

Informal Playground Activity Ideas

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Skipping

Skipping is probably the most popular game in the playground at the moment. It started when theme and taught the school some tricks,

Skipping Tricks

Can Can

Jump on your left foot while raising your right knee. Then do a two-foot jump. Jump on your left foot again while kicking your right foot. Then do a two-foot jump. Repeat with the other leg.

Pretzal

Place your hand under your knee and turn the rope around with the support of your other hand and jump.

Double Dutch

Two ropes in an eggbeater motion around one or two jumpers.

Windscreen Wiper

One person turn the rope and the other jump round and round waving to other people.

Skipping Rhymes

1. I had a little puppy
His name was Tiny Tim
I put him in the bathtub, to see if he could swim
He drank up all the water, he ate up all the soap
The next thing you know he had a bubble in his throat.
In came the doctor (person jumps in)
In came the nurse (person jumps in)
In came the lady with the alligator purse (person jumps in)
Out went the doctor (person jumps out)
Out went the nurse (person jumps out)
Out went the lady with the alligator purse (person jumps out)

2. Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do!

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, go upstairs
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn out the lights
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say good-night!

The skipper jumps the rope whilst singing this rhyme; he/she acts out the actions as the words come up in the rhyme.

3. I like coffee, I like tea,
I like (person's name) to jump with me.
(That person joins the first person so that two are now jumping.)
One, two, three, change places, seven, eight, nine, change places, etc.
(until the pair missed. The two change from right to left each time they said "change places" and all would keep track of who got the highest number before missing.)

or

I love coffee, I love tea.
I want (name) to come in with me.
Two little dickie birds sittin' on the wall
(the two players jump in)
One named Peter, one named Paul
(each player waves at their name)
Fly away, Peter, fly away, Paul
(the player exits the rope as name is called)
Don't you come back 'till your birthday's called
January, February -----December
(player returns when their month is called)
Now fly away, fly away, fly away all
(players both exit the rope)

4. Had a little bumper car, number 48, went around the corner (skipper jumps out and runs around the twirler and run back in the rope. Keep saying 'corner' until the skipper jumps back in) and slams on the brakes.
Policeman came and put me in jail.
How many days did he put me in jail? (count until the player messes up)

5. Apples, peaches, pears and plums
Tell me when your birthday comes,

The rope is then turned very fast whilst saying the months of the year (Jan, Feb, Mar etc). the skipper should end on his or her birthday.

6. Down by the river, down by the sea,
Johnny broke a bottle and blamed it on me.
I told ma, ma told pa,
Johnny got a spanking so ha ha ha.

How many spankings did Johnny get?
1, 2, 3...

Keep counting until the jumper messes up.

7. I went upstairs to make my bed.
I made a mistake and bumped my head.
I went downstairs to milk my cow.
I made a mistake and milked the sow.
I went to the kitchen to bake a pie.
I made a mistake and baked a fly.

8. Johnny gave me apples,
Johnny gave me pears
Johnny gave me fifty pence
And kissed me on the stairs,
I'd rather wash the dishes,
I'd rather scrub the floor
I'd rather kiss (name)
Behind the kitchen door.

OR

Johnny gave me apples,
Johnny gave me pears
Johnny gave me fifty pence
To kiss him on the stairs,
I gave him back his apples,
I gave him back his pears.
I gave him back his fifty pence
and kicked him down the stairs.

9. How many times can you jump without missing?

Chickety, chickety, chop.
How many times before I stop?

My little sister dressed in pink
Washed all the dishes in the sink.
How many dishes did she break?

Mother, mother I am sick.
Call for the doctor quick, quick, quick.
Doctor, doctor will I die?
Yes, my dear and so will I.
How many years will I live to be?

Down in the valley where the green grass grows.
There sat (name) sweet as a rose.
She sang, she sang so sweet.
Along came (name) and kissed her on the cheek.
How many kisses did he give her?

10. On the word pepper, turn the rope fast, to make the jumper miss!

Mabel, Mabel, set the table.
Just as fast as you are able.
Don't forget the salt, sugar, vinegar, mustard
and red-hot PEPPER!

Mother sent me to the store.
This is what she sent me for:
To get some coffee, tea and PEPPER!

