

Summarizing

Level 3

A Collection of Readings

**Reading
Wings** 4th
Edition

The **Savvy
Reader**

This project was developed at the Success for All Foundation under the direction of Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden to utilize the power of cooperative learning, frequent assessment and feedback, and schoolwide collaboration proven in decades of research to increase student learning.

The Savvy Reader—Summarizing, A Collection of Readings

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Why Anansi Lives in the Ceiling

Retold by Elizabeth McGraw-Austin



1. In the great continent of Africa there is a rainy season every year. It is called the monsoon season. When the monsoon season comes, it rains for days and days, and all the animals and people must stay inside.

One year brought the rainiest monsoon season ever. Even the oldest woman in the village had never seen one that was rainier.

It rained all day and it rained all night. It rained for a week, two weeks, and still another week. It rained so hard that it was dark during the day. The animals could not go outside to find food. Elephant, who would chew the new branches of the trees, could not chew the branches. Tortoise, who would march slowly across the ground to catch insects, could not catch insects. Hare, who would eat the grass of the meadows, could not eat in the meadow. And the lazy Spider, Anansi, who did not plant his farm or set his fish traps, did not have anything to eat at all. But the scariest thing that happened was that the spotted Leopard, who always hunts at night, was so hungry that he roamed the forest in search of food during the daytime.

2. And then one morning as the sun came up, the rain stopped.

Anansi was so hungry that he quickly jumped out of his bed and went out to get something to eat. He left his banana-leaf house and took the path that all

the animals use to go drink at the river. Leopard was out too, and he was hungrily walking on the river path. He padded along so quietly that Anansi didn't hear him, and he walked right into Anansi. Now, normally, Leopard likes to eat zebras or gazelles or even a monkey. Spider would be a tiny morsel to him. But today Spider looked like a very tasty snack to him, so he put on his friendly face and stopped to chat.



“Good morning, Mr. Spider,” purred Leopard. “How are you liking all this rain?”

Now, Anansi the Spider is lazy, and Anansi the Spider is tricky, but Anansi the Spider is not stupid. Anansi knew that, as a rule, Leopards hardly ever, ever purred at Spiders.

“I like it fine, Mr. Leopard,” he lied, “but I am in a bit of a hurry.” And with that Anansi quickly jumped behind a rock, where Leopard could not see him. Leopard’s eyes turned green with anger, and he roared loudly, slashing the air with his claws.

3. But after a few minutes Leopard came up with a plan. I know what I will do, he thought, I will find Spider's house. I will make myself very tiny and hide behind his front door. When he comes back I will gobble him up.

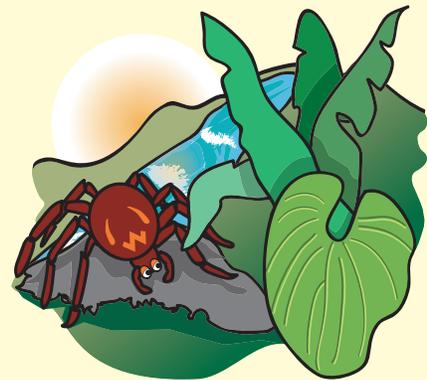
Leopard turned around and went back up the river path until he saw Anansi's house. He squeezed between the banana leaves and curled up until he was as small as he could possibly be. Then he settled his nose between his big Leopard paws and waited.

Did I mention before that Anansi the Spider is not stupid? He knew that Leopard would not give up so easily. So he spent the day thinking about what to do.

4. First he climbed out from behind the rock and went to the river, where he ate some fish that people had left in their traps. Then he went to a farm where the yams were ripe and ate his fill.

Then Anansi decided to call on his friends. He visited Elephant, who was out chewing the new branches of the trees. He visited Tortoise, who was marching slowly across the ground to catch insects. He visited Hare, who was eating the grass of the meadows. He stayed far away from his own house until it began to get dark.

As the sun began to sink behind the trees, Anansi knew he had to go home. So he walked slowly up the river path.



5. As Anansi drew near his little banana-leaf house, he perked up his ears to hear any sound that Leopard might be making. He looked at the path to see if Leopard had left any tracks. He heard nothing and he saw nothing. But he knew that Leopard was quiet and good at hiding, so he thought of something else.

He kept walking down the path, whistling as if he had nothing in his mind at all.

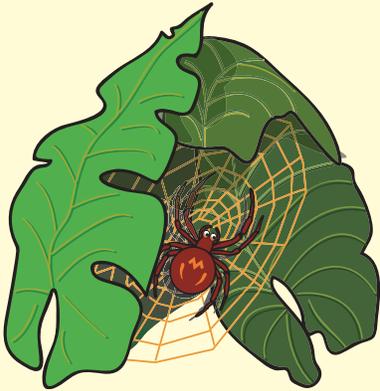
Casually, he called, “Yo! Banana-leaf house! I am home!”

There was no answer. There was not a sound. So Anansi kept walking toward the house. There was still no sound. Even the birds were quiet.

Then Anansi spoke loudly, “My, that’s strange. Banana-leaf house, you always answer me when I greet you. This evening you are quiet.”

So Anansi shouted more loudly, “Yo! Banana-leaf house. Is something wrong, my house?”

And in a moment a little squeaky voice came from inside the house. “Everything is fine, Spider. Walk right in.”



6. Anansi laughed so hard he nearly split his sides. “Oh, Mr. Leopard, how nice to know that you are there!” he said. “But you will not catch me.” With that Anansi jumped through the window of his banana-leaf house and into the highest, darkest corner of his ceiling. After many tries Leopard gave up trying to catch him and stalked away with his tail lashing.

Anansi was safe and warm and dry in the corner of the ceiling. So if you happen to meet a spider one day, chances are that his home is in a dark corner of the ceiling too.



