cooperation and accepting rules.
- Understand that failure is not final but an opportunity for growth and a fresh start.

The game supports the development of resilience by helping children cope with changes, manage frustration, and build perseverance in a playful and supportive environment.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, students:

- Improve their ability to quickly recognize situations and make decisions, as they must constantly adapt to changing roles and circumstances during the game.
- Practice emotional regulation, especially managing disappointment and frustration when they are tagged or pushed out of a nest.
- Enhance their social cooperation skills, since creating and maintaining the nests is a shared responsibility, and following the rules leads to collective success.
- Build self-confidence and a sense of responsibility by taking an active role in the game and learning to accept role changes.
- Develop perseverance and a positive attitude toward setbacks, experiencing that losing in the game is not the end but an opportunity for participation and growth.

Suggested use, and practical examples

The game requires less space than a typical tag game, so it can be played not only on a sports field or in a gym but also in a larger classroom. It is suitable for physical education lessons as well as leisure time. Since pairs constantly change during the game and roles switch quickly, children become accustomed to frequently adapting to new situations.

It is recommended to play the game regularly over several weeks and then set it aside for a while. Later, it can be reintroduced during another period in the school year. Changes in the number of players or available space will affect the game's dynamics, and rules can be adjusted slightly accordingly.

Once students are familiar with the game, they may develop strategies to keep the tagger away from the runner. They also become capable of cooperating even in changing situations.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

None.

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Guiding questions

Due to the active nature of the game, there is no opportunity to ask questions during play, except for questions aimed at understanding the rules

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students have difficulty understanding the rules.
  Tip: Provide a visual demonstration showing key movements and possible situations during the game.
- **Challenge**: Some children only choose their friends, leaving others out of the game.
  Tip: Ask players not to return to the same nest repeatedly.
- **Challenge**: The tagger and runner only play with each other, switching roles back and forth, while others are excluded from the fun.
  Tip: Agree on a time limit, for example a countdown from 15, and if no one manages to enter a nest, select a new pair to play as runners.
- **Challenge**: The runner rushes too aggressively into the nest, creating a risky situation.
  Tip: Temporarily ask the overexcited player to step out and observe the others playing from the sidelines.

Difficulty level tailoring

Nest-Tag can be played in multiple versions and difficulty levels, which the teacher can adjust based on the group's composition and prior knowledge by simplifying or complicating the rules.

Beginners (6-7 years old): Simplified version for children aged 6-8. It is recommended to provide a smaller, designated playing area with 8-10 "nests" and to designate one tagger-runner pair. Once the game is understood, the group size can be increased. Simple rules are applied, and possible situations are clearly and visually demonstrated. The game starts and restarts after role changes on a signal, with the runner possibly given a defined advantage. The teacher supports participants with positive reinforcement and asks for feedback at the end of the game.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): Basic game version for children aged 6–10, with a class-sized group (20–30 players) on a designated playing area. Visual demonstrations can be omitted, and rules are explained verbally. The teacher starts the game, but after role changes, the game continues without stopping, requiring quick reactions from the tagger and runner. In addition to the known rules, new game modes can be tried:

- With an odd number of players, the game is played with 1 tagger and 2 runners.
- The player forced out of the nest does not become a runner but instead becomes a tagger who chases the previous tagger (role exchange).

At the end of the game, it is useful to listen to participants' feedback and ask them to recall situations that made the game particularly exciting. Emphasize successful solutions and highlight that good play can mean different things to different players.

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Experts (9–10 years old): Advanced level with more complex rule variations, for children aged 8–10, class-sized groups (20–30 players), without a restricted playing area.

- Pairs may move slowly to change positions but must not obstruct nest entry.
- Without forming nests, pairs simply hold hands; if the runner grabs the free hand of one pair member, the other must continue running.
- In large, experienced groups, the 2 tagger – 2 runner variant can be tried, requiring greater concentration since there is no visual aid to identify the taggers.
- Difficulty can be further increased by playing in the role-exchange variant

Debriefing and reflection questions

- How did you feel when you were pushed out of the nest or caught? What did you do to get back into the game?
- Was there a situation where you had to make a quick decision or change your strategy? How did you handle it?
- What did you learn about managing disappointment or loss during the game?
- What feelings helped you keep going when you faced a difficult situation?
- How did your attitude toward the game change when you received a new role?
- What helped you accept the rules and changes during the game?

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3.6 FLEXIBILITY

3.6.1 Quad PUSE – Winning Quarters

Brief description, and rules of the game

Players place PUSE tiles on the table to recreate the patterns shown on their secret task cards. Action cards can be used to influence the course of the game. The goal is to complete as many task cards as possible within the set time or before all tiles are used.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Flexibility

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Creativity
- Problem solving
- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness
- Resilience

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 +	3-4 students / group class size	15-20 minutes, depending on the number of tiles and task cards

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparation: Place the PUSE tiles in two stacks at the edge of the table. A third stack consists of face-down task and action cards. Each player receives three tiles and draws from the third stack until they have exactly two task cards. (They may also receive multiple action cards.) Tiles are visible to everyone; cards remain secret.
2. The first player places one PUSE tile in the centre of the table, then draws a new tile to replace it. (Each player should always have three tiles and two task cards and may also hold action cards.)
3. Then, taking turns in clockwise order, players add one tile at a time to the shared layout, aligning full edges and making sure the size of the connecting squares matches. The goal is to complete the patterns shown on their task cards, in any scale.
4. If a player completes a task card—by placing the fourth tile in a 2×2 square so that the pattern is formed in the centre—they draw a new task card.
5. Action cards can be used to influence the game. They may be played only during the player's turn. These cards can drastically change the current situation, and it is not always easy for players to accept the new conditions.

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6. If a player does not wish to place a tile during their turn, they may choose to pass.
7. The game ends when the PUSE tiles run out or the agreed game time is over. The winner is the player who has completed the most task cards.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

It is primarily an indoor game. A large table is required to build continuous patterns with the tiles.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

In this game, children must continuously adapt to a changing game board and evolving situations: the shared patterns being built do not always develop according to their plans, and action cards can suddenly disrupt even well-established progress. The dynamic nature of the game requires quick rethinking and flexible thinking – especially when a task card is almost completed, but another player's move changes the course unexpectedly.

During the game, children:

- Experience what it means to adapt to a shared game space where others' decisions directly impact their own possibilities.
- Learn to develop new strategies when their original ideas can no longer be carried out.
- Practice emotional flexibility when an action card completely alters the structure they have been working on.
- Develop problem-solving skills by finding creative solutions with limited tools.
- Recognize that failure or a setback is not the end of the game, but an opportunity to rethink and move forward.

The game supports the development of both cognitive and emotional flexibility by presenting unpredictable challenges in a playful, supportive environment. It helps build children's self-confidence and perseverance, while encouraging open-minded and adaptive responses to unexpected changes—not only in the game, but also in everyday life.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, students:

- become more capable of flexibly adapting to unexpected situations – for example, when the shared game space does not unfold according to their plans.
- Improve in letting go of rigid original strategies and instead develop new ones that fit changing conditions.
- Learn to manage frustration and emotional ups and downs when carefully built opportunities fall through.
- Gain practical experience in viewing setbacks or limitations not as dead ends, but as opportunities for growth and progress.
- Develop cooperative skills, as the shared playing area requires constant awareness of others' moves and intentions.
- Strengthen their self-regulation and decision-making: for instance, learning when to take risks, when to wait, and how their choices impact others.

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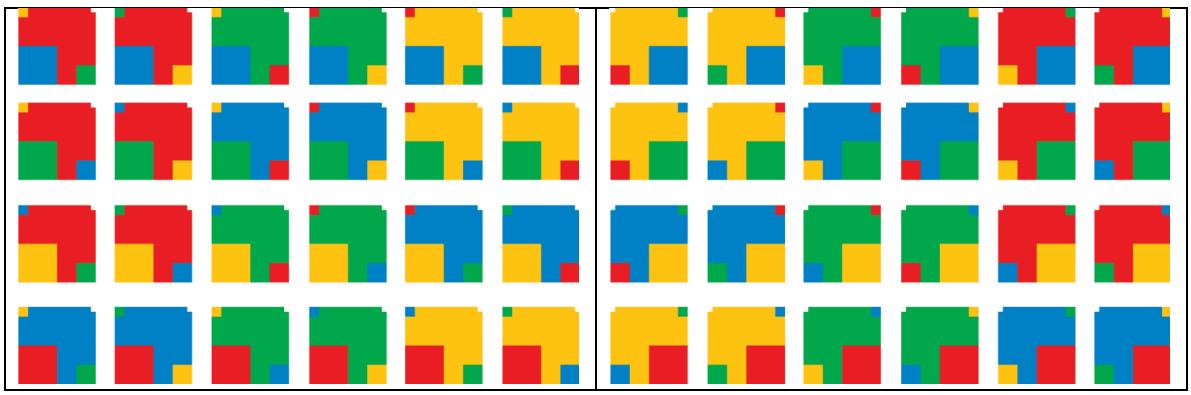
Suggested use, and practical examples

- Mathematics: The game is an excellent tool for deepening students' understanding of geometry. By combining PUSE tiles of various shapes and sizes, learners engage visually and experientially with concepts such as plane figures, area, and perimeter. As an extension activity, students can calculate the size of the completed patterns. Fulfilling the task cards also develops logical thinking, especially when time limits or additional rules are introduced.
- Combinatorics and creative thinking: Colouring the black-and-white PUSE tiles in different ways (either individually or in groups) supports understanding of pattern design, permutations, and variations. These student-created tiles can later serve as the basis for designing custom task cards.
- Visual arts: Discussing and analysing the shapes, colours, and patterns used in the game makes it suitable for visual education purposes as well. Students explore repeating patterns, colour contrasts, and proportions, and can also design their own tiles in a personal visual style.
- Cooperation and social skills development: When played in pairs or small groups, the game is particularly effective for practicing cooperation. Players make joint decisions, develop strategies together, and pay attention to one another, which helps strengthen communication, compromise, and teamwork.
- Project-based learning and creative extensions: Students can be involved in creatively expanding the game—designing new task or action cards, testing each other's versions, and giving peer feedback. This process supports the development of design thinking and reflective skills.
- As a closing classroom activity, students may invent their own game rules or variations and present them to their peers as a mini project.
- Differentiated instruction and talent development: The game is well suited for mixed-ability groups, as it allows for multiple difficulty levels: easier and more complex task cards, timed challenges, or creative tile-placement rules. This flexibility supports both inclusive classroom practice and talent development.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Two sets of square PUSE tiles (can be printed on paper and laminated)



- Task cards (two to three times as many as the PUSE tiles)
- Action cards
- Large table

Task cards:

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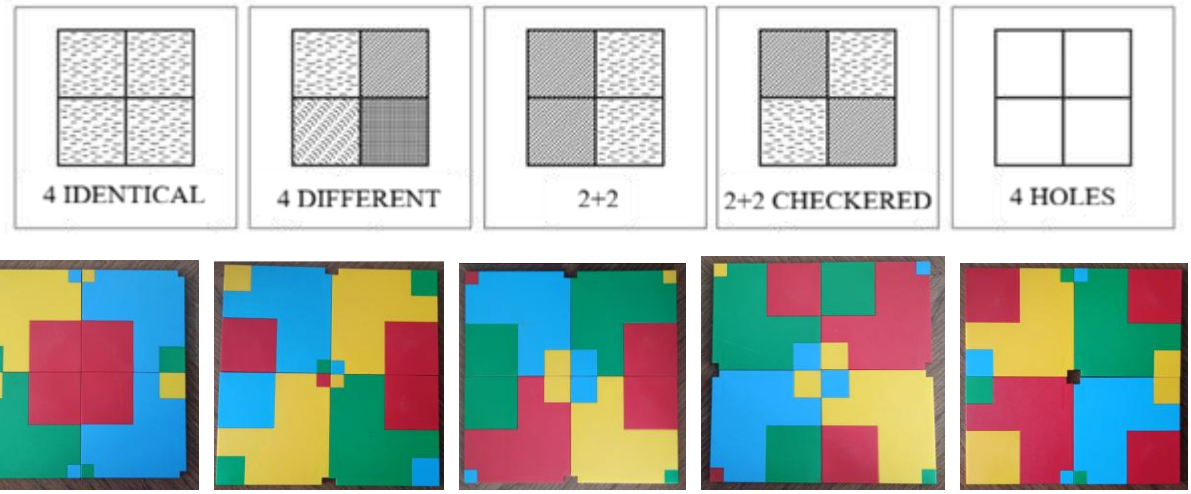
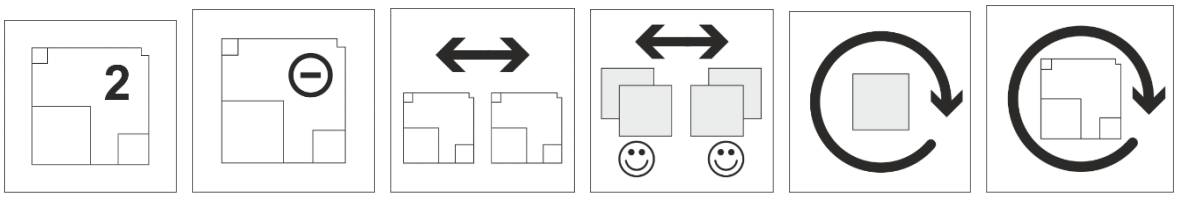
f1 f2 f3 f4 f5



f1/ Four squares of the same colour;
f2/ Four squares of different colours;
f3/ Two pairs of adjacent squares with matching colours;
f4/ Two pairs of diagonally positioned squares with matching colours;
f5/ The four PUSE squares connected by their hollow sides, colour not considered here.

a1 a2 a3 a4 a5 a6



a1/ The player using this action card may place two tiles instead of one during their turn (then draws two new tiles from the top of the decks);
a2/ The card holder can remove any tile from the shared layout and place it at the bottom of one of the draw decks (it can be reused later);
a3/ Two arbitrarily chosen tiles within the connected layout can be swapped (size-accurate matching must still be observed);
a4/ The player may exchange all their tiles, task cards, and action cards with another player of their choice;
a5/ Starting from the active player, everyone takes one task card from the player to their left, so everyone receives a new one but also gives up one;
a6/ Starting from the player who played this card, everyone passes one chosen tile clockwise to the next player, so everyone receives a new tile

Guiding questions

- Which task card is more worthwhile to complete right now?
- How can you prevent another player from completing their task card?
- Why did you decide to pass or use an action card?
- What changed in your plan after the other players' moves?

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- Have you ever thought of multiple strategies at once in case another player disrupts your current layout or an action card changes the conditions?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Gradual introduction of action cards.
  Tip: In the initial phase of the game, it is advisable to play using only task cards, allowing students to safely master the basic mechanics. Introducing action cards is recommended once they confidently apply the core rules and are ready for more complex gameplay.
- **Challenge**: Simplified version for beginners.
  Tip: To reduce initial frustration, it is beneficial to use fewer or no action cards during the first few game sessions. This approach is especially helpful for younger or socially sensitive players.
- **Challenge**: Tile exchange option in case of stalemate.
  Tip: If a player gets stuck, allowing them to exchange one tile can be helpful. This supports flexible thinking and can reduce feelings of helplessness during the game.
- **Challenge**: Positive reinforcement of flexible thinking.
  Tip: Special attention should be given to decisions that reflect replanning and adaptation. Positive feedback should focus on the process—such as openness and creative problem-solving—rather than solely on task completion or winning the game.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): At the beginner level, flexibility is supported by simpler task cards and easier PUSE tile patterns. Children can play at a calm pace, practicing adaptation to the game and experiencing that plans may change without it being a problem. Action cards are introduced sparingly or gradually. In paired or small-group play, students make decisions together, promoting communication, cooperation, and initial levels of flexible thinking.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At the advanced level, flexibility is challenged by more complex task cards, varied PUSE tile patterns, and more frequent use of action cards. Children must quickly adapt when the game situation changes unexpectedly and develops new strategies when their original plans are no longer feasible. Group decision-making helps them enhance attention, communication, and the ability to adjust to the shared game space.

