

## Summer Camps 2020

# NATIVE AMERICAN STORIES AND GAMES

Kendall County Outdoor Education Center \* [www.kcoutdoored.org](http://www.kcoutdoored.org) \* [dbazan@roe24.org](mailto:dbazan@roe24.org)

- Background Information: Who were the Native Americans?
- Activities
  - Books to Read – get to your local library
  - Talking Sticks – make your own at the KCOECC
  - Games: Double Ball, Hunting Darts, Rocks – play at the KCOEC
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### Background Information

The Native Americans were the first people to inhabit the American continents before the arrival of Europeans. Archeologists believe that these first people entered North America by way of the Bering Strait while it was frozen during the Ice Age. These travelers spread out across the continent over several thousand years establishing their own cultures based on where they ended up. In the land we now know as Illinois, the nomads lived on edible plants and the mastodonic animals they chased and hunted. As climate, vegetation and animal life underwent slow change, so did the descendants of the original people. After 2000 B.C, villages were established throughout the region and 1000 years later inhabitants were a part of what archeologists now call the Woodland period. The Native Americans were creating pottery; they developed an intricate social system which included elaborate religious burials. The rich soils enabled these people to acquire comparative wealth and some leisure time to pursue arts. The Illinois river system became the crossroads for trade routes. By 900 A.D the Native Americans had moved into the Mississippian period and had built huge earthen structures. Today you can visit Monk's Mound near St. Louis, the largest prehistoric earthwork on the North American continent. You can also visit Dickson Mounds and Cahokia Mounds (see Additional Resources for links). About the time Christopher Columbus reached the Americas, the Mississippian culture came to an end

and the Tribal period began. Explorers began their journeys across the Americas claiming lands for their countries and infusing European influence, changes that would forever end the previous ways of Native American life in North America.

*Howard, Robert P. Illinois: A History of the Prairie State. Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972.*

### **Activity #1: Books to Read**

There are many books to read about Native Americans and their culture. A favorite author of the Kendall County Outdoor Education Center is Joseph Bruchac. He writes books for children of all ages and they are based on much research and native tradition. Check with your local library and look for some books on this list: <https://www.josephbruchac.com/JBBOOKs2013W.pdf>

### **Activity # 2: Talking Stick**

Materials Needed: stick, string, ribbon, feathers (available at the KCOEC)

What is a talking stick? They have been used for centuries by many Native American tribes as a means of discussion. They were most commonly used at important events such as Pow-wow gatherings, tribal council meetings and important ceremonies. However, they were also used for storytelling circles and teaching children. A talking stick allows people to present and express their thoughts and views in a group.



The person hosting the meeting was responsible for making the Talking Stick for that event, and that is why great care was taken in selecting proper materials important to the maker. Most talking sticks are about as long as your fingertips to your elbow, and they are usually long, narrow, and brightly colored with furs, feathers, or etchings. To make your own, you may want to refer to this website to better understand the meanings of specific woods and adornments. <https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-culture/talking-sticks.htm>

### **Activity #3: Native American Games**

Just as in our culture today, Native American children played games and told stories to help them understand the ways of their people. The games served to build skills in hunting, a skill the Native Americans depended upon. In that culture, there was a strong harmony between man and wild. Try your skills by playing the games below.

#### **DOUBLE BALL**

Each participant uses a long stick and can play in twos, threes or fours with one ball set. Place the double ball over the end the stick, and hold the stick over your shoulder (like a soldier carrying a musket). In one quick motion, fling the ball over your shoulder and off the end of the stick to your teammate who will catch the flying ball. Continue to throw and catch. How many continuous passes can you complete?



To make your own double ball at home, you will need two tennis balls, a pantyhose leg and a tall sock. Place one tennis ball in the toe end of the pantyhose leg and tie a knot in the hose to hold the ball in place. Stretch the pantyhose out about another 8-10 inches and secure another tennis ball there using knots so the ball is held securely. Now place the two balls into the sock and knot the end of the sock. Enjoy using your own double ball for this game!

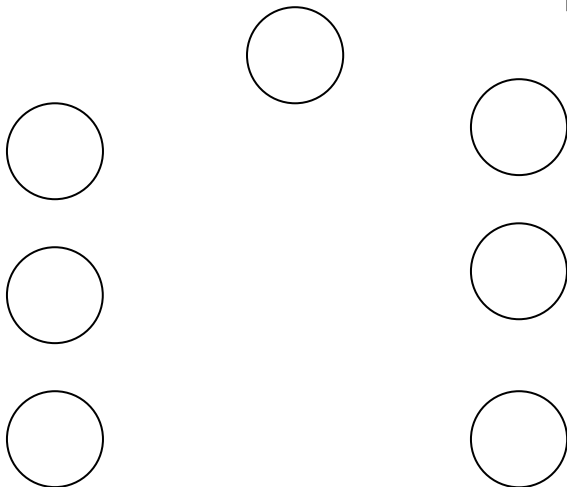
#### **THE DART HUNTING GAME**

Materials needed: rope, 7 hoops/rings, 6 corn cobs darts (corn cob, 12-penny nail, long feather)

To make your dart, take insert the 12-penny nail in the narrow end of the shelled cob. This will weight your dart. Now make a small hole in the wide end of the cob and insert a long feather. This will help your dart to fly.