11. Make the jumper miss, or the jumper misses on purpose.

Jump rope, jump rope, will I miss?
Jump rope, jump rope, just watch this!

What shall I name my little pup?
I'll have to think a good one up.
A-B-C-D-E-F-G-----
(player makes up a name that starts with the letter missed)

Blueberry, strawberry, apple tart,
Tell us the name of your sweetheart
A-B-C-D-E-F-G-----

Fortune teller please tell me
What my husband' (wife's) name will be.
A-B-C-D-E-F-G-----

12. Do the actions to these rhymes!

I am a little Dutch girl dressed in blue.
Here are the things I like to do:
Salute to the captain, bow to the queen
Turn my back on the submarine.
I can do the tap dance, I can do the split.
I can do the holka polka just like this.

Spanish dancer do the splits, splits, splits.
Spanish dancer do the kicks, kicks, kicks.
Spanish dancer turn around, 'round, 'round.
Spanish dancer jump up and down, down, down.
Spanish dancer get out of town. (run out)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around,
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do!
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, go upstairs
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn out the lights
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say goodnight!

Benjamin Franklin went to France
To teach the ladies how to dance.
First the heel, then the toe,
Spin around and out you go!

In these rhymes, the jumper calls in a friend by name.

Rooms for rent, enquire within,
As I move out, let (name) come in.

All in together girls
Never mind the weather girls
When I call your birthday
You must jump in
January, February, March,
April, May, June,
September, October
November, December
(Players jump in on their Birthday)

SKIPPING - Double-dutch jump rope song.

1. JACK BE NIMBLE JACK BE QUICK
JACK JUMPED OVER THE CANDLE STICK.
MUMBLE, KICK,
SIZZLER, SPLIT,

POP-UPS 10 TO 1 - HIT IT. 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1.

Jack Jumped Over - the jumper jumps up very high with both feet leaving the ground at the same time.

Mumble - by putting both feet together making very small hops;

Kick - repeatedly kicking one foot outward and back again;

Sizzler - crossing and uncrossing feet and legs;

Split - opening and closing legs about 5 feet apart;

Pop - jumping high in the rope with both feet coming off the ground together.

2. The rhyme starts with the rope being swung back and forth, not over

Blue bells, cockle shell
Easy ivy over

Swing rope over head on over and continue in normal rope swing.

3. Oh no, here comes Miss Blackwell
with her big black stick
Now its time for arithmetic

One plus one is?
(jumper responds) Two

Two plus two is?
(jumper responds) Four

Four plus four is?
(jumper responds) Eight

Eight plus eight is?
(jumper responds) Sixteen

Now its time for spelling
Spell cat.
(jumper responds) C-A-T

Spell dog.
(jumper responds) D-O-G

Spell hot.
(jumper responds) H-O-T

When the jumper finishes spelling H-O-T swing the rope as fast as possible till they mess up.

4. Mickey Mouse
Built a house
How many bricks
Did he use?
One, two, three
four, five, six
5. All in together girls
Never mind the weather girls
When I call your birthday
You must jump in.
January, February
March, April, May, June,
July, August, September,
October, November, December!
6. Touch the ground
Turn right round
Go upstairs
Say your prayers

Switch off the light
And say goodnight!

7. Sausage in a pan,
Sausage in a pan,
Turn 'em 'over, turn 'em 'over,
(you have to turn to face the other direction, then back again)

Clapping Rhymes

Some children enjoy clapping rhymes. This is where they clap hands with each other whilst saying a rhyme.

Below we have written some of the rhymes we use in our school playground:

1. A sailor went to sea, sea, sea.
To see what he could see, see, see.
But all that he could see, see, see.
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.

2. I went to a Chinese restaurant
to buy a loaf of bread, bread, bread.
He wrapped it up in a five pound note,
and this is what he said, said, said.....

3. Have you ever, ever, ever, in your long legged life
met a long legged sailor with a long legged wife?
No, I never, never, never, in my long legged life
met a long legged sailor with a long legged wife

4. Have you ever, ever, ever, in your short legged life....

....pigeon toed life...
....bow legged life...
....spoon headed life...