Experts (9–10 years old): At the expert level, flexibility is highly developed. Difficult task cards, complex PUSE tile patterns, and active action cards require continuous rethinking and adaptation. Children need to plan ahead, consider the moves of others, and react quickly to unexpected changes. Throughout these challenges, they learn to manage uncertainty, generate alternative solutions, and maintain motivation during the game.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which task card was the most difficult to complete and why?
- What was your strategy, and was it successful?
- Was there a situation where you had to change your plan? What did you do then?
- What was the biggest challenge in the game, and how did you solve it?
- Was there a moment when you felt a bit disappointed? What helped you keep going?
- What new idea came to you during the game that you hadn’t thought of at the beginning?
- If you played again next time, what would you do differently and why?

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3.6.2 Same Four

Brief description, and rules of the game

Same Four is a two-player board game similar to tic-tac-toe. During the game, the two players take turns handing each other game pieces, which the receiving player then freely places on the 4x4 board during their turn. The goal is to be the first to create a row, column, or diagonal containing four pieces with the same property (for example, shape, colour, size, or hole pattern) in a line. If the board fills up without either player achieving this, the game ends in a draw.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Flexibility

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Resilience
- Emotional awareness (emotional regulation and communication)

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 +	2 children	15 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Each pair receives an empty 4x4 board and a set of game pieces, which are placed next to the board.
2. One player selects a piece from their own set and hands it to their opponent.
3. The receiving player places the given piece on an empty spot on the board, where it cannot be moved afterward.
4. Then, the player who just placed a piece selects a new piece and hands it to the other player. Players continue alternating handing over and placing pieces.
5. The goal is to be the first to form a row, column, or diagonal of four pieces sharing the same property.
6. If the board fills up with no winner, the game ends in a draw.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor game requiring a table for the two players to place the game board and the logical game pieces on.

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

In the game, children must constantly switch between strategic planning and flexible adaptation: one moment they decide which piece to give to their partner, and the next moment they have to place an unexpectedly received piece on the board in a position advantageous to them. This dual role — decision-maker and adapter — develops cognitive flexibility, as children need to continuously revise their plans based on the other player's choices.

During the game, children:

- Frequently face unexpected situations that require quick reactions.
- Practice choosing and reconsidering among available options.
- Learn to accept that they are not always in control but can still make good decisions.
- Experience what it feels like when a plan fails and the need to find the next best solution
- Develop forward-thinking skills while taking the other player's moves into account.

The game supports the development of flexibility by teaching children, within a safe and playful environment, to quickly adapt to changing situations, accept the consequences of their decisions, and adjust their thinking flexibly.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity, students:

- Respond more flexibly to unexpected situations and are able to rethink their approach to adapt to changing circumstances,
- Accept that not every situation can be controlled, yet meaningful and effective decisions can still be made,
- Become more open to understanding others' intentions and decisions and can adapt accordingly,
- Develop problem-solving thinking through quick situation assessment and decision-making,
- Tolerate uncertainty with patience and learn that making mistakes or facing losses is not failure, but part of learning and growth,
- Approach unfamiliar or unusual tasks with a more positive attitude, realizing that creative thinking can lead to new solutions.

Suggested use, and practical examples

The Same Four game can be easily integrated into everyday school life because the gameplay is short, requires minimal preparation, and can be played with few materials. It can be used during lessons (e.g., developmental or leisure classes), as well as during breaks or after-school programs, providing a good opportunity for structured play. Tournaments can also be organized within a class or grade, which can be motivating for children.

During technology classes, students can create their own game sets, which helps develop manual skills, creativity, and independent planning. The 4x4 game board has a fixed size but can be freely decorated. The game pieces can vary widely in form as long as they are clearly distinguishable based on four different properties – they can be two-dimensional or three-dimensional, drawn, glued, carved, or made from recycled materials.

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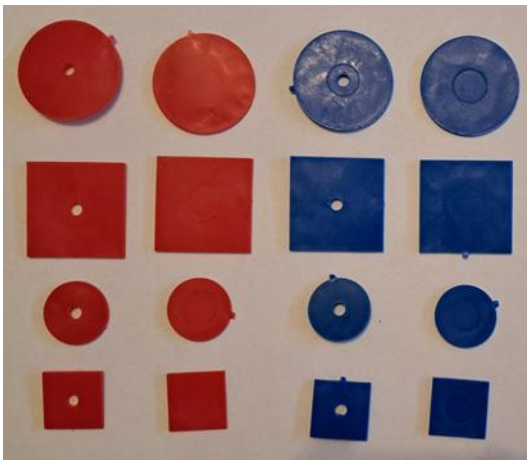
Both making and playing the game develop creativity, rule-following, patience, and offer opportunities for self-expression.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

The game board is a 4x4 grid. This can be a simple printed sheet of paper.

The game pieces are elements of a logic set. The characteristic of logic sets is that each piece is unique (no two pieces are identical), and each piece is defined by the same set of properties. For Same Four, a set of 16 pieces is needed. These 16 pieces should be characterized by 4 properties, each having two possible values. An example of four properties could be: shape (circle or square), colour (red or blue), size (small or large), and fill (solid or hollow).

Based on this, the 16 pieces needed are:



Children can also create their own sets for the game. They may choose any theme, but the 16 pieces must meet the criteria described above.

For example:

Flowers – colour (yellow or blue), stem (tilted left or right), petals (4-petaled or 3-petaled), leaves (has leaves or no leaves)

Bottles (real ones) – material (glass or plastic), shape (stout or elongated), cap (with or without), label (with or without)

Guiding questions

- What can you do now with the piece you just received?
- How has your plan changed now that you have to place this piece?
- Is there any spot where you wouldn't place this piece? Why?
- If you had a different plan before, how can you quickly make a new decision?
- What properties do you pay attention to know to make a good decision?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Significant differences in pairs' playing experience or thinking speed.
  Tip: Allow free partner changes over several rounds so everyone can find a partner at a suitable skill level.

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- **Challenge**: Some students find it difficult to accept when they don't control the game or don't win.
  Tip: Emphasize during the game that the main goal is practicing flexible thinking, not just winning.
- **Challenge**: Some students feel uncertain and freeze in decision-making moments.
  Tip: Encourage trying out ideas and reinforce that every move is a learning opportunity.
- **Challenge**: Long thinking times break the flow of the game.
  Tip: Introduce a recommended time limit per move to maintain a steady game pace.
- **Challenge**: The same students tend to always play with each other.
  Tip: Occasionally encourage partner swaps in a playful way to foster varied cooperation.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- Gameplay (Own Same Three): The game is played on a 3×3 board with 9 pieces, each with three values for two properties (for example: shape – triangle, circle, square; colour – red, yellow, blue). The player chooses which piece to place on the board themselves.
- Children learn to adapt to their own plans and recognize alternative solutions when a layout does not work on the first attempt. They experience the consequences of their own decisions while experimenting with different strategies.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- Gameplay (Own Same Four): The game is played on a 4×4 board, and the player still chooses which piece they will place.
- Children must continuously develop new strategies, considering the opponent's moves and unexpected situations. This level enhances quick decision-making, finding alternative solutions, and adapting flexibly to changing circumstances while optimizing their own opportunities.

Experts (9–10 years old):

- Gameplay (Same Three / Same Four): Players select pieces for their opponent. Same Three is played on a 3×3 board, Same Four on a 4×4 board.
- Immediate adaptation is required: children must anticipate their partner's moves, evaluate the effects, and quickly adjust their strategy if the opponent creates an unexpected situation. This level develops rapid reaction, flexible problem-solving, and strategic adaptability. Children learn to manage uncertainty while making effective decisions in real time.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Was there a moment when you had to change your original plan? How did you handle it?
- How did you feel when you didn't get what you wanted?
- What helped you find a new solution in a difficult situation?
- What did you learn about adapting to other people's decisions?
- What would you do differently next time if you played again?

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3.6.3 The Country Game

Brief description, and rules of the game

This is a dodgeball-style game designed for children over the age of 6, where the objective is for the active player to hit the fleeing opponents with a ball and gradually eliminate them from the game. The children standing around the circle each choose a country name – this is where the game gets its name from.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Flexibility

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness (emotional regulation and communication)
- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness
- Resilience
- Empathy
- Problem-solving

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 +	6-12 children	20-40 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Children stand around a circle with a diameter of 1.5–2 meters, positioned in a way that allows them to run away easily. A ball is placed in the centre of the circle. Each child chooses a country name, which the game leader writes down on a sheet of paper.
2. The game leader then begins calling out the country names one by one, saying: “Let it be the famous and well-known country... (e.g., Poland).”
3. The child whose country name is called grabs the ball and tries to hit one of the others, while the rest try to escape.
4. If the thrower successfully hits someone, the hit player receives a penalty mark. If the throw misses, the thrower receives the penalty mark. The game leader keeps track of the penalties.
5. Any player who receives three penalty marks is out. The last remaining player wins and becomes the next game leader.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

It is primarily an outdoor game, but it can also be played in a sports hall.

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

In the game, children need to pay attention simultaneously to their own movements, the intentions of the player holding the ball, and the positioning of the others. Since players do not know in advance when they will become targets, quick reactions and continuous adaptation are required.

During the game, children:

- Experience sudden changes in situation, such as when their country name is called and they instantly become runners,
- Practice quick decision-making and rapid adjustment of their movements, for example, when dodging the ball or choosing a new route,
- Learn to cope with making mistakes and the unpleasant feelings that come from being hit,
- Develop concentration as they must constantly watch the game leader and the player throwing the ball,
- Experience how to be present physically, mentally, and emotionally at the same time during a game situation.

The game supports the development of flexibility by helping children adapt in dynamic, fast-changing situations, find new solutions, and process setbacks. Through playing, they learn that change is a natural part of the game – and life – and that every new situation also offers a new opportunity for success.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the activity students:

- Detect changing situations more quickly and flexibly adjust their movements accordingly (e.g., sudden changes in direction, finding new routes),
- Become capable of emotionally shifting from a “I am safe” state to a “I am in danger, I need to act” situation,
- Accept failure as part of the learning process and remain motivated to participate in the next round,
- Develop social flexibility by cooperating in alternating roles and applying the rules during the game,
- Acquire positive self-regulation strategies (e.g., quick situation assessment, seeking new tactics) that can be applied in other situations as well.

Suggested use, and practical examples

Game variant with chalk, without a ball, and without a game leader:
A circle is drawn on the ground and divided into equal sections, with the names of countries written inside each section. The starting player calls out the first country: “Let it be the famous and well-known country .....”
The called player jumps into the centre of the circle and loudly shouts: “One, two, three, stop!”
The others who were not called must run away, but when the shout is made, they are required to stop immediately at the spot where they are. The called country chooses whom to “attack” and measures three steps from the centre of the circle toward the chosen player. If the attacker reaches the chosen

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player, they cut off a palm-sized piece from that player's country section (marked with chalk to shorten the section). If the attacker does not reach the target, then the target takes a palm-sized piece from the attacker's section. All players return to stand around the circle, and the next country to be called is the one that lost a piece in the previous round. During the game, previously lost pieces can be regained using the same method. A player is eliminated from the game when their territory runs out.
This game can be used as a ball game in physical education classes.
It can also be played on a flat, grassy area during excursions or forest schools.
In schoolyards with paved surfaces, the chalk-only, ball-free version is feasible.
Instead of country names, other categories such as flower or animal names can be chosen. This way, the game can also be used to practice multiplication tables, for example.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

a) Ball version: ball, and optionally chalk, stick, or rope to mark the circle depending on the terrain. (The game can also be played without these.) Paper and pencil.
b) Version without ball: sidewalk chalk.

Guiding questions

- What helped you decide quickly which way to run next?
- What did you do when your movement didn't go as you wanted?
- How did you decide when to stop or change direction?
- How did you feel when you got hit or were out? What helped you stay motivated for the next game.

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students may feel disappointed when they are eliminated from the game.
  Tip: It is helpful to emphasize that elimination is not the end of the game, but a time to prepare for the next round – during this time, they can observe others, learn tactics, and regain motivation to rejoin.
- **Challenge**: They find it difficult to switch roles quickly, for example from a safe position to a runner.
  Tip: At the beginning of the game, it's useful to point out that roles change quickly and this is part of the game. Short warm-up exercises or intentional role changes can help practice this transition.
- **Challenge**: They feel tension if they think they were eliminated unfairly.
  Tip: It is important to emphasize that every attempt is valuable, and elimination is part of the learning process. Reassure the children that the rules apply equally to everyone, and every new round offers a fresh opportunity

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- Gameplay adjustments: Players stand in a smaller circle, reducing running distance and simplifying the situation. Only a few easy-to-remember country names are used. The thrower announces in advance whom they will target, giving the runner more time to react. Eliminated players can take on helper or observer roles instead of remaining inactive.

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- Children practice adapting their movements to predictable situations while still responding to changes. They learn to anticipate and adjust quickly, gaining confidence in shifting between running, dodging, and observing. This level supports gradual development of flexible thinking in a low-pressure environment.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- Gameplay adjustments: The circle is larger, requiring longer and faster movement. More complex country names, including multiple syllables or similar-sounding names, are used. Multiple balls or dual throwers may be introduced. Roles may change more rapidly, such as calling two country names at once.
- Children experience faster and less predictable changes, requiring quick reassessment of strategy and movements. They strengthen their ability to adjust in real time, make split-second decisions, and cope with multiple simultaneous challenges. This level enhances adaptive thinking and situational awareness.

Experts (9–10 years old):

- Gameplay adjustments: The circle can be maximized in size, and all rules for advanced play apply. Additional challenges such as multiple balls, rapid role changes, and complex country names increase the unpredictability.
- Children must continuously shift attention, adapt their tactics, and anticipate opponents' moves under high-pressure conditions. They develop advanced cognitive and physical flexibility, learn to recover quickly from mistakes, and coordinate their actions with changing circumstances. This level encourages resilience, rapid problem-solving, and mastery of adaptive strategies in dynamic environments.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- How did you feel when you got out?
- Was there a moment when you had to rethink how you moved or what you did? How did you solve it?
- How did you feel when you faced a difficult or surprising situation during the game?
- What did you learn about yourself while playing today?
- If we played again next time, what would you do differently to feel even better or react more skilfully?

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3.7 CURIOSITY, SENSE OF WONDER AND OPENNESS

3.7.1 Old Blind Granny

Brief description, and rules of the game

In Old Blind Granny, one child (the "Granny") is blindfolded and placed in the middle of the play area, while the others move around freely. The blindfolded player must rely on listening, imagination, and curiosity to explore where the others are. Players can make soft sounds, giggles, or taps to guide the Granny, and respond to her call of "Where are you?" with "Here I am!" The goal is not only to find and recognize others, but also to enjoy the wonder of moving and playing without sight, opening space for creative and curious discovery.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness

Complementary/ Secondary Skill Focus

- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Emotional awareness regulation and communication
- Empathy

Age group	Student number	Duration
6 -10 years old	whole class working in small groups	15-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparation: The teacher designates a clearly defined playing area (a circle or a square) within which all players must remain. One student volunteers or is selected to become the Blind Granny. The student's eyes are covered with a scarf or blindfold. It is important that the playing area is safe and free of obstacles, while also having clearly visible boundaries for all participants.
2. Gameplay: The blindfolded player stands in the centre of the playing area. The other students move slowly and carefully around them within the marked space. Players may make soft sounds (such as laughter, clapping, or gentle foot tapping) to help the Blind Granny orient herself. At any moment, the Blind Granny may call out, "Where are you?" The other players can respond by saying, "Here I am!", while continuing to move if they wish.
3. Identification and Role Change: When the Blind Granny touches a player, she tries to identify that person by name. If the guess is correct, the touched student becomes the new Blind Granny. If the guess is incorrect, the game continues with the same blindfolded player. Any

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student who steps outside the designated playing area automatically becomes the next Blind Granny.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game can be played indoors (gym, spacious classroom) or outdoors (schoolyard, open field). Ensure the area is safe and free of obstacles.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

The “Old Blind Granny” game places children in a situation where they must explore the world without sight, awakening their curiosity and sense of wonder. As they listen closely and experiment with sound, movement, and voice, they become more open to new ways of perceiving and interacting. This fosters openness to the unknown and strengthens imaginative play. Creativity comes into play as children invent original ways to move, guide, or trick the Granny. Emotional awareness and empathy are also developed, as children reflect on how it feels to be blindfolded and dependent on others. Altogether, the game builds trust, playfulness, and openness in the group.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

- Strengthened curiosity and openness through sensory exploration.
- Enhanced creativity in inventing new strategies for movement and guidance.
- Improved emotional awareness and empathy.
- Better cooperation and group bonding.