To set up the game, lay the rope down as a starting line. Then place the hoops as shown. The closest hoop represents a fish, a meal good for one person one time. The second hoop represents a turkey, a meal good for a family for one day. The third hoop represents a deer, a meal good for the village for one day. The farthest hoop represents a bear, a meal that would feed the entire village for a feast! Stand with your toes on the rope. Toss the darts, one at a time, and try to get them into the hoops. That attempt represents your day of hunting for your village. How much food did you bring home? The average Potawatomi village in Illinois had around 50 residents. Will your hunting feed your village? How many hunters will it take to feed your village today? This week? This month?

Illustration: Dart Hunting Game



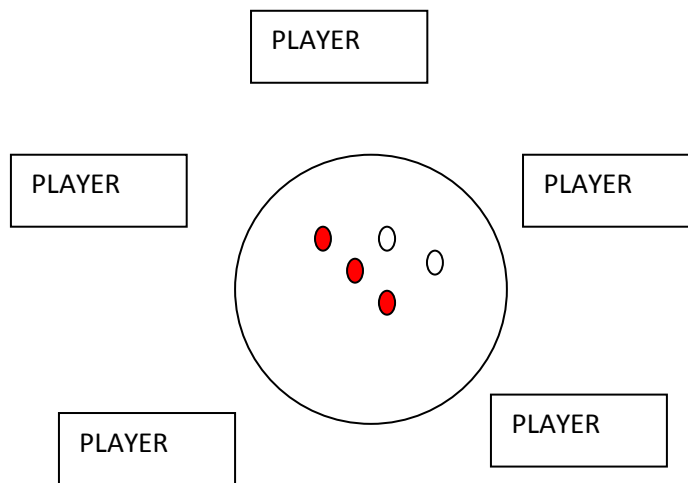
Hunter with  
three darts

Hunter with  
three darts

## THE ROCK GAME

Materials: 5 small rocks with red paint on one side

This is a game of chance using colored rocks. Participants work in small groups, about 5 people per group. The group sits on the ground in a tight circle. The first thrower takes five rocks of the painted rocks and tosses them lightly into the center of the group. If the rocks show more red than white, the thrower is “in”. If not, the thrower is “out” and remains with the group. Each member of the group takes a turn as is either “in” or “out”. Play continues around the circle until only one player is left “in” and becomes the winner. The prize? That player gets to start the next game and all players are back “in” the game. This game goes very quickly with many rounds played in a short amount of time.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Monks Mound <https://cahokiamounds.org/mound/mound-38-monks-mound/>
- Cahokia Mound <https://cahokiamounds.org/>
- Dickson Mound <http://www.illinoisstatemuseum.org/content/welcome-dickson-mounds>
- American Indian Tribes of Illinois [http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat\\_amer/post/](http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/post/)
- Joseph Bruchac Biography and Book list <https://www.josephbruchac.com/>

# NATIVE AMERICAN NATURAL RESOURCE HIKE

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Welcome to our Native American Natural Resource Map Hike! Throughout Hoover there are 8 wooden markers placed for you to find; each one is marked with a star on your map. On this sheet there will be questions, and the answers will be on the markers. When you are done, you'll understand more about the natural resources that allowed Native Americans to settle in this region.

1. Marker 1: Parking Lot (north end of Hoover, blacktop; northwest corner post)

Here is where your journey begins, but how did the Native Americans get here? Find the marker and read the card to discover the answer to this question.

2. Marker 2: The Prairie (check the road sign)

You are looking across the prairie at thousands of plants. Why would these be important to Native Americans? What would they use these plants for?

3. Marker 3: The Woodlands – Big Trees

The woodlands provided many resources for the Native Americans. Look at the trees around you and find the biggest ones. Why would the big trees be so important?

4. Marker 4: The Woodlands - Wildlife

The Native Americans in this region were hunters. What would they be hunting for in these woods?

5. Marker 5: The Fox River

Our local Potawatomi natives lived along the Fox River. Why would that be important?

6. Marker 6: Small Creeks

Small creeks like these were too small to paddle. Why would a village be located near such small streams?

7. Marker 7: Neshnabe'k Village

The village of Neshnabe'k (NISH-na-bay) was originally built here by Redhawk to help us learn more about the Potawatomi way of life. It means "the people." What are these homes called? How many people would live here at one time? How long did they stay here?

8. Marker 8: The Fields

Besides being hunters and gatherers, Native Americans were good farmers and grew their own crops in open field like these. What would you be growing if you were a Native here?

9. Marker 1: Parking Lot

Congratulations on completing the Native American Natural Resources Hike. Hopefully you have learned something new and, better yet, come up with some questions you would like answered. If you haven't already done so, plan to stop by the KCOEC and try out some Native American Games, read some stories, or make your own Talking Stick.

# Native American Natural Resource Hike - KCOEC