French Elastic or French Skipping

We play this game with a really long piece of elastic, about 2cm wide and 3 meters in length. We tie the ends of the elastic together to make a loop.

Two children stand inside the loop so they are stretching it relatively tight around their ankles. A third person performs a series of hops and jumps, chanting appropriate rhymes. When finished, the height of the elastic is raised to knees, then thighs, then waist.

Start with left foot inside the elastic loop and right foot just outside. Jump over to the other side so right foot is inside the loop and left foot is outside.

Here is one of the rhymes we say:

'Chocolate cake, when you bake,
How many minutes will you take?
One, two, three, four.'

On ONE: jump up and land with left foot outside the elastic loop and your right foot inside.

On TWO: jump up and land with both feet together inside the elastic loop.

On THREE: jump up and land with both feet outside the elastic loop.

On Four: jump up and land sideways to the elastic, with your left foot on top of the back elastic and your right foot ahead (in front) of the front elastic.

If the current player fails to execute the correct jump their turn is over and play passes to one of the people inside the circle of elastic, who then tries to out do the previous player.

Here are more of the rhymes we use:

'England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales
Inside, outside, inside, on!'

'Old Mrs Mason broke her basin
on the way to London Station.
How much did it cost?
One, two, three, four.'

'Charlie Chaplin sat on a pin
How many inches did it go in?
One, two, three, four.'

Connect 4



This is a quieter game.
Schools have monitors who are in charge of putting out this game every break time and putting it away.

Mr Crocodile

Enjoy playing this game with 4 or 5 friends.

One person is 'Mr Crocodile' and the other people say "Please Mr Crocodile can we cross your Golden River".

'Mr Crocodile' replies with something like "Only if you are wearing something blue".

If you are wearing that colour you can move on one step. When you reach the other side, you are then the next 'Mr Crocodile'.

MARBLES

How to Play Ringer (& More!)

Most children understand Ringer the first time it is explained, but to make it easier, these drawings show the most common plays, such as frequently occur in championship games.

In studying these diagrams imagine that two children are going to play a game. To determine who shall play first each child lags with his or her shooter.

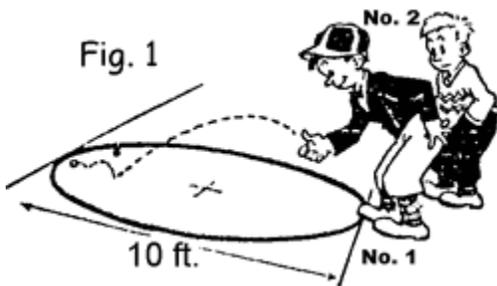


FIG. 1: To start a game of Ringer the children lag from a line, drawn tangent to the ring, to a parallel line across the ring, which would be 10 feet away. The child whose shooter comes nearest the line has the first shot. Players must lag before each game. Practice lagging, as the first shot may mean the winning of the game before your opponent gets a shot. In lagging, a child may toss his or her shooter to the other line, or he or she may

knuckle down and shoot it.

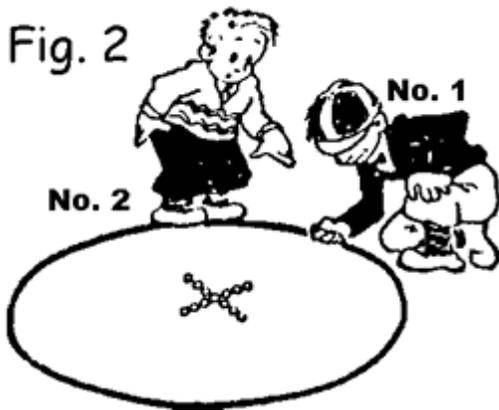


FIG. 2: This shows child No.1 who won the lag, preparing to knuckle down. His knuckle has not quite reached the ground, which is necessary before shooting. He can take any position about the ring he chooses. Notice how the 13 marbles in the ring are arranged at the start

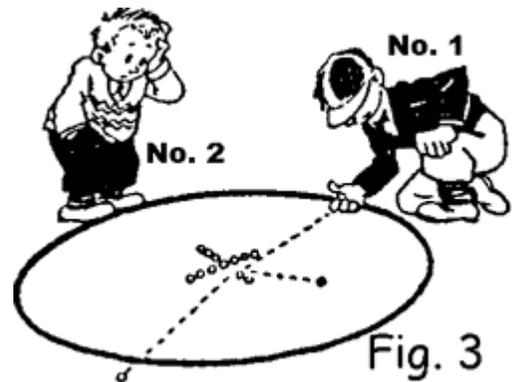


FIG. 3: child No.1 knocks a marble from the ring on his first shot and his shooter stays in the ring. He picks up the marble. As he has knocked one from the ring, he is entitled to another try. Players are not permitted to walk inside the ring unless their shooter comes to a stop inside the ring. Penalty is a fine of one

of the game.