Suggested use, and practical examples

- Perfect as an icebreaker at the beginning of the school year.
- Can be used in physical education lessons for warm-up or cooldown.
- Effective for class community-building activities.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- One scarf or blindfold

Guiding questions

- What surprised you when you couldn’t use your sight?
- How did you explore and find new ways to move or listen?
- What did you discover about your classmates through sound and play?
- Which moment made you feel most curious or creative?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- For shy children, start with smaller groups.
- Soft rhythmic background music can help the blindfolded player orient themselves.
- Thoroughly explain and practice the rules before starting to ensure safety and comfort.

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Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): Played in a smaller group with a smaller designated play area, making it easier to follow the game. Players must respond loudly and clearly when the Granny asks, “Where are you?” Children explore the environment safely, noticing subtle sounds, movements, and changes around them. They are encouraged to ask questions and reflect on unexpected events. This level supports curiosity and wonders by allowing children to experiment gradually, observe outcomes, and develop a sense of openness to exploring new ways of moving and interacting.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): Larger play area, with players responding more quietly. Continuous movement is encouraged, without mandatory pauses. Children explore more complex spatial relationships and perceive subtle audio and body cues, improving situational awareness and attention. They are invited to wonder: “What might happen if I approach differently?” or “How will others react to my movement?” They actively investigate cause and effect, try alternative strategies, and notice emerging patterns. This level fosters deeper curiosity, a stronger sense of wonder, and encourages creative and flexible thinking in dynamic situations.

Experts (9–10 years old): Largest play area, possibly with multiple groups playing simultaneously. Players move almost silently, and the Granny must rely on subtle cues. Faster, more complex movement patterns and multiple interactions increase the challenge. Children are encouraged to formulate hypotheses, test new strategies, and reflect on unexpected outcomes. They explore joint movement, anticipate others’ actions, and take calculated risks while staying open to surprises. This level emphasizes high-level curiosity, imaginative exploration, and creative openness, allowing children to experience wonder in every interaction and continuously adapt to evolving situations.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- How did it feel to play and explore without seeing?
- What new ideas or strategies did you try?
- How did curiosity help you in the game?
- What did you learn about trust and openness with your classmates?

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3.7.2 Tic-Tac-Toe

Brief description, and rules of the game

Tic-Tac-Toe is a well-known logic game through which students develop curiosity about possibilities, ask questions, and openly explore how a situation changes as a result of different decisions. The goal of the game is not quick victory, but rather to encourage students to observe with curiosity what happens after each move, recognise connections and patterns, and accept that the same situation can unfold in different ways. During the game, the experience of wonder naturally emerges (for example: “I didn’t expect it to end like this!”), as well as openness, when students are willing to try new strategies or learn from one another’s solutions.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness

Complementary/ Secondary Skill Focus

- Problem-solving
- Creativity
- Flexibility

Age group	Student number	Duration
8-10 years old	Small-group work (4–10 students) or whole-class activity using parallel game boards	10-15 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparation: The teacher prepares the Tic-Tac-Toe boards in advance. These can be drawn or printed on paper or cardboard, drawn on the board, or created as a large-scale version on the floor or in the schoolyard. Students work in pairs. The teacher emphasises that this game is not about who wins, but about observing what happens and exploring possibilities with curiosity.
2. Game Process: Students play according to the familiar rules of Tic-Tac-Toe, taking turns to place their symbols on the board, with the aim of placing three identical symbols in a row. The teacher encourages students to observe how the board changes after each move, when a situation suddenly shifts, and which decisions lead to unexpected outcomes.
3. Raising Awareness of Wonder and Openness: During the game, or after individual rounds, the teacher may pause briefly and ask reflective questions such as: “What surprised you in this round?” “What happened differently than you expected?” “What new possibility did you notice?” These moments help students not only to play, but also to explore and discover.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

The game can be implemented flexibly in the classroom, in the gym using a large grid, or outdoors by drawing the board with chalk. The varied use of space further strengthens openness and curiosity, as students encounter a familiar game in new contexts.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

Tic-Tac-Toe develops curiosity, a sense of wonder and openness by encouraging students to continuously observe changes, ask questions (e.g. “Why did it end in a draw?”), and become open to alternative solutions and perspectives. The game teaches that the first idea does not always lead to success, that surprises are a natural part of learning, and that trying new ideas is a valuable experience.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the game, students observe game situations with greater curiosity, try new solutions more confidently, accept uncertainty and change, and become more open to the thinking of their peers.

Suggested use, and practical examples

- The game can be used as a short “exploratory” warm-up activity at the beginning of a lesson (5–7 minutes). The teacher starts with quick rounds, focusing not on winning, but on helping students notice how quickly a situation can change after a single move. Students are encouraged to share one observation about the board in each round (for example: “I had two possible options this time.”), which activates curiosity and observational attention.
- In mathematics lessons, the game can be used as a “What if…?” learning situation focusing on patterns and rules. The teacher introduces variations, such as a 4×4 board, a win condition of four symbols in a row, or alternative winning patterns (e.g. diagonal plus corner). Students experience how a small rule change can open up an entirely new “world”, strongly supporting openness and a sense of wonder.
- For developing social connection (during class teacher sessions or community-building activities), the teacher may introduce a “polite play” rule: at the end of each round, both players share one positive observation about the other (for example: “That was a clever move.”). This supports relationship-building and openness to others’ ways of thinking.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Tic-Tac-Toe boards (drawn or printed)
- Markers (X–O symbols, counters, natural objects such as stones or seeds)

Guiding questions

- What did you notice on the board that was not true before the previous move?
- What changed because of just one move?
- What surprised you about the other player’s move?
- What would happen if you did not choose the “usual” place this time?
- Which option are you most curious about right now?
- Is there a move you would make just to “see what happens”?

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- What do you think the other player is trying to achieve?
- If you swapped symbols, where would you place the next move? Why?
- What can you learn from the other player's solution?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students focus too strongly on winning and lose their exploratory attitude.
  Tip: The teacher introduces explorer points: one point is awarded for a good observation or an interesting question. Organise a "draw challenge", where the conscious goal is to reach a draw rather than to win. This often surprises students and encourages them to explore new strategies.
- **Challenge**: Repetitive, automatic moves occur ("I always place my symbol in the same spot").
  Tip: Ask students to name at least two possible options before making a move. Introduce a "forbidden square" round, where one field is temporarily blocked, forcing students to look for alternative solutions.
- **Challenge**: Frustration appears when a student's plan does not work.
  Tip: The teacher explicitly normalises this experience by saying: "This game is an experiment, not a test." Use a "replanning signal": when the signal is given, everyone pauses briefly and states a new plan in one sentence?"

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): The game is played on a 3×3 board at a slower pace. The teacher models thinking aloud, for example: "I can see two possible places... which one might be better?" Support cards with simple observation prompts (e.g., "I notice that...", "I wonder if...") can be used. Children explore possibilities safely, notice patterns, and ask questions about outcomes. They develop curiosity by observing how small changes affect the board, wondering what happens if they try different moves, and reflecting on surprising results.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): The game is played on a 4×4 board, with the goal to place four identical symbols in a row. Students participate in "What if...?" rounds, modifying a rule after each game and observing the effect. They also try to predict their partner's next move. Children actively explore alternative strategies, notice complex patterns, and ask questions about potential outcomes. This encourages deeper curiosity, openness to new ideas, and the habit of testing hypotheses about the board's possibilities.

Experts (9–10 years old): Played on a 4×4 or larger board with additional challenges, such as introducing multiple game boards simultaneously or playing under time constraints. Students can experiment with custom rules, create their own variations, or play in "blind prediction" mode where moves are planned without seeing the partner's placement. Children experiment with custom rules, explore unexpected results, and respond to rapid changes. They are encouraged to formulate hypotheses, observe outcomes carefully, and ask "What if...?" questions. This level strengthens curiosity, reflective thinking, and the ability to adapt strategies flexibly while staying open to surprising outcomes.

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Debriefing and reflection questions

- What was the most surprising moment in today's game?
- Was there a move that made you think, "I didn't expect that!"? Why?
- In which situation did the game change the most because of a single move?
- Which "What if...?" question interested you the most?
- Did you try something purely out of curiosity? What happened?
- What did you learn from simply wanting to see what would happen?
- What did you take over from the other player (an idea, a way of thinking, a strategy)?
- When were you open to changing your plan? What helped you do that?
- How did the game help you accept that more than one solution can be good?

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3.7.3 Rope Football

Brief description, and rules of the game

Rope Football is a movement-based team game in which students encounter an unusual form of cooperation. Team members hold onto the same rope and, while being physically connected, try to move a ball towards a designated target area. The uniqueness of the game lies in the fact that familiar football movements cannot be applied automatically, which naturally encourages students to explore the new situation. The primary goal of the game is not winning, but rather to enable students to observe with curiosity how their movements influence one another during joint action, to experience a sense of wonder at the challenges and opportunities created by physical connectedness, and to openly experiment with new forms of cooperation. Throughout the game, teams continuously experience how even small changes (such as pace, direction, or communication) can influence the outcome, thereby supporting the development of curiosity and openness.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness

Complementary/ Secondary Skill Focus

- Empathy
- Problem-solving
- Flexibility
- Connectedness

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	Two teams (4–8 students per team) or whole-class implementation using rotation	25-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparation: The teacher designates the playing area as well as the target zones or goals. Students are divided into two teams of roughly equal size. Each team receives a rope of appropriate length, which all team members hold while standing next to each other, evenly spaced. Students are not allowed to let go of the rope during the game. The teacher briefly introduces the basic situation of the game and draws students' attention to the fact that this is not a traditional football game, but an exploratory cooperation challenge. It is useful to begin with a question such as: "What do you think might be difficult if everyone is holding the same rope?" Such questions help awaken curiosity and bring students' prior assumptions to the surface.
2. First Attempt: The first round is exploratory in nature. The ball is placed in the middle of the playing area, and on the teacher's signal, the teams attempt to move the ball towards the target

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area while moving together with the rope. At this stage, the teacher does not correct or direct the students, allowing them to gain their own experiences. A sense of wonder often appears within the first few minutes (e.g. “This is much harder than we thought!”), which is a natural part of the learning process. After a short time, the teacher may pause the game and ask: “What has surprised you the most so far?”

3. Second Attempt: In subsequent rounds, the teacher encourages teams to deliberately change their movements. Students may be asked to move more slowly, to discuss the direction before moving, or to observe what happens if everyone starts at the same time. The teacher emphasises that there are no “right” or “wrong” solutions; each round is a new experiment. Students gradually learn that success does not depend on individual skill, but on joint observation, coordination and adaptation. Once teams move more confidently together, the teacher may introduce simple variations, such as walking only, playing a round without speaking, or choosing a different route towards the target. These small modifications create new moments of wonder and further strengthen openness to unfamiliar solutions.
4. Closing the Game: At the end of the game, the teacher stops the activity and signals that the next step is collective reflection rather than another round. The game is considered successful if students have discovered new insights about themselves, their team, and cooperation, regardless of how many goals were scored. This closing naturally leads into the reflection section.?

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Rope Football can be implemented both indoors and outdoors, with safety and clear spatial organisation as primary considerations. Indoors, the gym is an ideal setting where the teacher can mark the playing area using cones, lines or tape. The size of the field should be adjusted to the team size to allow enough space for direction changes while ensuring students remain close due to the shared rope. Goals may consist of gym benches, pairs of cones or a marked line, and should be clearly visible.

Outdoors, a playground or grassy area is suitable provided the surface is non-slippery and obstacle-free. In this case, the field may be rectangular or, for greater safety, shaped like a wide corridor. The teacher ensures that the rope length matches the number of players and that there is sufficient space for coordinated movement. The aim of spatial organisation is to help students feel the structure of the game (boundaries and goals) while still allowing room for experimentation and exploration.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

Rope Football primarily develops curiosity, a sense of wonder and openness because students encounter a familiar situation (a ball-based team game) combined with an unusual rule: moving while physically connected through a shared rope. This naturally evokes wonder (“So this is another way to play!”) and raises questions about how effective cooperation can be achieved within this framework. During the game, students observe how pace, direction changes, spacing and communication shape collective movement. Curiosity is strengthened as students actively want to try out different solutions (e.g. “What happens if we move more slowly?”). Openness develops as students realise that familiar strategies do not always work and that it is worth experimenting with others’ ideas—even those that initially seem unusual.

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What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

Through this activity, the goal is for students to approach new and unfamiliar situations with greater confidence and awareness. They should come to understand that curiosity is not merely interest, but an inner drive that helps them make sense of situations and identify opportunities within them. Students should be able to articulate what surprised them, what questions arose, and how they experimented with new solutions to achieve a shared goal. Another aim is for students to become more open to their peers' thinking and suggestions, learning from others' ideas and accepting that multiple approaches can be valid within a team. In the long term, the game helps students associate novelty with positive experiences and perceive unfamiliar situations not as threats, but as opportunities for discovery and learning.

Suggested use, and practical examples

- In physical education lessons, Rope Football allows students to experience and reflect on the complexity of coordinated movement. Rather than giving technical instructions, the teacher guides attention through questions about how the game changes when pace or direction is altered.
- During homeroom or community-building sessions, the game helps students recognise how individual decisions influence the group. They experience the importance of adaptation, patience and openness.
- On school trips or sports days, Rope Football is an ideal choice due to its minimal equipment needs, outdoor adaptability and ability to quickly engage students in a shared exploratory activity.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Soft, non-injurious ball (e.g. foam ball or light rubber ball)
- Two medium-length or long ropes (without knots or metal parts)
- Cones, marker discs, tape or chalk to mark the playing area and target zones
- Signal device for starting and stopping rounds (e.g. whistle, bell or clapping)
- Optional: simple question cards to support observation and curiosity

Guiding questions

- What did you notice about the team's movement that was not present at the beginning?
- What changed when you moved faster or more slowly?
- Which moment surprised you the most?
- What happens when someone wants to do something different from the others?
- What are you curious to try in the next round?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Students focus too much on scoring or winning, reducing their exploratory attitude. **Tip**: Emphasise that the goal is not quick scoring but observing how collective movement changes with different approaches. Introduce "explorer points": teams earn points for interesting observations or newly tried solutions, regardless of the outcome.

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- **Challenge**: One or two students dominate the team
  Tip: Highlight that every team member's movement is equally important. Introduce a "silent round" where communication is non-verbal only, ensuring everyone's active participation.
- **Challenge**: Students lose curiosity and repeat earlier solutions automatically.
  Tip: Guide attention with questions such as "What would happen if you tried this in a completely different way?" Apply the "one-round rule change" method (e.g. walking only), creating new exploratory situations.
- **Challenge**: Frustration arises when cooperation does not lead to immediate success.
  Tip: Reinforce that difficulties are a natural part of learning and that every attempt is valuable. Use a "slow-motion round" in which the team intentionally moves very slowly to observe and understand the effects of joint movement.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): The game takes place on a smaller field, with fewer players per team and at a slower pace. The teacher pauses the game more frequently to help children articulate their observations and questions. Teams can progress step by step or discuss their movement directions in advance. Children can safely explore how their own movements affect the team, notice unexpected changes, and ask questions about what happens if they act differently. They experience a sense of wonder when collective movement reveals new challenges or opportunities.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): A larger field is used, and the target zones are more complex, possibly reachable from multiple directions. Teams experiment more independently, adjusting pace or direction and responding flexibly to unexpected events. Children actively observe how small adjustments influence outcomes, express what surprises them, and experiment with new strategies. This strengthens openness, the sense of wonder, and encourages them to try unconventional solutions with confidence.

