PLAYING GAMES

SUPPORT MATERIALS

If you need further support on specific aspects of outdoor learning these materials can enhance the engaging experiences you are providing. They can support you as you design, plan and implement your curriculum. Outdoor learning is a great way to develop learners' integral skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, personal effectiveness, planning and organising). You will want to focus on why learning matters and ensure you are meeting your learners' needs.
These materials show a path that could be taken through the activity. This is not meant to be prescriptive. You should adapt your approach depending on your learners' needs and interests and your local area.

OVERVIEW

Learners consider what they already know about playing games, discussing their favourite games and exploring the reasons we play games and what the benefits are. They are introduced to a Nigerian board game, consider the rules and play a game against each other.
Learners consider a Welsh board game, introduced to the British Isles by the Vikings. They carry out research to find out more, make a board and pieces and try to play the game following a set of rules presented as a historical source. Learners write a set of instructions for playing the game, compare these to the actual rules of the game and explore other 'abstract strategy' games. They invent and play their own abstract strategy game, evaluating the game and reflecting on the process of developing it. Finally, learners create an advert to promote their game and consider feedback from their peers.

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

Areas explored:

- Expressive Arts
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication

Activity also incorporates aspects of cross-curricular skills outlined in the LNF and DCF.

RESOURCES

Internet enabled device and internet access.
Access to materials that could be used as counters, e.g. twigs, small stones, acorns, etc.
Access to materials that could be used as draw a board, e.g. a stick, sharp stone, etc.
Means of recording and editing video (e.g. smart phone, tablet, camera).

DOING THE ACTIVITY

- Most tasks require learners to work in pairs or groups.
- Encourage learners to share their ideas, and through open questioning, explain and justify their ideas when possible. Focus questions have been suggested to guide learners through the tasks.
- When taking learners outdoors, it is essential that the Countryside Code is adhered to and any relevant risk assessments have been carried out with risks mitigated.

TASK 1

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PLAYING GAMES?

Explain to learners that this task should help them to explore and understand their experience and ideas about playing games.

Screen 3

Ask learners to consider what they think 'playing games' means and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- Who takes part in playing games? Why do you think that?
- When and where do people play games?
- How important is playing games? Why do you think that?

Screen 4

To activate prior knowledge, experience and understanding, ask learners to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What are your favourite games?
- Why do you enjoy these games?
- Are there any parts of playing games you don't enjoy? Why?
- What are the benefits of playing games for you?
- What skills have you learned by playing games?
- How have these skills been useful to you in your school or everyday life?
- Can you recall a game you used to enjoy, but haven't played for a long time? Why haven't you played it for a long time?

Screen 5

Inform learners that games can be categorised in different ways. Ask them to complete the table with their favourite game in each category.

Explain to learners that some games may fall into multiple categories. Invite them to share their choices and reasons for those choices with a partner and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- Did you choose the same things?
- Did you have similar reasons? If so, what were they?

Screen 6

Ask learners to consider why we play games by clicking on each character and discussing their views as they appear on the screen.

Focus questions

- Which of these learners' comments do you most agree with? Why?
- Who do you least agree with? Why?

Screen 7

Invite learners to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What are the main reasons you play games? (Try not to think only of online games!)
- Did you and your partner agree? If not, how were your ideas different?

Screen 8

Invite learners to consider why playing games is important to them and to summarise the reasons why by completing the sentence on screen.

'Playing games is important to me because...'

TASK 2

LEARNING AND PLAYING NEW GAMES

Explain to learners that this task will involve them exploring and playing old board games that are likely to be new to them.

Screen 3

This screen introduces learners to a game from Nigeria called 'Dara' and invites them to draw the game board and gather counters to play the game.

Screen 4

The rules of Dara are outlined on this screen. Ask learners to read and discuss the rules and then go over the rules to ensure they understand how to play the game. You might want to demonstrate briefly how to play the game, for example, on a whiteboard.

Screen 5

Inform learners that they are going to play Dara against another team. Ask them to discuss the questions posed with the rest of their team.

Focus questions

- Where will you put your counters at the start? Why?
- What will your strategies be? Why?

Screen 6

Take the learners outside and invite them to play a game of Dara.

Screen 7

After learners have completed a game of Dara, ask them to discuss the questions posed with their team.

Focus questions

- If you played the game again, what would you do differently? Why? How would that improve the outcome?
- What did you enjoy about playing the game? How did playing the game make you feel?

What would you like to change about the game to enable you to enjoy it more?

Screen 8

This screen introduces learners to 'Tawlbwrdd', a Welsh game, introduced to the British Isles by the Vikings. Ask learners to look at the image of the tawlbwrdd board laid with its pieces and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What does the board and its pieces remind you of?
- What other games have you seen that look similar to this?

Screen 9

Inform learners that King Hywel Dda reigned in the 10th Century and gave high-ranking officials the game of tawlbwrdd as a gift. Invite them to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What do you know about King Hywel Dda?
- What do you think the gifts of tawlbwrdd would have been made from in the 10th Century? Why?

Screen 10

Ask learners to research on the internet to find answers to these questions about King Hywel Dda:

- What was his real name?
- Between which years did he live?
- How did he become King of Wales?
- What links did he have to the Gower?
- Which areas of Wales did he not have control of when he was King of Wales? Why?