FIG. 4: Here we see child No. 1 continuing play. He "knuckles down" inside the ring where his shooter stopped on the last shot. This gives him the advantage of being nearer to the big group of marbles in the center of the ring for his next shot. Expert marble shots try to hit a marble, knock it out of ring and make their shooter "stick" in the spot.

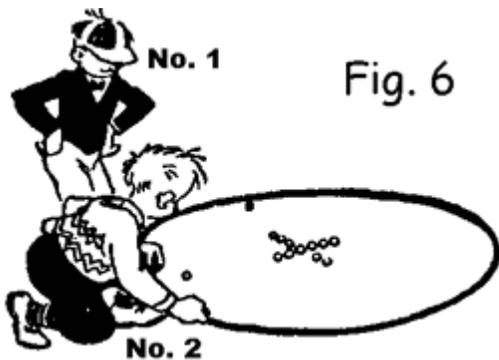


FIG. 6: child No. 2 may start by "knuckling down" anywhere at the ring edge. In this case he may shoot at the 11 marbles in the center or if he wishes, he may go to the other side and try for No.1's shooter or the marble that No.1 almost knocked from the ring.

marble.

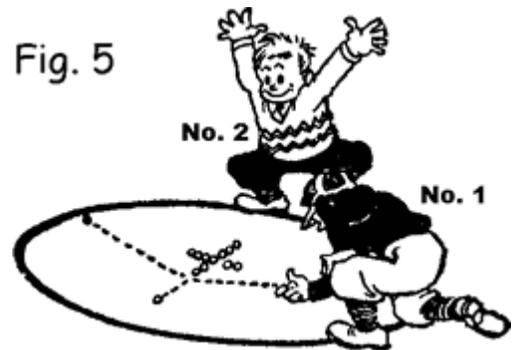


FIG 5: On this play, No.1 hit a marble, but did not knock it from the ring. At the same time his shooter, too, stays inside the ring. He can not pick up the marble, neither is he allowed to pick up his shooter. He must leave the shooter there until the other child has played.

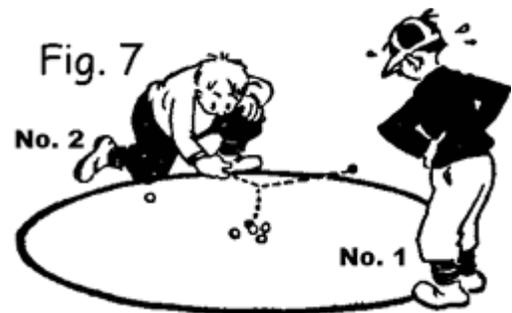


FIG. 7: child No.2 chooses to try for No. 1 child's shooter and knocks it out of ring, winning all the marbles No.1 has taken and putting No.1 out of that game. Or he could shoot as shown in Fig. 8.

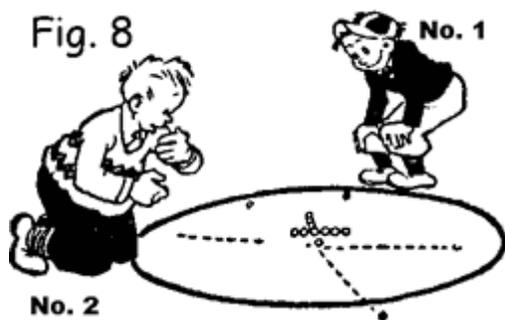


FIG. 8: child No.2 hits a marble but does not knock it out of the ring yet his shooter goes thru the ring and stops outside. The marble remains where it stopped in the ring, and as No.2 did not score, it is now the turn of No.1 to shoot again.