Experts (9–10 years old): Multiple balls, parallel target areas, or communication restrictions can be introduced. Teams solve several challenges simultaneously, applying more advanced coordination techniques while monitoring each other's movements in real time. Children form and test hypotheses, continuously adapt to changing situations, and remain open to their teammates' ideas. They experience unexpected moments of wonder as joint movement creates new patterns and possibilities, while becoming increasingly aware of team dynamics.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- What was the most surprising moment during the game?
- When did you need to be truly open to one another?
- What did you learn from a round that did not go as planned?
- What new question emerged during the game?
- How did the team's cooperation change compared to the beginning

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3.8 EMPATHY

3.8.1 The emotional telephone

Brief description, and rules of the game

This game follows the classic "whispering telephone" rules, but instead of transmitting a word or phrase, an emotion is conveyed through a short verbal and non-verbal expression. The child receiving the message must interpret it and pass it on to the next participant until the last child, who will try to identify the original emotion.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Empathy

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication
- Connectedness

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	6-15 children	15-20 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Arrange the group: children stand in a line so each can see the next person clearly.
2. Choose the first player: the teacher quietly gives the first child an emotion card or whispers an emotion (e.g., joy, fear, anger, surprise).
3. Soft expression of the emotion: the first child expresses the emotion softly — using tone of voice, facial expression, and subtle gestures — so that only the next child can observe it.
4. Passing the emotion along: the second child watches and listens carefully, then tries to reproduce the same emotion for the next child in line or circle.
5. Continue the chain: each child repeats this process, passing the emotion along until it reaches the last child.
6. Final guess: the last child must guess what the original emotion was and say it aloud.
7. Group reflection: the teacher leads a short discussion comparing the first and last versions of the emotion, asking how and why it may have changed during the process.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Arrange students in a large circle or seated in a line where each child can clearly see and hear the others. Choose a quiet environment, such as a library corner or an empty classroom, to ensure children can concentrate on subtle tone changes and facial expressions without background noise. Have a whiteboard nearby for noting emotions after the activity.

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Outdoor: Choose a calm, enclosed space like a quiet courtyard, under a gazebo, or in a shaded area of the playground. Children can sit on mats or benches in a circle. To prevent distractions from the environment (wind, noise), consider using whisper cones or taking turns closer together to preserve the soft tone transmission.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game clearly illustrates how small misunderstandings can grow and change the message as it spreads from person to person. Emotions can easily be misunderstood if we do not actively listen to the other person and/or express them clearly. And also, it shows that a given emotion can mean something slightly different to one child than it does to another. The game thus encourages participants to listen carefully to the message and to each other and shows players how important it is to communicate information clearly and understandably to the other party so that the message is passed on correctly.

It supports the development of empathy and emotional awareness by helping children practice recognizing and expressing emotions in subtle, non-verbal ways. As the emotion is passed from child to child, they must focus carefully on tone, facial expressions, and body language — key components of emotional communication. The final group discussion encourages reflection on how emotions are interpreted differently and how easily emotional messages can shift, helping children better understand both their own feelings and those of others. This process builds vocabulary, sensitivity, and attention to emotional nuance.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After playing this game, students will:

- Be able to better recognise and interpret the emotions of others.
- Understand the importance of paying attention to others and watching for nonverbal cues.
- Be aware that others may perceive emotions differently.
- Understand that emotions are interpreted differently and that emotional messages can change easily.
- Be better able to understand both their own and others' feelings.
- having an age-appropriate emotional vocabulary (verbal and nonverbal) and being able to use it to communicate their own emotions.
- able to interpret and discover emotional nuances that can be understood based on their age.

Suggested use, and practical examples

One way to explore emotions in this game is through a scenario where the first child expresses joy by smiling and saying, “I feel happy because I got a hug from my friend.” As the message passes along the chain, some children may amplify the expression with a bigger smile, while others might reduce its intensity, making it appear more neutral. By the time it reaches the last participant, the emotion might have shifted from joy to excitement or even contentment. This gives the teacher an opportunity to discuss how subtle changes in expression and tone can influence how emotions are perceived. Another interesting case occurs when an emotion like fear is introduced at the start. A child might express it by whispering with a trembling voice, simulating a reaction to a sudden noise. However, as the message travels, someone in the chain might interpret the wide eyes and raised eyebrows as surprise instead of

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fear. During the reflection phase, the group can discuss how these two emotions share similar facial expressions, yet their meaning depends on context.

There are also times when children struggle to fully express certain emotions, particularly those perceived as negative, like anger. A child might initially portray frustration by crossing their arms and frowning, but as the message is passed, some participants may hesitate to exaggerate the emotion and instead soften it, transforming anger into mild disappointment or even sadness. This provides an opportunity to discuss how emotions are sometimes difficult to communicate openly and how social and personal filters shape the way we express ourselves.

To add another layer to the game, the teacher can introduce a non-verbal version, where children must transmit emotions without speaking, relying solely on facial expressions and gestures. This variation pushes them to focus on non-verbal cues, highlighting the importance of body language in emotional communication. It also allows them to reflect on how much we rely on words to convey our feelings and how, in some situations, non-verbal signals are just as powerful.

By playing with these different scenarios, children can deepen their understanding of how emotions are transmitted and interpreted in everyday life. They become more aware of how small differences in expression, tone, and gestures can completely change the perception of a feeling, reinforcing both empathy and emotional awareness through experiential learning.

There are many ways to express your emotional world. We have suggested many activities that involve language, but art is also a way to express your emotions. In the group of questions, you will find questions that go in this direction.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

Small emotion cards (optional, to help children visualize different emotions).
A quiet space where children can hear and observe each other easily.
A whiteboard or chart paper (optional) to write down the different emotions at the end and discuss them.
A timer or bell (optional, to signal when a new round starts).

Guiding questions

- What do you notice in their face or voice that helps you guess the emotion?
- Does this emotion feel familiar to you? When have you felt this way?
- What makes this emotion hard or easy to show without words?
- How do you think the last person will understand this emotion?
- If this emotion was a colour or a sound, what would it be?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: One common scenario is that some children may exaggerate or stereotype emotions, making them more theatrical than originally intended.
  Tip: In this case, the teacher can help them reflect on how real emotions are often expressed through more subtle and nuanced signals.

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- **Challenge**: Another situation is when the emotional message gets distorted along the chain, making the final emotion very different from the initial one.
  Tip: The teacher can emphasize how emotional communication is subjective and influenced by personal experiences, helping children develop empathy toward different interpretations.
- **Challenge**: Some children may struggle to express certain emotions, particularly negative ones like anger or sadness.
  Tip: Here, the teacher can encourage them to experiment in a safe, judgment-free environment, explaining that all emotions are valid and important to recognize.
- **Challenge**: If a child feels insecure or freezes,
  Tip: The teacher can support them by providing small hints or examples, perhaps demonstrating a similar emotional expression themselves to help the child feel more confident.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): The game can be simplified by providing only four basic emotions with illustrative pictures to help them recognize them more easily. The teacher can also name the emotions after each turn to reinforce the link between expression and meaning.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): Children can be encouraged to add a short sentence alongside their emotional expression, such as "I feel happy today because I played with a friend" or "I'm a bit angry because someone pushed me." This helps them connect emotions to real-life situations, stimulating reflection on emotional regulation.

Experts (9–10 years old): The game can be made more complex by introducing a variation where children must transmit the emotion in an increasingly subtle way, either without words or with very minimal gestures. More complex emotions, such as gratitude or frustration, can be introduced to expand their emotional vocabulary.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Was it easy or difficult to recognize the transmitted emotion?
- Did the initial emotion change along the way? Why do you think that happened?
- What helped you understand the emotion best: the tone of voice, facial expression, or gestures?
- How did it feel when you realized the emotion had changed?
- Have you ever been in a situation where your emotion was misunderstood? How did that make you feel?
- What can we do to communicate our emotions more clearly?
- What did you learn about how others express and interpret feelings?

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3.8.2 The postman of emotions

Brief description, and rules of the game

In this adapted version of the postman game, children "deliver" emotional messages to each other. The messages contain emotional situations, and the receiver must guess and react to the emotion, helping the group learn to name, interpret, and empathise with various feelings.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Empathy

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication
- Connectedness

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	8-20 children	25-35 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

1. Preparation: the teacher prepares a set of small cards, each containing a short emotional scenario (e.g., “You’ve lost your favourite toy”, “Your friend gave you a surprise gift”, “You have to speak in front of the class”). These are folded and placed in a bag or envelope.
2. Form the group: children sit in a circle. One child is selected to be the Postman and stands in the middle holding the envelope or bag with the emotion scenario cards.
3. Delivering the letter: the Postman walks around the circle, stops at a random child, and says: “A letter for you!” They hand the child one card from the bag.
4. Reading and acting: the selected child reads the card silently, thinks about how the character might feel, and then acts out the emotion without saying the emotion's name. They can use:
   - facial expressions
   - gestures or posture
   - a short phrase (e.g., “Why did this happen to me?”)
5. Guessing the emotion: the rest of the group watches carefully and tries to guess:
   - What emotion is being expressed?
   - What might have caused it?
6. Confirmation and reflection: once the correct emotion is guessed, the child confirms it and may choose to add a comment like:
   “Yes, I was nervous because everyone was looking at me.”
7. New round: a new Postman is selected, and the game continues with another delivery.
8. Extension (optional): As the game progresses, the teacher can:
   - introduce more complex or mixed emotions

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- encourage brief group reflections on how emotions are expressed and recognized

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

This activity works best outdoors, in a spacious garden or schoolyard, where children can move freely between stations (representing different "houses"). However, it can also be adapted for indoor play using clearly marked areas in a large classroom or gym.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game strengthens empathy and emotional awareness by encouraging children to recognize and express emotions in a non-verbal and creative way. Each child must interpret an emotional situation, imagine how it feels, and translate that inner state into gestures, posture, or tone of voice. This process develops their ability to identify emotions in themselves and others, even when they are not explicitly named.

As children observe their peers and try to guess the emotion, they learn to pay attention to subtle emotional cues and body language. This sharpens their observational skills and builds a richer emotional vocabulary.

The game also promotes empathy by inviting children to imagine the experiences behind each emotion. When they guess or reflect on what the character might be feeling and why, they practice putting themselves in someone else's shoes. Over time, this builds greater sensitivity to others' emotions in real-life situations.

The playful and safe context helps even shy or quiet children feel comfortable expressing themselves and seeing emotions as a normal and shared human experience.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After playing this game, students will be able to:

- Recognize the emotions expressed by others through facial expressions, tone, and movement.
- Recognize and label their own basic emotions in ways appropriate for their age.
- Communicate their emotions using gestures, storytelling, and simple verbal expressions.
- Use age-appropriate emotional vocabulary during group interactions.

Suggested use, and practical examples

Use this game to introduce or reinforce emotional vocabulary, especially in early primary grades. It can be a playful way to explore empathy by encouraging children to reflect on which emotion "belongs" to which character or context.

Example: During a unit on friendship, the postman delivers emotional messages between fictional friends. Children must decide how to respond kindly to someone feeling lonely or angry.

It also works well as a circle time warm-up or end-of-day reflection.

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Materials and tools needed for implementation

- A bag or box labelled “Postman’s Bag”
- 20–30 folded cards with short emotional situations written on them (can be illustrated for younger children)
- A chair or soft hat for the postman (optional, to add a playful ritual)

Guiding questions

- What do you think the character in your envelope is feeling?
- Why might someone feel this way?
- Have you ever felt like this? When?
- How would you help someone who feels like that?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Some children may struggle to express an emotion clearly or may feel embarrassed.
  Tip: The teacher can support them with simple prompts like “Think of a moment when you felt this way” or “How would your body look if you felt this emotion?
- **Challenge**: Some children may exaggerate their emotional expressions.
  Tip: The teacher can guide a short conversation about how real emotions are often more subtle and can vary greatly between individuals.
- **Challenge**: Some children will guess emotions quickly, while others need more time to reflect.
  Tip: The teacher should validate both approaches and encourage exploration through questions like “What else could this child be feeling?”
- **Challenge**: The teacher plays a key role in creating a safe emotional climate.
  Tip: If giggles or discomfort arise, they should be addressed warmly, reinforcing that all emotions are normal and that interpreting them takes practice and kindness.
- **Challenge**: Children who feel shy or hesitant may need additional modelling or examples.
  Tip: The teacher can provide simple emotional scenarios to help them participate more confidently and expand their emotional vocabulary.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): Benefit from cards with simple, familiar situations and visual icons (like a sad face or a gift). The teacher can read the cards aloud and help them express the emotion through mimicry and gestures.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): More complex scenarios can be introduced — for instance, ambiguous feelings like “You’re happy your friend won, but also a bit jealous”. These situations allow richer emotional discussion and more sophisticated expression.

Experts (9–10 years old): Older children can also write their own emotional messages to add to the postman’s bag.

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Debriefing and reflection questions

- How did it feel to receive and act out someone else's emotion?
- Was it easy to guess what others were feeling? Why or why not?
- Did you ever feel unsure about an emotion? What helped you decide?
- How do you think we can use this skill in the classroom or with friends?
- Can two people feel different emotions in the same situation? What does that tell us?
- Is it easy or hard to guess emotions? Why?

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3.8.3 Scopa

Brief description, and rules of the game

The game is inspired by Scopa, a traditional Italian card game in which players collect cards through matching and strategy. In this adapted version, instead of numerical values, children match cards based on emotions. This maintains the original game's turn-taking and decision-making dynamics while shifting the focus toward emotional recognition and expression.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Empathy

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness regulation and communication
- Valuing people and nature
- Problem-solving

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2-6 children	20-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Setup:

1. Prepare a deck of Emotion Cards (at least 32 cards), ensuring that each emotion appears multiple times (e.g., 4 cards for Joy, 4 for Sadness, 4 for Fear, etc.), so that several players can hold or play the same emotion.
2. Emotions can be represented either with written labels or simple drawings/icons, depending on the age group.
3. Prepare a deck of Situation Cards (at least 20 cards), each describing a short, age-appropriate scenario (e.g., "A child lost their favourite toy," "Someone feels nervous before a big test," "A friend was left out of a game").
4. Shuffle both decks and place four Situation Cards face-up on the table.
5. Each player receives three Emotion Cards in their hand.
6. The remaining Emotion Cards form the draw pile for the game

Gameplay:

7. Players take turns choosing one of their Emotion Cards and trying to match it with a Situation Card on the table.
8. To claim the match, the player must explain why the emotion fits the situation (e.g., "I match 'Fear' with 'A child lost in a supermarket' because when we get lost, we often feel scared.").

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9. The player then suggests a way to help the person feeling that emotion (e.g., "To help them, I could tell them to find a security guard or stay calm and ask for help.").
10. If the reasoning is valid and convincing, the player collects the matched cards and places them in their personal pile.
11. A new Situation Card is drawn from the deck to replace the one taken.
12. The next player repeats the process.

Winning the Game:

13. The game ends when there are no more Situation Cards left.
14. Players count their matched pairs, but the focus is on who provided the most meaningful and insightful responses, not just who collected the most cards.

Special Rules:

15. If a player cannot match any of their cards, they may trade one card from their hand with the draw pile.
16. Empathy Bonus: Any player at the table (not only the one whose turn it is) may challenge a match if they believe a different emotion would fit the situation better. The challenging player must propose an alternative Emotion Card and briefly explain their reasoning.
17. If the group agrees that the alternative emotion is a better match, the challenging player wins the pair instead of the original player.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Set up tables or mats on the floor where small groups of 3–6 players can comfortably sit around the cards. Ensure the room is quiet enough to allow for thoughtful discussion and explanations during gameplay. Visual aids for emotions can be displayed on a board to support younger learners.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game helps children develop empathy by encouraging them to make meaningful emotional connections between everyday situations and specific feelings. To create a valid match, players must not only identify the emotion that fits the scenario, but also explain their reasoning and suggest a caring response. This process requires children to step into another person’s shoes, think about what that person might be feeling, and consider how best to respond.

Because the game includes both emotional reasoning and collaborative discussion, it fosters a supportive environment where children listen to each other’s perspectives, challenge respectfully, and reflect on multiple interpretations. The act of justifying their choices and responding to emotional needs helps children practice perspective-taking, emotional literacy, and prosocial behaviour in a structured yet playful way.

