

■ GRADES 1-3: PHYSICAL EDUCATION

LACROSSE: CANADA'S NATIONAL SPORT



Purpose: Students will learn about the origins of lacrosse in Canada, the basics of the sport and practise beginner skills.

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Activity:

1. Have students sit in a circle. Ask them the following questions while recording the answers on the board or on chart paper:
 - a. What sports do you know of?
 - b. What sports from the list do you think are the oldest?
 - c. What sports do you think were invented in Canada? Why?
 - d. For this class, we will be learning about lacrosse, an old sport that began in Canada. What do you know about lacrosse?
 - e. Who invented lacrosse?
2. Share with students the following facts about Lacrosse:
 - Invented by First Nations people, though similar games were played by Métis and Inuit, it has many names including the Algonquian baggataway, Mohawk tewaarrathon and stickball.
 - Originally played in large open areas with the goals sometimes several kilometres apart.
 - Some estimate games were played by 100 to 10,000 people at a time.
 - A demonstration of lacrosse was given by First Nations people in Montreal in 1834.
 - In 1860 it was declared Canada's national sport.
3. Show students a lacrosse stick and ask if anyone can name the parts. Explain that the mesh part is called the "pocket," the stick is called "the shaft" and the front of the pocket is called "the shooting string." Today lacrosse equipment is made out of plastic in factories. Ask students, how do you think First Nations people traditionally made lacrosse equipment? What materials would they have used (hint: what materials do you find in nature)?
4. Tell students they will learn basic lacrosse skills. Provide each student with a lacrosse stick. Show them how to hold it correctly with their dominant hand around the top of the shaft below the pocket and the other hand at the bottom of the shaft. Explain that you use your wrists for movement. Ask students to practise moving their wrists to make the pocket move from side to side.
5. Next, have students practise running in straight lines while using their wrists to move the pocket from side to side.

Set up a relay race if space allows. Next, give each student a ball. Ask them to practise cradling the ball by making the wrist movement with the ball inside the pocket. Allow students time to become comfortable with this.

6. Then, have the class repeat the relay race while cradling the ball. If that goes well, divide the class into two with half of the class on each side of the room. Have one student run to the other side with a ball and try to place the ball in the next student's pocket. Repeat until every student has had a chance.
7. At the end of the class, tell students that they are well on their way to mastering the skills for playing lacrosse. Ask students what they think of lacrosse, Canada's national game, so far?

■ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the lesson plans, share these resources with your students:

- "Origin & History of Lacrosse | FIL." Origin & History of Lacrosse | FIL. Ed. Jane Claydon. Federation of International Lacrosse, n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.
<https://filacrosse.com/origin/>
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, "Lacrosse."
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lacrosse