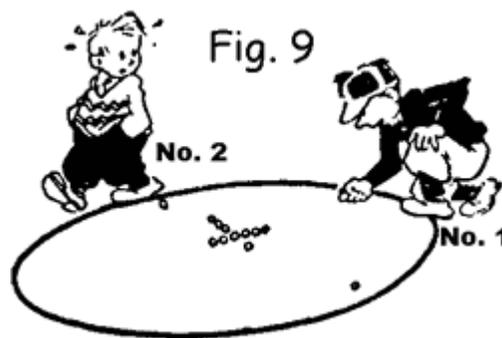


FIG. 9: No. 1 "knuckles down" inside the ring where his shooter stopped (Fig. 5). He is going to shoot at the marble nearest his shooter. By hitting it at the proper angle and knocking it from the ring he can get his shooter near the center of the ring for his next shot.

More Marble Games

Bear in mind that rules varied wildly from region to region and making up a game on the spot was not at all unusual. Players should also agree in advance whether they are playing 'for fair' (all marbles returned to owner) or 'for keeps' (winner keeps, loser weeps).

RING TAW (aka **RINGER**, **RINGO**) - A one foot ring is drawn inside of a ten foot ring. Each player puts in a number of 5/8" marbles so that there is about a dozen marbles in the smaller ring. At the National Marble Tournament, thirteen marbles supplied by the organizers are arranged in a cross at the center of the ring and there is no one foot ring. Shooting order is determined by 'lagging', shooting to see who can get closest to a designated line. The first player, starting outside the ten foot circle, attempts to thumb his or her 'taw' (a 3/4" shooting marble) to knock a target marble out of the large ring while keeping the taw inside the ring. If he or she succeeds, he or she shoots again from where the taw stopped. 'Sticking' or shooting seven consecutive marbles out of the ring and winning the game without giving an opponent a turn is usually good for two days of playground bragging rights. If the player fails to knock a target marble out of the ring or his or her taw leaves the ring, his or her turn is over and next player takes his or her turn.

At the National Marble Tournament, if your taw is in the ring at the end of your turn, you must remove it. In informal games, if your taw is in the ring, it becomes a legitimate target and any player who hits it out collects a forfeit from you. Players should agree in advance whether to use this rule. Play alternates until one player has knocked a majority of the marbles out of the ring. The process of picking the best possible position for starting is referred to as 'taking rounder's'.

BOSS OUT (aka **LONG TAWL**) - First player shoots one marble. Second player try's to hit the first player's marble. If he or she hits it, he or she collects both marbles. If the two marbles are close enough, he or she can attempt to 'span' them. He places his or her thumb on his or her own marble and his or her index finger on his or her opponent's

marble. He then draws his or her hand up while bringing his or her fingers together. If the two marbles hit, he or she collects both marbles. If he or she misses, the first player may shoot at either marble on the field. If a player collects the last marble on the field, he or she must shoot a marble for the next player to shoot at.

BRIDGEBOARD - A board with nine cutouts along one edge is propped up on that edge to form nine archways. The numbers 6, 2, 3, 1, 5, 8, 7, 9, 4 are painted over the arches, one number over each arch. Players try to shoot through the holes and win the number of marbles indicated by the number above the hole. Any marbles which miss become the property of the board owner. The board may also be used to play NINE HOLES.

BUN-HOLE - A one-foot wide hole is dug in the center of the playing field. Players attempt to get a marble as close as possible to the hole without going in. Whoever's marble comes closest without going in wins a marble from each player. Knocking in your opponent's marble is permitted.

CHERRY PIT - This is the reverse of RING TAW. A one-foot wide hole is dug in the center of a ten-foot circle. Each player places a number of marbles around the hole so that there is about a dozen marbles surrounding the hole. Players take turns trying to knock marbles into the hole. Like Ring Taw, as long as marbles are knocked into the hole and the taw remains in the ring, players may continue to shoot. If a taw goes into the hole, the owner must forfeit a number of marbles and place them around the hole to 'buy back' his or her shooter.