The game encourages perspective-taking and emotional recognition, helping children see situations through the eyes of others. It also teaches active listening and communication skills, since players must justify their choices and respond thoughtfully to different emotions. The cooperative elements of the game help develop social sensitivity and emotional intelligence.

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What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After playing this game, students will be able to:

- Make a direct connection between a situation and an appropriate emotion.
- Explain which emotions a given situation might cause in another child and why.
- Understand that the same situation can create similar emotions in others as in themselves.
- Speak openly about emotions during group discussion and justify their choices using emotional vocabulary.

Suggested use, and practical examples

A player draws "Loneliness" and matches it with "A new student at school", explaining: "When you're in a new place and don't know anyone, it's easy to feel lonely." They suggest, "I would invite them to play with me at recess."

Another player picks "Pride" and matches it with "Someone who learned how to swim", saying, "When we achieve something difficult, we feel proud of ourselves."

A more advanced round involves "Jealousy", matched with "A friend who got a better grade on a test". The child reflects, "It's normal to feel jealous, but instead of getting upset, we can ask them for tips to improve next time.".

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- At least 32 cards emotion cards (with different emotions like Happiness, Sadness, Fear, etc.), ensuring that each emotion appears multiple times (e.g., 4 cards for Joy, 4 for Sadness, 4 for Fear, etc.),
- Situation Cards (at least 20 cards), each describing a short, age-appropriate scenario
- A draw pile for new cards

Guiding questions

- Can you imagine how this person is feeling right now? What might be going on inside them?
- Have you ever felt this way in a similar situation? What happened?
- What could you say or do to help someone who feels this way?
- Do you think different people might feel differently in this situation? Why?
- Why did you choose this emotion for this situation? What makes you think it fits?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Some children may struggle to understand why an emotion fits a situation.
  Tip: The teacher can provide guiding questions, such as "Have you ever felt this way?"
- **Challenge**: Players might disagree on an emotion (e.g., one says "anger," while another says "frustration").
  Tip: The teacher can facilitate discussion, showing how different people interpret emotions differently.

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- **Challenge**: Some children may have difficulty offering solutions.
  Tip: The teacher can introduce examples or ask, "How would you like someone to help you if you felt this way?"
- **Challenge**: If a child is shy or unsure
  Tip: The teacher can let them team up with a partner to build confidence.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): Simplifying the game can make it more engaging and accessible. Instead of using written emotions and situations, they can rely on picture-based cards, where they match illustrated facial expressions with simple scenarios. If they struggle to verbalize an emotion, they can act it out instead, allowing them to experience feelings through movement and imitation rather than through complex explanations. This version keeps the game fun while still fostering emotional recognition.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): The game can introduce more nuanced emotions beyond basic ones like happiness or sadness. Emotions such as embarrassment, gratitude, or frustration can be added, encouraging children to think more deeply about social interactions and different emotional responses. At this stage, discussions can go beyond just recognizing emotions, prompting players to reflect on how people regulate or manage them in different situations.

Experts (9–10 years old): The game can become even more analytical and thought-provoking. Players can be asked to not only match an emotion with a situation but also to offer two different perspectives—one from the person experiencing the emotion and another from an observer or a helper. This allows them to consider multiple viewpoints and engage in perspective-taking at a deeper level. They can also discuss real-life experiences that relate to the emotion they matched, strengthening their ability to connect personal experiences with broader emotional understanding.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Was there an emotion that was harder to understand?
- Did you learn a new way to help someone today by knowing better how they feel?
- Why is it important to consider how others feel?
- Did any of your opinions about emotions change during the game?
- How can we use what we learned to be better friends?

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3.9 VALUING PEOPLE AND NATURE

3.9.1 Treasure hunt

Brief description, and rules of the game

This is a team-based treasure hunt where children follow riddles, maps, and nature-linked observation tasks to find a series of hidden clue stations. At each station, teams solve a prompt connected to valuing nature and valuing people, then earn a puzzle piece. When all pieces are collected, teams assemble them into an A4 "final message" that reveals the location of the final treasure (a nature-connected reward).

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Valuing people and nature

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Connectedness
- Curiosity, sense of wonder and openness
- Problem-solving

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2-30 children (best is teams)	30-50 minutes (depending on number of stations)

How to play - brief game rules

1. Prepare 6–12 stations (indoors or outdoors). Each station has:
   - one clue/riddle leading to the next location
   - one short mini-task (people + nature connection)
   - one puzzle piece (part of an A4 page per team)
2. Divide students into teams of 3–5. Give each team:
   - Station 1 clue (or a starting map)
   - A clipboard/folder
   - A small envelope to store puzzle pieces
3. Teams solve the riddle, travel to the next station, and complete the mini-task.
4. When they complete the task, they collect the puzzle piece and move on using the next clue.
5. When teams collect all puzzle pieces, they assemble them into the A4 final message, which reveals the final treasure location.
6. The final treasure should be nature-linked (e.g., seed paper, a "nature protector" badge, a small plant, a recycled-material craft kit, or a "nature mission" certificate).

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Outdoor (recommended): school yard, garden, park area, or playground with clear boundaries.

- Place stations under safe, visible landmarks: a tree, bench, fence corner, sign, etc.
- Set “nature rules” before starting: look with eyes first, touch gently, leave no litter.

Indoor option: hallways + classroom corners.

- Use “nature objects” inside: plant corner, window sunlight, water station, recycling bin.

Layout tip: Stagger teams (start Team A at Station 1, Team B at Station 2, etc.) to avoid crowding.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This treasure hunt builds Valuing People and Nature through lived experience: children move through real spaces and learn that nature is not “background”—it is a shared home that deserves respect.

Biodiversity and appreciation of nature: Many clues require noticing living and non-living parts of the environment (shade, leaves, soil, insects, water sources), helping children see that nature is made of many connected elements.

Curiosity and sense of wonder: The hunt format naturally creates excitement and attention to detail. Children look more closely, ask questions, and discover small things they often ignore (patterns on leaves, where shade comes from, how ants move).

Connectedness (people + nature): Teams succeed only by cooperating and by moving responsibly through shared space. Prompts link appreciation of teammates with appreciation of nature (“We need each other—just like living things in an ecosystem”).

Responsibility and coexistence: Clear “nature-respect rules” and station tasks convert values into actions: leave no trace, protect living things, use resources wisely, and treat the environment as something we belong to—not something we use.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After this game, students should be able to:

- Describe that nature includes many different living things and that biodiversity helps ecosystems stay healthy.
- Show more careful behaviour in natural spaces (gentle touch, no picking, no littering, staying on paths/boundaries).
- Demonstrate appreciation for teammates through respectful communication and shared decision-making.
- Use practical problem-solving strategies: testing ideas, rereading clues, dividing roles, staying calm when stuck.
- Show openness by listening to others’ ideas and trying different approaches (not insisting on one “right” answer).
- Express at least one way humans can coexist with nature (protect habitats, reduce waste, respect living beings).

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Suggested use, and practical examples

You can design each station to include one nature focus + one people focus + one small action.
Example stations (quick, in-motion tasks):

1. Shade Station (Trees & gratitude)
   - Clue: “Find something that gives shade without a roof.”
   - Task: “Name one way trees help living beings.” + “Name one thing you appreciate about a teammate.”
   - Puzzle piece earned.
2. Biodiversity Spot (Many living things)
   - Clue: “Go where you can see at least three different kinds of plants.”
   - Task: “Spot 3 different living things (plant/bug/bird). One teammate points, one teammate records, one teammate shares.”
   - Puzzle piece earned.
3. Leave No Trace Station (Responsibility)
   - Clue: “Find the place where we keep our area clean.” (recycling bin / designated clean spot)
   - Task: “Sort 3 example items (paper/plastic/organic) OR answer: ‘What do we do with rubbish in nature?’”
   - Puzzle piece earned.
4. Water Station (Life connection)
   - Clue: “Find something that living beings need every day.”
   - Task: “Say one way to save water at school/home.”
   - Puzzle piece earned.
5. Openness Station (Different ideas)
   - Clue: “Go to a place where you can hear more than one sound.”
   - Task: Each teammate shares one guess for the next clue before choosing. Team must choose together.".

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Clue cards or printed riddles/envelopes
- A simple map (optional)
- Small “treasure” items (stickers, tokens, treats)
- Containers or envelopes to hide prizes in
- Clipboards or folders for teams to carry their clues
- (Optional) Stickers or stamps to mark off each found station
- A4 paper × number of teams (to become the final assembled message)
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- (Optional) Props (magnifying glasses, binoculars, “nature detective” badges.

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Guiding questions

(These are designed to be "micro-prompts" that don't break the flow—one short answer, then move on.)

- Did your team notice more than one kind of living thing here?
- What is one small way to show respect to this place (right now)?
- Are we acting like guests in nature—gentle and careful?
- Did everyone's idea get heard before choosing the next step?
- Can we solve this faster if we share roles (reader / finder / recorder)?
- What do we know for sure from the clue?
- What's one new idea we haven't tried yet?
- What is something surprising or beautiful you noticed?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Teams rushing and missing tasks:
  Tip: Make the rule: "No puzzle piece until the task is completed." Keep tasks short and clear.
- **Challenge**: Crowding at stations:
  Tip: Stagger team starting points or create two parallel routes that merge at the end.
- **Challenge**: Over-excitement outdoors (running, touching plants):
  Tip: Set 3 simple rules:
  1. walk fast, don't run
  2. look first, touch gently only if allowed
  3. leave no trace
- **Challenge**: Some children dominating decisions:
  Tip: Assign rotating roles at each station: clue reader, navigator, recorder, checker.
- **Challenge**: Children getting stuck on a riddle:
  Tip: Offer a "nature hint" system: one hint allowed per team per hunt (teaches responsibility + strategy.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): The game is played in smaller groups with 6–8 stations. Use picture clues, arrows, and very concrete tasks, e.g., "Find a leaf!", "Find shade!", "Find something rough!". Children explore nature and teammates in a safe, guided environment while practicing teamwork. They notice small details, ask questions, and experience wonder at their discoveries. The goal is to observe how their own movements and choices affect the team and the natural environment.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): The game includes 8–10 stations, with simple riddles and observation challenges, e.g., "Find two different leaf shapes." Teams work more independently, coordinating movements and decisions, reflecting on each other's ideas, and experimenting with multiple solutions. Children actively observe how choices influence outcomes, test different strategies, and strengthen curiosity, sense of wonder, and openness toward nature and their peers.

Experts (9–10 years old): A larger number of stations, logic steps, and decision points are introduced, e.g., "Two possible locations – use the clue to decide!", along with mini "trade-off" tasks, e.g., "Which choice protects nature more?" Teams face multiple challenges simultaneously, balancing the value of nature and teamwork while independently shaping strategies. Children continuously test hypotheses,

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notice unexpected outcomes, experiment with new solutions, and intensively develop curiosity, sense of wonder, openness, and responsibility toward nature and their peers.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- What did you notice today that you usually don't notice outside/in the school yard?
- Where did you see biodiversity (different living things)? Why is that important?
- How did your team solve problems when you got stuck? What worked best?
- Did anyone change their mind after hearing someone else's idea? What happened?
- What made you feel a sense of wonder or curiosity today?
- What is one way humans can live that shows respect for nature?
- What is one small action you will take this week to care for nature and the people around you?

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3.9.2 Beavers and Mice – "Biodiversity and Coexistence" Edition

Brief description, and rules of the game

This is an adapted version of Beavers and Mice, a game of memory, luck, and simple arithmetic. Players still aim to finish each round with the lowest total by smartly replacing cards without being allowed to flip them again.

In this version, the animals are not just decoration. The beavers, mice, and cards that show both kinds of animals, represent biodiversity and interdependence: even when there is rivalry, living beings often need each other to survive and thrive. The game stays competitive, but students learn that winning and thriving are not the same thing – nature thrives through balance and diversity, and people thrive when we respect differences and cooperate responsibly.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Valuing people and nature

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Connectedness
- Critical Thinking
- Problem-solving

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	groups of 2-10 children (best: 4-8)	20-30 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

A) Core rules (unchanged)

1. Shuffle the deck and give 4 face-down cards to each player in a row.
2. At the start, each player secretly looks at their two corner cards, memorises them, and puts them back face down.
3. Players take turns clockwise. On your turn:
   - Draw a card from the deck, look at it, and decide if you want to keep it.
   - If you keep it, replace one of your four face-down cards (without flipping it). Put the replaced card face-up next to the deck.
   - If you don't keep it, discard the drawn card face-up next to the deck.
4. Next player chooses either:
   - draw a new card from the deck, or
   - take the top face-up card from the discard pile.
5. Red cards do not count as numbers. If drawn, reveal it and follow the instruction:
   - Exchange: swap one of your face-down cards with another player's face-down card (without seeing them).

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- Second chance: draw a card secretly; if you don't want it, discard it and draw one more.
- Quick look: secretly peek at one of your face-down cards.

6. If a player thinks they have the lowest total, they knock. All other players get one final turn.
7. Reveal cards, add totals, lowest total wins the round. Play multiple rounds and keep overall scores.

B) The "Biodiversity & Coexistence" layer (added on top)
These additions don't change the mechanics—only the meaning and the classroom learning focus.

1. Biodiversity Check (before the round starts – 1 minute)
   Teacher says:
   "In nature, it's not just about who is strongest. A healthy habitat needs different living beings. Beavers and mice may compete sometimes, but they also need each other because each one has something important for the ecosystem."
2. Interdependence Prompt (during play – 5 seconds when an animal is seen)
   Whenever a face-up card shows:
   - Beaver: "What does the beaver help within nature?" (e.g., water habitats, building, shelter for others)
   - Mouse: "What does the mouse help within nature?" (e.g., spreading seeds, being part of the food chain, keeping balance)
   - Both animals: "This shows co-existence: what happens when different living beings share a home?"
3. "We Need Each Other" moment (only when the Exchange card happens)
   The swap still happens exactly the same, but add one sentence:
   Before swapping, each player says one of these (teacher can give them as options):
   - "Even if we compete, we still share the same habitat."
   - "Different living beings have different strengths."
   - "I will swap fairly and respectfully."

   This is where the game naturally teaches the idea: what I have might be valuable to you, and what you have might be valuable to me – even without knowing what it is yet.

4. Optional (simple) Coexistence Goal for the whole group (does not affect who wins)
   At the end of the round, do a fast class check:
   - If, across the table, players collectively have a mix of beaver cards and mouse cards showing in their revealed sets, the class earns a "Healthy Habitat" point for that round.
   - If almost all are one type, teacher says: "This is what happens when biodiversity is lost – habitats become weaker."

   This creates a parallel message: You can still compete, but the habitat needs diversity to stay healthy.

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Small groups at tables. Keep the discard pile clearly visible.

Outdoor: Flat surface with trays/clipboards so cards don't fly away.

Layout tip: Place a small "Habitat Reminder" card in the middle that says: "Biodiversity = different living beings. Different strengths. Shared home."

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game develops Valuing People and Nature by helping children experience, through play, that:

1. Biodiversity matters (nature perspective)

   Children notice that beavers, mice, and mixed cards represent different roles in the ecosystem. The short prompts build the idea that a habitat is healthiest when it includes different living beings, not just one. "Both" cards help children understand coexistence, where different species share space and influence each other.

2. Diversity matters (people perspective)

   In the classroom, students see that players also bring different strengths: memory, patience, risk-taking, careful thinking, quick calculation, emotional control. The teacher highlights:

   "Just like nature needs many kinds of living beings, people communities work better when we respect differences."

3. Humans must respect and coexist with nature – and we need each other

   The repeated message becomes:

   - living beings are interconnected
   - competition exists, but so does mutual need
   - responsible choices protect shared habitats

Children begin to connect this to everyday actions: caring for animals and plants, reducing harm, sharing resources fairly, and seeing themselves as part of nature – not separate from it.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After this game, students should be able to:

- Explain why biodiversity makes nature stronger (different living beings = balance and resilience).
- Give at least one example of how two living beings can both compete and still need each other (shared habitat, food chain, shelter, balance).
- Show more respectful language about animals, habitats, and nature ("They have a role," "They belong here").
- Recognize that human diversity (different strengths, cultures, needs) is valuable and supports community well-being.
- Demonstrate coexistence behaviours during play: fair swaps, kind tone, no blaming, and responsibility for the shared space.