Screen 11

Invite learners to read the historical source provided on this screen, showing the original Welsh description of tawlbwrdd, translated into English.

Screen 12

Inform learners that they are going to make their own tawlbwrdd board and pieces. They will then use the historical source from the previous screen (11) to play the game.

Provide learners with cardboard, scissors, pens and rulers. Ask pairs to decide how they will make their tawlbwrdd board and pieces and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- How will you make the board? What measurements will you use? Why?
- What will be the size of each piece? Why?
- How many pieces will you make?
- How many pieces of each colour will you make?

Screen 13

Invite learners to use the historical source to try and play tawlbwrdd. Ask them to make a note of any parts of the game they had to invent themselves to make more sense of the source and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- Which parts of the game were clear from the source?
- Which parts of the game were not clear? Why?
- What did you add to the instructions in the source so you could play the game?

Screen 14

Invite pairs of learners to write a set of instructions to play their version of tawlbwrdd. Ask each pair to share their board and instructions with another pair of learners and to invite these learners to have a game of tawlbwrdd. Each playing pair should provide feedback to the pair who wrote the instructions by discussing the questions posed.

Focus questions

- How easy were the instructions to follow?
- What could be added to the instructions to make them clearer? How would these additions help?

Screen 15

This screen provides learners with the rules for tawlbwrdd. Invite them to access the rules and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- How similar are these rules to yours?
- What is different between the two sets of rules?

Screen 16

Now, invite learners to play tawlbwrdd using the correct rules and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- How easy was it to play using these rules? Why?
- How much did you enjoy playing tawlbwrdd? Why?
- Which other game(s) does tawlbwrdd remind you of? Why?

Screen 17

Inform learner that Tafl games, also known as hnefatafl games, are a family of ancient Northern European strategy board games played on a checkered or latticed gameboard with two armies of uneven numbers. Tawlbwrdd is one of the games in this family.

Since 2011, the World Tafl Federation has been holding annual world hnefatafl championships.

Screen 18

Inform learners that Tawlbwrdd and Dara are known as ‘abstract strategy’ games. Ask them to consider this phrase and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What do you think ‘abstract strategy’ means?
- What other games do you know that are abstract strategy games?
- Which abstract strategy games have you played?
- What is your favourite abstract strategy game? Why?

TASK 3

INVENTING OUR OWN ABSTRACT STRATEGY GAME

Explain to learners that in this task they will explore how to design and make an abstract strategy game and consider peer feedback.

Screen 3

Explain to learners that in groups, they are going to invent an abstract strategy game to be played outside using people in the class as the pieces. Inform them that they will be able to use any natural materials in the area they play in to mark out the board or define pieces.

For example:

- the board could be drawn in the sand
- the queen might have a crown made from sticks
- some of the pieces could carry stones as 'weapons' to show they are soldiers.

Screen 4

Invite learners to discuss the questions posed and to start a mind map to show their ideas.

Focus questions

- Where will your game be played?
- What natural materials will be available to use?
- How will you mark out the board? Why do it like this?

Invite learners to start a mind map to show their ideas.

Screen 5

Ask learners to make decisions about their board game and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What is the board like for your game? Why?
- How is the board set out? Why?
- What size will your board be? Why?
- If you have sections on your board, how big should each section be? Why?
- What pieces does your game need? How will you denote the pieces?
- What natural materials or other equipment will be needed to play the game?

Invite learners to add ideas to their mind map.

Screen 6

Ask learners to make decisions about their board game and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What are the rules for playing the game?
- How many players could play the game?
- What strategies would a player need in order to win the game?

Invite learners to add ideas to their mind map.

Screen 7

Ask learners to make use the ideas on their mind map to draw the board and the pieces and to draft a set of rules for playing their game.

Screen 8

Ask learners to go outside and play their game.

Screen 9

Explain to learners that each group now needs to evaluate their game, its board, pieces and the rules. Ask them to discuss the questions posed and make any adjustments to their game to improve it.

Focus questions

- How well did the game work? Why?
- What could be done to improve the game in terms of its:
    - board
    - pieces
    - rules?

Screen 10

This screen offers learners a chance to use three or more of the sentence starters provided to reflect on creating their game.

The key knowledge and skills we used to create our game were...; I used to think... Now I think...; The next time we could...; We played different roles in our group when...; We solved problems when...; The thing we found most difficult was...; We had to think creatively to reframe and solve problems when...; We hope other people will benefit from our game by...; Something I don't understand is....

Screen 11

Inform learners that they are going to create a short advert to promote their game. The advert could be a video, sound recording, poster or even a live performance. Ask them to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What format should we use for our advert?
- Who is the audience for our advert?
- What do we need to include in our advert? Why?
- How can we make our advert engaging to our audience?

Screen 12

Ask learners to create their advert and show it to the class. Invite the class to feedback on how well the advert showcased the game, how engaging they found the advert and whether the advert make them want to play the game and why.

Screen 13

Invite learners to consider the feedback from the class and to discuss the questions posed.

Focus questions

- What went well with your advert?
- What didn't go as well with your advert?
- How could you change your advert to make others want to play your game more?