HUNDREDS - Both players try to shoot their taws into a one-foot hole. If both taws go in, players start over. If one player's marble goes in and the other player's marble doesn't, the player whose marble went in scores ten points. If neither player's marble goes in, the first player now tries to hit the second player's marble. If he or she hits it, he or she earns ten points and another chance to shoot his or her marble into the hole for ten points. If he or she misses either his or her opponent's marble or the hole, the second player tries to hit the first player's marble for ten points and another try at shooting his or her marble into the hole for ten points. Whenever a marble goes into the hole, both players start over from the starting line, otherwise all shots are made from wherever the marble stopped rolling. First player to reach one hundred points wins.

NINE HOLES - This name is given to two different marble games. The first game is *Miniature Golf* played with marbles. Players construct a miniature golf course from materials at hand and take turns shooting their marbles around, through, and over the obstacles they've built. First player to complete nine holes wins.

The second version of the game is played with a bridgeboard. Players take turns shooting their marbles through the arches in numerical order. Arches that are shot through out of sequence don't count. A successful shoot through the correct arch entitles the shooter to an additional turn. First player to send his or her marble through all nine holes in the correct order wins.

Queenie, Queenie

A person is picked to be the "queenie," and that person turns her back to everyone else. The "queenie" then throws the ball over her shoulder and one of the other players needs to catch it or pick it up. Everyone, except the "queenie", puts their hands behind their backs so that the "queenie" doesn't know who has the ball. The "queenie" then turns around and everyone shouts:

"Queenie, Queenie who's got the ball?
Are they short, or are they tall?
Are they hairy, or are they bald?
You don't know because you don't have the ball!"

The "queenie" has to guess who has the ball through a process of elimination. If the person with the ball is the last one to be picked, that person becomes the new "queenie."

Jacks or Five Stones



This game used to play with small rounded stones but today we play it with plastic or metal jacks.

To decide who starts, a player throws five jacks into the air with one hand and tries to catch as many as possible on the back of the same hand. The jacks that were caught are then thrown up again from the back of the hand where they came to rest and as many as possible are caught in the palm of the same hand. The other players do the same and the player who catches the most jacks' starts; play continuing in a clockwise fashion.

The first player starts the game by throwing the five jacks on the ground and then picking up the ball.

The player throws the ball up, picks up one jack with the same hand and then catches the ball before it hits the ground. The jack is then put into the other hand. This is repeated until all the jacks have been picked up. The player then throws the jacks back on the floor and starts again, but this time, two jacks must be picked up each time except for the third and final throw when, obviously, only one jack is picked up. Once this is achieved successfully, the player starts again but this time with three jacks and then again with four jacks and finally the ball is thrown up and all five jacks are picked up at once before the ball is caught.

When the player misses the ball or does not manage to pick up the required number of jacks, the turn immediately finishes and the next player has a try. The player who manages to progress furthest in the sequence of throws wins.

Oranges and Lemons

This is a game based around an old English children's song, called 'Oranges and Lemons', about the sounds of church bells in various parts of London.

This is how it is played:

Two children form an arch with their arms. They determine in secret which of them shall be an 'orange' and which a 'lemon'. Everyone sings the 'Oranges and Lemons' song (see below). The other children in the game take turns to run under the arch until one of them is caught when the arch falls at the end of the song. The captured player is asked privately whether they will be an 'orange' or a 'lemon' and then goes behind the original 'orange' or 'lemon' team leader. The game and singing then starts over again. At the end of the game there is usually 'a tug of war' to test whether the 'oranges' or 'lemons' are stronger. The game is similar to 'London Bridge is Falling Down'.

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Oranges and Lemons

Oranges and lemons,
Say the bells of St. Clement's.

You owe me five farthings;
Say the bells of St. Martin's.

When will you pay me?
Say the bells of Old Bailey.

When I grow rich,
Say the bells of Shoreditch.

When will that be?
Say the bells of Stepney.

I'm sure I don't know,
says the great bell at Bow.

Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
here comes a chopper to chop off your head.

Red Letter

A person is picked to be the leader. He stands with his back to the rest of the players who stand 10 meters back from him. The leader calls a letter of the alphabet (for example "a"). If a player's name contains that letter the player can move a step forward. The number of steps forward depends on the number of that letter in his name. The leader continues calling out letters until someone reaches the leader.