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- Use critical thinking when uncertain: "What do I know? What do I not know? What is my best decision right now?"

Suggested use, and practical examples

1. Before starting:

"In this habitat, beavers change the river, and mice help spread life in the forest. They might argue or compete, but they are part of the same system."

2. When a 'both' card appears face-up:

Teacher: "This card shows coexistence. What do we need to do when we share a home?"
Student: "Be careful, respect space, don't harm."

3. When Exchange is played:

Teacher: "Swapping can feel unfair, but we practice fairness. In nature, sharing space is not always easy either."

4. End-of-round biodiversity check:

"Do we see both animals represented on the table? What does that tell us about a healthy habitat.".

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Beavers and Mice card deck
- Optional: a small "Habitat Reminder" card/poster (biodiversity, coexistence, shared home)
- Optional: "Healthy Habitat" points sheet (one point per round if biodiversity appears across players)
- Paper/pencil for game scoring.

Guiding questions

In order to not mess with the flow of the game, guiding questions if used should be very brief or have them notice things in order to discuss later during the debriefing.

- Can you win with only the cards you started with, or do you need help from what others reveal?
- What helped you more right now: luck, memory, or another player's discard?
- Did another player's "waste" become useful for you? What does that remind you of in nature?
- Are you competing... but also depending on each other to improve your set?
- If everyone kept everything to themselves, would the game still move forward well?
- When you saw a beaver/mouse/both card, did it change your choice or your plan?
- Are you trying to remove "big numbers" only... or also trying to keep the game fair and respectful?
- What do you know for sure, and what are you guessing?
- "Can you win alone?"
- Is this card showing competition, coexistence, or balance? (pick one word)

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Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: It's competitive, so kids may ignore the message.
  Tip: Keep prompts short, repeated, and calm. You're not stopping play—just adding tiny "meaning moments."
- **Challenge**: Swaps can cause frustration.
  Tip: Normalize feelings and focus on fairness:
- **Challenge**: "It's okay to feel disappointed. We still treat each other kindly."
  Tip: Kids may treat animals as "teams" and become mean about it.
- **Challenge**: Reframe immediately.
  Tip: "In nature, teams are not 'better.' Every living being has worth."
- **Challenge**: Some kids will struggle with uncertainty.
  Tip: Use it as learning: "You don't have all the information—so you make your best choice responsibly."

One liner teacher narrations:

- When a player takes from the discard pile: "Interesting—someone else's card became your resource."
- When the Exchange card happens: "We share a habitat, so we affect each other."
- When a "both" card shows: "Different living beings can share space.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): Use very simple prompts, such as "What does it need?" or "How do we share space?" Students may be allowed one extra peek at the start if needed. Children focus on noticing how each card represents an animal or role in the ecosystem and how their choices affect both the game and the "habitat." They practice fair exchanges and cooperation, developing respect for the needs of others—both in nature and among people. The main goal is to strengthen awareness of interdependence and the value of all living beings.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): Add "why" questions, e.g., "Why does biodiversity protect the habitat?" Students explain their strategies and reasoning: "What helped me make this choice?" They explore how their decisions impact both the animal ecosystem and the human players. This encourages responsibility, empathy, and reflective thinking about the consequences of actions for people and nature. Teams develop deeper understanding of interdependence and learn to balance competition with cooperation.

Experts (9–10 years old): Introduce scenario challenges, e.g., "A new road cuts through the forest. What could humans do to reduce harm?" Students propose realistic solutions such as wildlife crossings, protected areas, litter reduction, or planting. Teams discuss trade-offs and predict consequences for both animals and humans. Children practice responsible decision-making, collaboration, and evaluating the needs of diverse living beings. This level emphasizes valuing people and nature, fostering ethical thinking, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility for the community and the environment.

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Debriefing and reflection questions

- If this animal could talk, what would it ask for: clean water, safe home, or food?
- What might happen to the forest/river if this animal disappeared?
- Is this animal a “small” part… or an important part of the whole system?
- Does nature work better with one kind of animal, or many different kinds?
- When habitats change, who else is affected?
- What is one way humans could help this habitat today? (one quick idea)
- Where did you see competition in the game? Where did you see interdependence?
- What did you learn about biodiversity from the animal cards?
- Why might a habitat become weaker if it loses one kind of living being?
- How are people like biodiversity—why do we need different strengths and differences?
- How did you act when something felt unfair (like a swap)? What helped you stay kind?
- What is one way humans can coexist with nature instead of harming it?
- What is one small action you will take this week to show respect for nature?

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3.9.3 Pigs in Mud – Nature Edition: "Happy in the Mud"

Brief description, and rules of the game

Pigs in Mud/Dirty Pig, originally Drecksau, is a fast, interactive card game where each player is a farmer taking care of their piglets. Players try to be the first to get all their piglets "happy in the mud."

In this adapted version, we keep the original rules but shift the meaning:

- Mud is not "dirt = bad." It represents a natural behaviour and habitat need (cooling, skin protection, insect protection).
- Water is treated as a valuable shared resource that should be used carefully.
- Other cards (Barn, Shut Door, Rain, Lightning, Lightning Rod) become story tools for protection, responsibility, and understanding natural forces.

Students still play competitively, but they also track a shared "ecosystem impact" (Nature Meter) and use quick, in-the-moment narration cues that connect game choices to caring for living beings and shared resources.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Valuing people and nature

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Connectedness
- Critical Thinking
- Problem-solving
- Empathy

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2-4 teams per game (with 1 -2 players each team). For whole-class use: play in groups, with one game set per table.	20-30 minutes gameplay + 10–15 min debrief = 30–45 min total

How to play - brief game rules

1. Short introduction (2 minutes – teacher script)

The educator says:

- "In this story, muddy means comfortable and protected—it's part of nature for some animals."
- "Water is precious. We use it when we need it, and we avoid wasting it."
- "We can play to win and still be respectful and responsible."

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2. Game setup (as in the original)
   - Give pig cards:
     - 2 players → 5 pigs each
     - 3 players → 4 pigs each
     - 4 players → 3 pigs each
   - Shuffle the remaining deck.
   - Deal 3 cards to each player.
   - Place the rest face-down as the draw pile.

All piglets begin clean (clean side showing).

3. Goal

The first player to have all their piglets "happy in the mud" (muddy side showing) wins.

4. A turn

On your turn:

- Play 1 card from your hand and do what it says.
- Draw 1 card from the deck (so you return to 3 cards).

Optional discarding rules :

- If you don't want to play any card, you may discard 1 card without effect and then draw 1.
- If you cannot play any of your cards, you may discard all 3 and draw 3 new cards.

5. "Skill add-on" that does NOT change who wins: The Shared Nature Meter

Place a small meter on each table with two token types (very simple):

- Water Drops (5 tokens) = shared water resource
- Care Leaves (5 tokens) = stewardship/care actions

When tokens change:

- When a player uses a Washing card → remove 1 Water Drop
- When a Rain card happens (cleans all pigs) → remove 1 Water Drop (nature event that impacts everyone + water use effect)
- When a player uses Mud on their own pig and says a 1-sentence habitat reason → add 1 Care Leaf (up to 5)
- When a player protects responsibly (Barn or Lightning Rod) and says a 1-sentence "why protection matters" → add 1 Care Leaf (up to 5)

Important: Tokens do not affect the winner. They help children see "shared impact" and build discussion.

6. End of game

A winner is declared by the original rules. Then the group quickly looks at:

- Water Drops remaining
- Care Leaves gained and discussed what kind of "farmers/community" they were during play.

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7. Card Meaning Guide
   - Mud card
     - Game action: Muddy one of your pigs (flip to muddy side).
     - Meaning: Habitat/behaviour need (cooling, insect protection, sun protection).
     - Micro-prompt: "Mud helps because ___."
   - Washing card
     - Game action: Clean (flip back) a muddy pig of an opponent.
     - Meaning: Human intervention—sometimes helpful, sometimes excessive.
     - Micro-prompt: "Need or waste?" (one word)
   - Rain card
     - Game action: All pigs get cleaned (everyone flips to clean).
     - Meaning: Nature affects everyone; shared conditions; we can't control everything.
     - Micro-line (no answer): "Nature impacts all of us."
   - Barn card
     - Game action: Place on one of your pigs to protect from Rain (only).
     - Meaning: Shelter/stewardship—protecting living beings from harsh conditions.
     - Micro-prompt: "We protect to keep them ___." (safe / healthy / comfortable)
   - Shut Door card (played on top of a Barn)
     - Game action: Once the pig is muddy, add Shut Door so no one can bother it.
     - Meaning: Boundaries/ownership/control—protecting can be good, but it can also create "closed access."
     - Micro-prompt: "Protection or control?" (choose one word)
   - Lightning card
     - Game action: Destroys a Shut Door (and breaks that protection).
     - Meaning: Sudden disruption/hazard—unexpected events happen in nature and life.
     - Micro-line: "Unexpected things happen."
   - Lightning Rod card (placed on Barn)
     - Game action: Protects a Barn from Lightning.
     - Meaning: Prevention/preparedness—responsible planning to reduce harm.
     - Micro-prompt: "We prepare so ___." (we reduce harm / we stay safe.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor (ideal):

- Tables in groups of 3–5.
- Teacher circulates to support fair play and quick prompts.
- A small "nature reminder" image on the table (wetland/soil/water) can help framing.

Outdoor (possible):

- Use benches/tables, protect cards from wind (tray, clipboards, small weights).

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game develops Valuing People and Nature (with emphasis on nature) because it repeatedly invites children to practice respect for living beings and ecosystems through concrete choices, visible consequences, and short reflection in the moment.

1. Understanding and appreciating nature as a whole (wholeness)
   - The pig's well-being is shown as a relationship between a living being and its environment: mud, rain, shelter, and sudden events all influence what happens.
   - Cards like Rain (system-wide change) and Mud (habitat need) help children understand that nature works as an interconnected system, not as isolated objects.
2. Empathy and meaningful relationships with living beings
   - By reframing "muddy" as "comfortable and protected," children practice thinking from an animal's perspective: "What does this animal need to be okay?"
   - The Mud micro-prompt ("Mud helps because…") creates repeated, simple empathy moments without pausing the game.
3. Curiosity and respect for differences (living beings need different things)
   - The game challenges the default idea that "clean is always good." Children learn that different species have different needs and that nature isn't "right/wrong," it's context-based.
   - The Washing micro-prompt ("Need or waste?") supports critical curiosity: when is intervention caring, and when might it become control?
4. Kindness, fairness, and care (valuing beyond winning)
   - Students practice playing competitively without cruelty, using respectful language and emotional regulation when their pigs are cleaned or when rain resets progress.
   - The teacher's framing ("protect people, question actions") reinforces a values-based approach: we can compete while still caring.
5. Taking responsibility and transforming values into actions
   - The Shared Nature Meter makes responsibility visible:
   - Washing/Rain reduces Water Drops → water is limited and shared
   - Mud/Barn/Rod can increase Care Leaves → protective, stewardship-minded actions
   - This helps children connect game behaviour to real-life behaviour: saving water, thinking before acting, protecting living beings, and planning ahead.
6. Human–nature interdependence (shared impact)
   - Because the meter is shared, children see that individual actions affect the whole group's "ecosystem balance."
   - This supports the core idea: valuing nature means noticing consequences and making choices that respect the common good.

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What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After this game, students will be able to demonstrate the following (in age-appropriate ways):

Understanding and valuing nature (primary)

- Habitat needs (Mud meaning): When playing a Mud card, students can give one correct habitat reason (e.g., cooling, insect protection, sun protection) in one short sentence at least once.
- Resources and responsibility (Water meaning): When a Washing card or Rain card is played, students can identify it as using/affecting a shared resource by correctly moving 1 Water Drop on the Shared Nature Meter and saying "need" or "waste" (one word) at least once.
- Nature as a system (Rain / Lightning): Students can state that some events affect everyone (e.g., rain changes all pigs) using a simple phrase such as "Nature affects all of us" at least once during the round or debrief.

Stewardship, protection, and consequences (primary)

- Protection actions (Barn / Lightning Rod): When placing a Barn or Lightning Rod, students can name what they are protecting (safety/shelter/prevention) in one short phrase at least once.
- Protection vs control (Shut Door): When a Shut Door is used, students can choose between the words "protection" or "control" (one-word classification) and explain in one sentence during debrief.

Values to actions (primary)

- Common good thinking (shared meter): Students can describe the shared meter idea in simple terms:
  - "Our choices affect the water/care tokens," or
  - "We share the water,"
  - at least once in the debrief.

Emotional awareness, regulation & communication (secondary but essential for safe play)

- Emotion vocabulary: Students can name one feeling that appeared during play (e.g., disappointed, excited, frustrated, proud) and link it to an action (e.g., "I felt frustrated when my pig got washed, so I took a breath.") during debrief.
- Regulation strategy: Students practice at least one quick strategy during play when disappointed (e.g., pause + breath + "next plan") with teacher prompting.

Connectedness (secondary)

- Respectful competitive language: Students can use at least one respectful sentence stem during play (e.g., "I choose this because…" / "Next time I will…") instead of teasing/attack language.
- Shared responsibility: Students can show awareness that the Shared Nature Meter belongs to everyone by making one suggestion like "Let's try protecting instead of washing so much" (during play or debrief?"

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Suggested use, and practical examples

At each table, place:

- the 7-Card Meaning Guide (one page)
- the Shared Nature Meter (5 Water Drops + 5 Care Leaves)
- a tiny "micro-cue strip" for the teacher or the table's Nature Narrator:
  - Mud → "Mud helps because ___"
  - Washing → "Need or waste?"
  - Barn/Rod → "We protect/prepare so ___"
  - Shut Door → "Protection or control?"
  - Rain/Lightning → "Nature affects all of us / unexpected things happen"

Assign rotating roles (30 seconds):

- Nature Narrator (reads the micro-cue)
- Token Keeper (moves the tokens)
- Fair Play Helper (reminds respectful language)

This makes the values part built-in, not added later.

Example 1: Mud card (habitat need + empathy)

Game moment: A child plays Mud to muddy one of their pigs.

Teacher or Nature Narrator cue (3 seconds):

- "Mud helps because ___."
- Student micro-response (1 short phrase):
- "It cools them down." / "It protects from insects."

Visible action:

- Flip pig card to muddy side + add 1 Care Leaf (if you're using Care Leaves for stewardship statements).

Why this matters (teacher note): Children practice seeing nature as home and protection, not "dirty = bad."

Example 2: Washing card (resource stewardship + moderation)

Game moment: A child plays Washing to clean an opponent's muddy pig.

Cue:

- "Need or waste?" (one word)
- Student response:
- "Need." or "Waste."
- Visible action:
- Flip pig to clean + remove 1 Water Drop
- Optional follow-up (only if calm, 5 seconds):
- "One way to save water is ___."
- Student: "Turn off tap."

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Why this matters: Links "using water" to shared resource and encourages conscious choices.

Example 3: Rain card (systems thinking + shared impact)

Game moment: Someone plays Rain and all pigs get cleaned.

Teacher cue (no student response needed):

- "Nature affects all of us."

Visible action:

- Everyone flips pigs that are muddy → clean
- Remove 1 Water Drop (because the shared system changed / water impact is highlighted)

Emotion integration (optional, 3 seconds):

- "Thumbs: calm / annoyed / surprised?" (kids show thumbs and continue)

Why this matters: Kids experience system-wide change and practice regulating disappointment.

Example 4: Barn card (stewardship, shelter, caring protection)

Game moment: A child plays Barn on a pig (protects from Rain).

Cue:

- "We protect to keep them ___."

Student response:

- "Safe." / "Healthy." / "Comfortable."

Visible action:

- Place Barn card + add 1 Care Leaf

Why this matters: Frames "protection" as responsible care, not just competitive blocking.

Example 5: Shut Door card (protection vs control – critical thinking)

Game moment: A child places Shut Door on a Barn (only after pig is muddy).

Cue:

- "Protection or control?" (one word)

Student response:

- "Protection." or "Control."

Visible action:

- Place Shut Door (no token move needed during play to keep it fast)

Debrief anchor (teacher note):

Save the "why" for after the round:

- "When does protection become too much control?"

Why this matters: This is the strongest "values" card — it introduces nuance without moralizing mid-game.

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Example 6: Lightning + Lightning Rod (risk, prevention, responsibility)

Game moment A: Lightning is played and destroys a Shut Door.

Teacher cue:

- "Unexpected things happen."

Game moment B: Lightning Rod is played on a Barn.

Cue:

- "We prepare so ___."

Student response:

- "We reduce harm." / "We stay safe."

Visible action:

- For Rod: place Rod + add 1 Care Leaf

Why this matters: Connects to real-world responsibility: planning ahead is part of caring for living beings.

Example 7: Connectedness + common good strategy (when Water Drops get low)

Game moment: The Shared Nature Meter is low (0–1 Water Drops left).

Teacher micro-cue (5 seconds, not every time):

- "Team check: How can we play strongly with less water use?"

Student suggestions (choose one):

- "Use Barn more."
- "Stop washing every turn."
- "Protect instead of wasting."

Visible action:

- No rule changes — just awareness.

Why this matters: This is where the game stops being "theme" and becomes collective responsibility.".

Materials and tools needed for implementation

Must-have (for the game to run)

- Pigs in Mud card deck / game set (includes pig cards + action cards)
- Table space for 3–5 players per set (desks pushed together or one table)

Must-have (for the skill focus to be visible and assessable)

- 7-Card Meaning Guide (Nature Edition) – 1 per table
  - Mud / Washing / Rain / Barn / Shut Door / Lightning / Lightning Rod
  - Purpose: makes the valuing nature link explicit and consistent
- Shared Nature Meter kit – 1 per table

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  - 5 Water Drop tokens (buttons, counters, paper drops)
  - 5 Care Leaf tokens (stickers, counters, paper leaves)
  - Purpose: shows shared impact + stewardship actions in a concrete way
  - Note: tokens should be large enough not to get lost
- Micro-cue strip (teacher/table prompt card) – 1 per table (or displayed on board)
  - Mud → "Mud helps because ___."
  - Washing → "Need or waste?"
  - Barn/Rod → "We protect/prepare so ___."
  - Shut Door → "Protection or control?"
  - Rain/Lightning → "Nature affects all of us / unexpected things happen."
  - Purpose: keeps prompts short and doesn't disrupt gameplay

Strongly recommended (for classroom management + connectedness)

- Role cards for table jobs (optional but highly effective):
  - Nature Narrator (reads micro-cues)
  - Token Keeper (moves Water/Care tokens)
  - Fair Play Helper (reminds respectful language)
  - Card Organizer (keeps discard/draw tidy)
  - Purpose: keeps all children engaged, prevents domination, supports connectedness
- Respectful play sentence starters (small card or on the board)
  - "I choose this because…"
  - "My next plan is…"
  - "I feel ___, so I will take a breath."
  - "Good game / well played."
  - Purpose: reduces teasing + supports emotional communication

Debrief support (useful but optional)

- Whiteboard / flipchart for quick debrief capture
  - two columns: "What helped nature?" / "What used shared resources?"
- Emotion words mini-strip (calm / annoyed / frustrated / proud / excited)
  - Purpose: helps younger learners label feelings quickly without long talk

Practical classroom extras (only if needed)

- Timer (optional)
  - to keep turns moving and prevent long debates
- Table weights / tray (for outdoor play)
  - prevents cards/tokens from blowing away.

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Guiding questions

1. In-game micro-cues (use only when that card is played)

   (One short response, then continue play. No discussion.)

   Mud card (habitat need / empathy)

   - "Mud helps because ___." (cooling / insects / sun / comfort)

   Washing card (resource stewardship / moderation)

   - "Need or waste?" (one word)
   - Optional follow-up only if time: "Need for ___?" (health / safety / rules)

   Rain card (systems thinking + shared impact)

   - Teacher line (no student response required): "Nature affects all of us."
   - Optional: "What changed for everyone?" (one word: "all pigs cleaned")

   Barn card (stewardship / protection)

   - "We protect to keep them ___." (safe / comfortable / healthy)

   Shut Door card (protection vs control / ethics)

   - "Protection or control?" (one word)

   Lightning card (disruption / uncertainty)

   - Teacher line: "Unexpected things happen."
   - Optional: "What's our next plan?" (one phrase)

   Lightning Rod (preparedness / responsibility)

   - "We prepare so ___." (reduce harm / stay safe)
2. Shared Nature Meter quick checks (only when a token moves)

   (No discussion — just an awareness habit.)

   - When removing a Water Drop: "Shared water goes down."
   - When adding a Care Leaf: "Care goes up."

   Optional one-liner:

   - "Is this choice helping nature or using resources?" (student points to water/care tokens)

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

To avoid interrupting gameplay:

- Use only one micro-cue per relevant card (3–5 seconds).
- Skip follow-ups during play; keep depth for debrief.
- If a table is getting distracted, use only token moves (silent) and talk later.

Over-competitiveness / teasing

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- Set one rule: No 'attack language'. Replace with nature language:
  "I'm changing the habitat situation" instead of "I'm ruining you."
- Give "Leaf Tokens" for kind play, not for winning.

Confusion about 'dirty = good'

- Make it very clear:
  "In this story, 'muddy' means comfortable in nature—not 'unclean' in a negative way."

Students feel upset when their piglets get cleaned

- Normalize emotions: "It's okay to feel disappointed."
- Add a calming script: "What's your next plan?"

Fast players dominate

- Rotate roles (Narrator, Fair Play Helper, Organizer) to keep everyone involved.

Moral oversimplification (washing is always bad)

- Important teachers note:
  "In real life, cleaning can be caring (health), but sometimes humans also control nature too much. Our job is to think about context and impact."

Classroom management tip:

- Put students in groups of mixed ages/strengths if possible (supports connectedness and peer learning.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): (focus: basic valuing nature + simple emotional safety):

Skill goal: Recognize habitat needs + understand "shared water" at a basic level.

During play (micro-cues only, no discussion):

- Use only 2 prompts consistently:
  - Mud → "Mud helps because ___."
  - Washing/Rain → "Need or waste?" (one word)
- Token actions are automatic:
  - Washing/Rain → remove 1 Water Drop
  - Mud/Barn/Rod + 1 short stewardship sentence → add 1 Care Leaf
    Expected evidence (simple, observable):

- Each student gives one habitat reason at least once.
- Each student uses one emotion word once in debrief (happy/annoyed/proud).

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Advanced learners (8-9 years old): (focus: responsibility + common good + cause–effect thinking):

Skill goal: Connect choices to consequences and begin "common good" thinking.

During play (same micro-cues + 1 team check moment):

- Keep the same prompts as Beginners.
- Add one short "shared impact" check when Water Drops get low (once per game):
  - "Team check: how can we play strongly with less water use?"
    Expected evidence:
- Students can say one cause–effect sentence in debrief:
  - "When we washed a lot, the water drops went down."
- Students suggest one water-saving action at school/home.

Experts (9–10 years old): (focus: values-in-action + nuance + ethical reasoning):

Skill goal: Handle complexity: protection vs control, necessary vs waste, trade-offs.

During play (still brief, still not disruptive):

- Add two higher-level micro-cues when the relevant card appears:
  - Shut Door → "Protection or control?" (one word)
  - Lightning Rod → "We prepare so ___."
- Introduce a values dilemma only in debrief, not during play:
  - "You wanted to win fast, but it cost many Water Drops. What would you choose next time and why?"
    Expected evidence:
- Students can justify one decision with a value-based reason:
  - "I think washing is 'need' here because..."
- Students can name one real-life "stewardship" action beyond water:
  - waste reduction, caring for plants, protecting animals, keeping shared spaces clean)

Debriefing and reflection questions

- When did you feel you were "thinking about nature" during the game?
- What did you notice about water as a shared resource? Was it easy to "spend" the Water Drops?
- How does our thinking change when mud is seen as habitat/comfort and not "dirt"?
- What is one way mud helps a pig in real life (cooling, sun protection, insect protection)?
- When did you decide something was "need" vs "waste"? What helped you decide?
- What did the Rain card teach you about how nature can affect everyone at the same time?
- What did the Barn card make you think of in real life (shelter, protection, caring for living things)?
- When you used (or saw) the Shut Door card, did it feel more like protection or control? Why?
- What did Lightning and the Lightning Rod remind you of (unexpected events and being prepared)?
- How did one person's choices affect the whole group (the Shared Nature Meter and the other players)?
- How did you feel when your pig got cleaned or when rain reset the pigs (excited, annoyed, frustrated, proud, surprised)?
- What did you do (or what could you do next time) to calm your body and keep playing kindly?

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- Did you notice anyone using respectful language or fair play when things got competitive? What did they say/do?
- If you played again, what would you do differently to care more for the common good (shared water + care actions)?
- If nature had a “voice,” what would it tell us about our choices today?
- What small action can we take this week at school for nature (water/waste/plants/animals)?
- Closing prompt (teacher):Today we practiced playing to win and caring for our shared home.

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3.10 CONNECTEDNESS

3.10.1 Traditional Relay Games – Buddy Challenges

Brief description, and rules of the game

This is a team relay game where students complete short movement challenges (run, balance, dribble, carry) and then tag the next teammate. The adaptation turns a normal relay into a buddy system relay: every relay leg includes a 10-second connectedness action (encouragement, appreciation, inclusion, responsibility). Teams still race, but the real aim is to practice being a supportive community under pressure.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Connectedness

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication
- Valuing people and nature

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	Whole class (in groups).	25–40 minutes (1–3 rounds)

How to play - brief game rules

A) Core relay structure (kept the same)

1. Divide the class into equal teams. Teams line up behind a start line.
2. Set up stations or a simple course (cone → task → return).
3. First player completes the station task, returns, and tags the next teammate.
4. Continue until all players have completed a leg.
5. Run another round (optional), rotating roles and station types.

B) Buddy System rules (key adaptation)

To make connectedness the main focus, each team uses rotating roles:

6. Runner: completes the movement task
7. Encourager: gives the runner a short supportive phrase before they go
8. Strategist: quickly helps if the team gets stuck or a station fails (“Try again with a tweak”)
9. Connector: makes sure everyone is included (especially quieter students)

Roles can rotate each round or every 2 turns.

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C) The “Tag with Connection” rule (always)

Tagging is not just a tap. When tagging, the runner must say one short connection phrase (choose one):

- “You’ve got this!”
- “I’m with you!”
- “Let’s do it together!”

This keeps connectedness alive without stopping the relay.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Gym / playground (recommended): clear lane per team with cones.
Wide hallway option: shorter course, quieter voices.
Safety: one runner per team at a time; clear “no crossing lanes” rule.
Layout tip: Put a “Buddy Phrase” poster near the start line so students can grab a phrase quickly.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This relay builds Connectedness because every child’s success depends on the team—and the team is trained to act like a supportive community.

- Belonging & engagement: Each student has a place in the team and a role beyond running (encourager, strategist, connector).
- Mutual respect & valuing others: Students practice appreciation and inclusion in fast, simple ways (supportive phrases, noticing effort, sharing turns fairly).
- Dynamic, reciprocal relationship: Children experience giving support and receiving support immediately—before and after each leg.
- Responsibility: Teams learn to keep each other safe, follow rules, and help a teammate who struggles without shame.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After this game, students should be able to:

- Use buddy language naturally (encouragement, gratitude, inclusion).
- Show stronger sense of belonging (“I’m part of my team/class and I matter here”).
- Demonstrate fair teamwork: taking turns, supporting different ability levels, celebrating effort.
- Use basic emotional skills during pressure: naming feelings, calming down, asking for help.
- Problem-solve as a team when something goes wrong (“We try again—what’s our tweak?”).
- Show responsibility for shared space and equipment (people + nature connection).

Suggested use, and practical examples

Example station types (movement + connectedness micro-action)

Pick 4–6 stations and rotate them:

1. Balance Station (Support + appreciation)
   - Task: balance a beanbag on a spoon to the cone and back.
   - Micro-action before tagging: “One thing I appreciate about you is…”

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2. Dribble Station (Emotion regulation + team calm)
   - Task: dribble a ball around a cone and back.
   - Micro-action: two deep breaths + "I feel ___ (excited/nervous/proud)."
3. Puzzle Station (Team problem-solving)
   - Task: match a simple card (word/picture/shape) correctly, then run back.
   - Micro-action: "Our team tweak is ___" (slower, focus, take turns).
4. Carry-and-Care Station (Responsibility)
   - Task: carry a "community token" carefully without dropping.
   - Micro-action: "We take care of our shared space by..."
5. Inclusion Station (Belonging)
   - Task: hop to the cone and back.
   - Micro-action: "I'm bringing in ___ (name) next because we need everyone."

Flow tip: Keep the micro-action to one sentence, then tag.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Cones or markers (lanes + turning points)
- Station items: beanbags + spoons, balls, simple puzzle cards, tokens
- Optional: buddy phrase poster / role cards
- Optional: small emotion word cards (happy, nervous, frustrated, proud, calm)

Guiding questions

(Quick, in-game micro-prompts – 1 short answer, no stopping.)

Connectedness (primary)

- Did you tag with a supportive phrase?
- Did everyone get a turn and feel included?
- Who needs extra support this round? (name quietly)
- Are we acting like a team or like individuals right now?

Emotional awareness/regulation (secondary)

- What feeling is in your body right now: excited, nervous, frustrated, proud?
- Do you need a breath or a buddy?

Valuing people and nature (secondary, very light)

- Are we caring for our shared space and equipment?
- Did we leave the area clean and safe)

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Kids focus only on winning:
  Tip: Give "Team Spirit points" for buddy behaviours (encouraging, including, calming). Announce both: speed + spirit.
- **Challenge**: Some kids feel slow or embarrassed:
  Tip: Emphasize "Everyone belongs." Allow different station difficulty options (walk fast vs run).

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- **Challenge**: Arguments after mistakes:
  Tip: Use a built-in reset phrase: "We try again—what's our tweak?" No blaming; only adjustment.
- **Challenge**:Noise gets too high:
  Tip: Use "inside cheer" (silent thumbs up, quiet "you got this"). Keep it community-friendly.
- **Challenge**: Unequal participation:
  Tip: Roles ensure non-runners still contribute. Rotate roles every round.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): At this level, a shorter course with fewer stations and simple tasks such as running, balancing, or carrying a ball is used. At each tag, children say a one-word feeling or short supportive phrase like "You got this!" or "I'm with you!", practicing small but intentional moments of connection. Children begin to notice that every teammate matters and experience the basics of supporting one another. The focus is on empathy, giving simple feedback, and practicing inclusion, while safely exploring how the team functions together.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old): At the intermediate level, a longer course and an additional puzzle or logic station are introduced, where children need to consider team strategy. Children also give "I noticed..." appreciation statements about their teammates' efforts, consciously reflecting on each other's contributions. They increasingly pay attention to one another throughout the course, applying support at every station and understanding the importance of collaboration. The focus is on conscious awareness of team dynamics, responsibility toward teammates, independent cooperation, and focused attention.

Experts (9–10 years old): At the expert level, teams make strategic choices, such as "fast but risky" or "steady and accurate," while ensuring every member is included and supported. Children deliberately coordinate with multiple teammates, maintaining awareness of each other's needs. The emphasis is on complex collaboration, inclusive decision-making, reflective attention, and shared responsibility for team success and the collective play experience.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- When did you feel most like you belonged to your team?
- Who supported you, and how did it feel?
- How did your team respond when something went wrong?
- What emotions showed up during the relay? What helped you manage them?
- Did everyone get included and respected? What helped that happen?
- What does a "community" do when someone struggles?
- How can we use our buddy system in class work, break time, or with a new student?
- How did we care for our shared space (and why does that matter for people and nature)?

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3.10.2 Falling Night in Palermo (Buddy Village Edition – Lambs, Wolves and Shepherd)

Brief description, and rules of the game

This is a child-friendly social deduction game based on the Greek traditional "Πέφτει η νύχτα στο Παλέρμο." It's a cooperative card-based game and like cooperative games in general players work together to achieve a common goal rather than competing against each other, emphasizing teamwork, communication, and collective success or failure. In this specific game players form a village community. Most players are Lambs (community members). Two players are Wolves (a Hidden Wolf and a Visible Wolf). One player is the Shepherd, who secretly learns who the Visible Wolf is and tries to help the lambs.

The game alternates between Day (discussion + voting to remove someone) and Night (wolves "steal" a villager). The village wins by removing both wolves; wolves win by outnumbering lambs. In the special end case where only the Shepherd and one Wolf remain, the village wins because the Shepherd can "free the lambs."

Connectedness-first adaptation: even though teams can "win/lose" the round, the class also plays for a Community Win: staying respectful, including voices, managing emotions, and repairing after mistakes.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Connectedness

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication
- Valuing people and nature
- Critical Thinking

Age group	Student number	Duration
8–10 years old (possible 7+ only with strong class bonding + very short rounds)	8–28 (best: 10–18) (or you can divide class into groups).	25–40 minutes (10–15 min. per round)

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How to play - brief game rules

Roles (beginner set)

Lambs (majority)

- Goal: protect the village by identifying and voting out both wolves.
- Rule: lambs do not reveal cards.

Hidden Wolf (minority)

- Known only to the Visible Wolf during night.
- Goal: take over the village by "stealing" lambs at night and surviving votes.

Visible Wolf (minority)

- The Shepherd knows who this is.
- Goal: same as wolves, but must also watch out for the Shepherd's influence during the day.

Shepherd (1 player)

- Learns who the Visible Wolf is during the first night signal.
- Goal: guide the community toward a wise decision without revealing identity.
- Key skill practice: calm leadership, careful language, protecting belonging.

Game phases (exact flow based on your rules)

0) Setup (Narrator/Teacher)

- Students sit in a circle.
- Narrator gives one secret role card to each student.
- Everyone silently looks at their own card.

Narration cue:

"Roles are costumes. People are always worthy. We play the role, but we respect the person."

1. First Night (special: wolves meet + Shepherd learns Visible Wolf)

   Narration cue (slow, calm): "Night falls in the village. Everyone closes eyes. No talking, no moving."

   - Narrator: "Hidden Wolf and Visible Wolf, open your eyes and see each other."
   - Wolves silently follow instruction (acknowledge each other).
   - Narrator: "Wolves, close your eyes." (everyone still closed)
   - Narrator: "Visible Wolf, carefully raise one finger." (eyes still closed)
   - Narrator: "Shepherd, open your eyes." (Shepherd looks and sees the raised finger)
   - Narrator: "Visible Wolf, lower your finger."
   - Narrator: "Shepherd, close your eyes."
   - Narrator: "Day begins. Everyone opens eyes."

2. Day Phase (every round starts with Day)

   Students discuss who the wolves might be.

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Connectedness rule for Day:

- No “You are bad.”
- Use observation language: “I noticed…” / “I’m wondering…”
- Everyone belongs, even if suspected.

Narration cue: “We protect people, we question ideas. Speak kindly. Listen fully.”

Discussion (2–5 minutes):

- Narrator can use a simple talk rule: each person speaks once before anyone speaks twice.

Voting:

- Each player puts one finger up for who they vote out.
- Players give a short reason (one sentence).
- Most votes = removed from the village.
- If tie, vote again only between tied players.

Removed player rule:

- They do not reveal their card.
- They stay in the circle but cannot speak to the village anymore.

Connectedness adaptation for removed players (recommended):

They become Silent Guardians: still included, still important, but silent. Their job is to:

- hold a “community token” (or just a hand signal) when they notice respectful talk
- model calm body language
- at the end, they speak during debrief

(This keeps belonging without breaking your “no speaking” rule.)

3. Night Phase (wolves steal)

Narration cue:

“Night falls again. Everyone closes eyes.”

- Narrator: “Wolves, open your eyes.”
- Wolves silently point to who they “steal.”
- Narrator: “Wolves, close your eyes.”
- Narrator: “Day begins. Everyone opens eyes.”
- Narrator reveals who was stolen.

Stolen player rule:

- They stay in the circle.
- They cannot speak.
- They do not reveal their card.

4. Win conditions (unchanged)
   - Village wins if both wolves are voted out.
   - Wolves win if wolves are more than lambs or if all lambs are removed.
   - Special case: if only Shepherd + one Wolf remain → Village wins.

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End of game:

- Narrator announces the result.
- Everyone reveals cards.

Narration cue (very important):

- "Game over. Roles off. We are classmates again."
- Teacher narration cues (quick cheat-sheet)
- Start: "Roles are costumes. People are worthy."
- Day: "Observations, not attacks. Include everyone."
- Before voting: "One breath. Be kind."
- After a mistake: "Repair, not blame."
- End: "Roles off. Classmates on."

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: chairs in a circle, calm environment, visible timer for discussion.

Outdoor: quiet area, still a circle, avoid loud distractions.

Connectedness layout tip:

Place a small poster visible with 3 rules:

- "Roles are costumes. People are worthy."
- "Observations, not insults."
- "We repair after mistakes.".

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game creates a strong experience of community membership: every decision affects everyone, and students learn how groups handle uncertainty together.

- Sense of belonging: sitting in a circle, shared story, shared responsibility for the village.
- Mutual respect: children practice disagreeing without harming relationships (a core community skill).
- Interdependence: the village can only succeed if students listen, share ideas, and think together.
- Collective responsibility: voting is powerful; students learn to use it carefully, not impulsively.
- Emotional awareness/regulation: suspicion, pressure, and being doubted create real emotions. The game becomes a safe place to practice naming feelings, calming down, and communicating respectfully.
- Valuing people (and lightly nature): the village is a "shared home." Protecting it means caring for one another and the community environment.

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What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After this game, students should be able to:

- Use respectful community language under pressure ("I noticed…", "I might be wrong…", "Can you explain?").
- Listen to others and allow multiple perspectives before deciding.
- Experience belonging even when suspected or removed (no shaming).
- Show supportive behaviour after mistakes (wrong vote, wrong suspicion).
- Regulate strong feelings (frustration, embarrassment, anxiety) using simple strategies.
- Understand that community problem-solving works best when people stay calm, humble, and solution-oriented.

Suggested use, and practical examples

Best practice: "Warm-up round" for unfamiliar classes

Round 0: Practice discussion (no wolves)

- Everyone is a lamb.
- Narrator invents a "mystery problem" ("Something went missing in the village") and students' practice:
  - "I noticed…"
  - "I'm wondering…"
  - voting gently
  - This teaches them how to talk before the real roles begin.

During play: one-sentence argument frames (on board)

- "I noticed ___."
- "I think ___ because ___."
- "It could also be ___."
- "I'm not sure yet." (humility is allowed!)

Connectedness "Community Win"

Give the class a shared goal alongside the normal win/lose:

- The class earns a "Community Star" when:
  - everyone stays respectful during voting
  - someone includes a quiet voice
  - someone admits "I could be wrong"
  - someone calms down instead of reacting
  - If the class collects 3–5 stars, the class "wins together" no matter who wins the round.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Role cards: Lamb, Hidden Wolf, Visible Wolf, Shepherd
- Timer (for discussion rounds)
- "Community Rules" poster (3 simple rules)

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- Optional: Community Stars/Tokens (stickers, paper stars)
- Optional: emotion cue cards (calm / nervous / frustrated / proud)

Guiding questions

(These are narrator cues that support connectedness without stopping the flow.)

Day Phase (discussion)

- "What did we observe (not assume)?"
- "Who hasn't spoken yet?"
- "Can we hear one different idea?"
- "Is that a fact, or a guess?"
- "How can we say that kindlier?"

Emotional regulation cues

- Quick check: are we calm, nervous, frustrated?" (thumb signal)
- "One breath together before voting."

Community responsibility cues

- "How do we protect the village without hurting innocent people?"
- "Are we being solution-oriented?"

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Suspicion spilling outside the game.
  Tip: End with a clear ritual: "Roles off, classmates on."
  Optional: everyone says one kind sentence to the circle.
- **Challenge**: Kids taking accusations personally.
  Tip: Keep language rules visible. Narrator repeats: "We question the role, not the person."
- **Challenge**: Quiet students not participating:
  Tip: Use "talk tokens" or require: one idea per person before second turns.
- **Challenge**: Emotions escalating (tears, anger):
  Tip: Pause the round. Do a reset: "Stop—breathe—kind voices."
  Remind: "It's a story game."
- **Challenge**: Eliminated players feeling excluded:
  Tip: Keep them in the circle as Silent Guardians with a meaningful job (tokens / modelling calm / debrief voice.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old): (focus: belonging + safe discussion):

Roles: Lambs, Hidden Wolf, Visible Wolf, Shepherd only.

- Short day discussions (2-3 minutes).
- Use sentence stems on the board.
- Community Stars are emphasized more than "winning."

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Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

Add one new role that supports community (not chaos):

Guardian Dog (optional)

- Once per game, can protect one player from being stolen at night.
- Teaches responsibility and care ("I protect someone vulnerable.")

Experts (9–10 years old): (older / emotionally ready group):

Add:

Healer (optional)

- Can bring back one stolen player once per game (still doesn't reveal roles).
- Or "Mediator" who can allow two players to speak calmly after tension.
- These roles are chosen to strengthen connectedness, not increase betrayal.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- When did you feel most like you belonged to the village?
- What helped the discussion stay respectful?
- Did anyone show humility (e.g., "I might be wrong")? How did that affect trust?
- How did it feel to be suspected? What helped you regulate your emotions?
- How did the group handle a wrong vote or mistake? Did we repair or blame?
- What is one thing we can take from this game into real class life (group work, conflicts, new students)?
- How is a healthy community similar to a healthy "shared home" (classroom/playground/nature)?

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3.10.3 Colour Jenga: Buddy Tower

Brief description, and rules of the game

This is a team-based adaptation of Colour Jenga where students take turns removing a block from a Jenga tower and placing it on top without collapsing it. Each block colour is linked to a Connectedness category, so when a colour is drawn, the team completes a fast "buddy-system" prompt (10–20 seconds). The tower may still fall – but the real goal is to practice belonging, support, empathy, and teamwork while staying calm and respectful under pressure.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Connectedness

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication
- Valuing people and nature

Age group	Student number	Duration
6–10 years old	2–24 children (in groups)	25–40 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

A) Core rules (kept the same)

1. Build the tower in alternating directions.
2. Students play in teams (not individuals). Teams sit around the tower.
3. On each turn, a team removes one block from below the topmost complete level.
4. The team announces the block colour, completes the quick prompt for that colour, then places the block on top.
5. If the tower collapses, the class does a short "repair moment," rebuilds together, and continues.

B) Buddy-System rules (the key adaptation)

To make connectedness the main point, each team has rotating roles:

- Builder (Extractor): carefully removes the block
- Voice: reads the colour prompt + answers briefly
- Buddy (Supporter): gives supportive help (calm reminder, encouragement, notices feelings)

Roles rotate every turn, so every child experiences being supported and supporting others.

Important: The team succeeds together. There is no "blame" if the tower falls—only learning and repairing."

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Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor (recommended): floor circle or table groups with space around the tower.

- Put the Colour Legend (poster) where everyone can see it.
- Teams sit close enough to quietly support each other.

Outdoor: works if blocks won't get lost; use a flat surface.

Layout tip: Arrange teams so students can hear each other. The aim is community, not speed.

How does this game develop the primary skill?

This game builds Connectedness because children experience a real sense of "we're in this together." The tower is shared, the pressure is shared, and success depends on mutual support, not individual performance.

- Sense of belonging & engagement: Every student has a role and a buddy. Nobody is "just watching."
- Mutual respect & valuing others: Prompts guide children to notice strengths, include quieter voices, and respond kindly.
- Dynamic & reciprocal relationship: Students practice giving and receiving support in the moment (encouragement, calm reminders, empathy).
- Responsibility: Teams are responsible for safety, fairness, and rebuilding the tower together after falls—like a community repairing something that affects everyone.
- Cognitive connectedness: The class links "community" to real-life interdependence (school, neighbourhood, wider world) in short, age-appropriate ways during debrief.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

After this game, students should be able to:

- Show stronger buddy behaviours: encouraging others, taking turns fairly, helping without taking over.
- Use simple emotion words ("nervous," "excited," "frustrated," "proud") and calming strategies (breathing, asking for help).
- Demonstrate belonging language: "We can do this," "Let's try together," "Good idea," "I'll help."
- Respect differences in confidence and ability (steady hands, careful planning, reading aloud, etc.).
- Repair socially after mistakes (no blaming; supportive reflection; rebuild together).
- Make a basic connection that communities work because people depend on each other and care for shared spaces (and that this extends to caring for nature too).

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Suggested use, and practical examples

Before you start (2 minutes)

Introduce the "Buddy Tower" idea:

- "This tower is like a community. When it wobbles, we support it. When it falls, we rebuild—together."

During play (no flow breaks)

Prompts are 10–20 seconds, one short answer, then place the block.

After a collapse (30 seconds)

- The last team says: "What did we try?"
- A buddy from another team says one supportive sentence: "It's okay, we're learning."
- Everyone helps rebuild quickly and continues.

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Jenga set (painted or labelled in distinct colours)
- Colour Legend poster (what each colour means)
- Optional: role cards (Builder / Voice / Buddy)
- Optional: emotion word mini-poster (happy, nervous, frustrated, proud, calm)
- Timer (optional, to keep prompts quick)

Guiding questions

(These are "in-game" micro-prompts. One short response, then continue.)

Colour Categories linked to Connectedness sub-skills

You can use 5–6 colours and assign each one to a connectedness category:

1. RED – Belonging ("I'm part of us")
   - "Say one thing that makes our team feel like a team."
   - "Name one way we include everyone."
2. BLUE – Empathy & Respect ("I notice you")
   - "Choose someone and say: 'I noticed you…' (helped/kept calm/gave a good idea)."
   - "How might a teammate feel right now—excited, nervous, calm, frustrated?"
3. GREEN – Support & Solidarity ("I've got you")
   - "Ask your buddy: 'Do you want a tip or encouragement?'"
   - "Say one supportive sentence to the Builder."
4. YELLOW – Shared Responsibility ("We take care")
   - "What is one fair rule we are following right now?"
   - "What do we do if someone makes a mistake?" (one sentence)
5. ORANGE – Community & Wider World ("We are connected")
   - "Name one community you belong to (class/family/team/neighbourhood)."
   - "One thing we share with kids in other countries is…" (food, games, feelings, school)
6. PURPLE – People & Nature Connection ("We share a home") (secondary skill link)
   - "Name one way we can care for our classroom/playground like a shared home."

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- "One small action that helps nature and people is..."

Super quick option for younger kids:

Instead of speaking, they can point to a poster choice (Belonging / Support / Fairness / Nature)."

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge**: Kids might tease when the tower falls.
  Tip: Set a rule: "No blame, only support." Make supportive language part of the game.
- **Challenge**: Some kids dominate decisions.
  Tip: Use rotating roles and a "one-voice rule": only the Voice speaks during the prompt.
- **Challenge**: Nervous kids avoid being the Builder.
  Tip: Let them start as Buddy or Voice and choose Builder when ready. Normalize nervousness.
- **Challenge**: Prompts take too long.
  Tip: Keep a visible timer and remind: "One sentence only."
- **Challenge**: Conflict between teammates.
  Tip: Use a reset phrase: "Pause—team breath—choose together."

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- Use fewer colours (3–4). Prompts are simple sentence starters:
- "I can help by..." / "I feel..." / "We are a team because..."

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- Add the "community & wider world" colour. Encourage short examples.

Experts (9–10 years old):

- Add mini-scenarios
- "Someone is left out—what do we do?"
- "Two people disagree—how do we decide fairly?"

Debriefing and reflection questions

- When did you feel most like you belonged today?
- What did your buddy do that helped you?
- What did you do to help someone else feel safe or included?
- What emotions came up (nervous, excited, frustrated, proud)? How did you manage them?
- When the tower fell, what helped the group stay kind and calm?
- How is our class like a community? What responsibilities do we share?
- How can we use the buddy system outside the game (break time, group work, new student)?
- How does caring for our shared spaces (classroom/playground/nature) help people feel connected

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