A Gift in the Storm





The Griot's Challenge

1. Once upon a time, in the land of Anansi, baby Kenyatta was born. It was the rainy season. On the night she was born, the sky was black with clouds, the rain poured, the lightning struck, and the thunder clapped. Some say it was the Sky that gave Kenyatta her gift.



2. Kenyatta was the middle child of her mother Kanika and her father Kashka. She had an older brother and sister and a younger brother and sister. For Kenyatta, growing up in a family of five children made it hard for her to feel special.



3. Kamili, the eldest daughter, could sing. Her song was sweeter than that of the boubou bird. On special days or just to make people feel happy, people asked Kamili to sing. Singing was Kamili's special gift.





The Griot's Challenge

4. Kantigi, the eldest son, could make things with his hands. He helped his father build their house. He could carve wood into animal shapes and sell them at the market. When the village elder needed a special chair, Kantigi was asked to carve it. Making things with his hands was Kantigi's special gift.



5. Kayla, who was two years younger than Kenyatta, was smart. All the teachers at school said so. She won first prize in the math test every year. She was always the first to finish her school work. Some say she was smarter than two children put together. Being smart was Kayla's special gift.

6. Keita, the youngest child, was an artist. He used color and lines to make beautiful drawings of elephants and leopards. Drawing was Keita's special gift.



7. Kenyatta thought she had no gift at all. She was sad when people said her brothers and sisters had special gifts. Nobody told Kenyatta that she had a gift.



The Griot's Challenge

8. It was the time of the rainy season. The rain came down and the rivers overflowed. Kanika and Kashka took their family to the home of Mother Griot who lived at the top of a very high hill. But the water rose and began to creep into the house. The sky was very black; lightening crackled and thunder rumbled. The house trembled and so did the children. Kamili tried to calm her brothers and sisters by singing. But she was frightened and her voice cracked. Kantigi tried to carve a puppet to entertain the children, but his hands shook with fright and he couldn't carve. Kayla put her mind to thinking, but the thunder was so loud, she couldn't hear her own thoughts. Keita tried to draw funny animals to make the children laugh, but his hand trembled so badly that his drawings looked like scribbles.

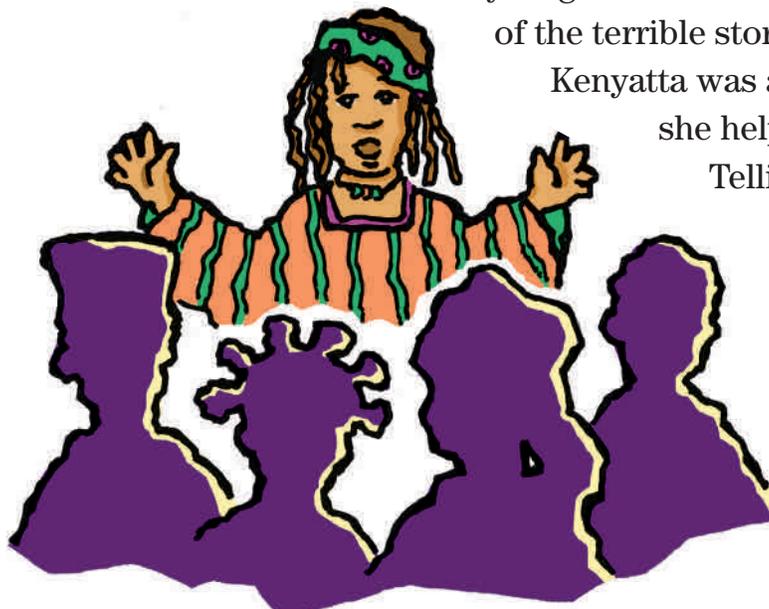


9. Then Kenyatta began telling the story of a funny spider who met a leopard during the rainy season. The children listened to Kenyatta. They relaxed and enjoyed the story.

They forgot all about the storm. Some say it was on the night of the terrible storm that Kenyatta found her gift—

Kenyatta was a wonderful storyteller! Even today she helps children learn how to tell stories.

Telling stories was Kenyatta's special gift.



Jay Street Jumpers

1. Anya knew she had to practice. No one could become a good rope jumper overnight! She watched the older girls from her window. They did double dutch like they were born jumping rope. Anya knew...she had to go get her girls.

2. She walked over to Tia and Tara's house. The twins were sitting on the stoop. "Are you girls ready to practice?" Anya asked. The girls held their ropes in their hands and jumped at the question. "We've just been waiting for you to get here," Tara said.

3. As Tia, Tara, and Anya walked away from the twins' stoop, they saw CeCe walking toward them. She was ready to practice too. Now that the team was together, they walked toward the park. They liked to practice in a quiet spot where the older girls couldn't see them. Tia, Tara, Anya, and CeCe wanted to surprise everyone at the block party on Saturday. They had one week.

4. Tia and Tara were excited because they had been practicing their turning skills. A lot of people thought the jumpers had the hardest job in double dutch. But a jumper needs good turners, and Tia and Tara were good. They had perfect rhythm. The ropes turned in full arcs. The ropes never touched each other, and they never touched the ground. Tia and Tara both knew to watch the jumpers. When turning the ropes, they kept their eyes on Anya and CeCe's feet. This helped the jumpers and the team.

5. Anya and CeCe needed a little more work. They weren't moving together. Anya had trouble keeping rhythm. CeCe had trouble jumping in and out of the ropes. The first step was to learn their song. Tia and Tara started chanting it. "Tia and Tara turnin' those ropes. Anya and CeCe raising our hopes. Hop it now. Skip it now. Turn 'round twice and take a bow." Anya jumped into the ropes first and carefully listened to the chant. She forced her feet to jump to the rhythm. By the third try, she had it. Now she just had to make sure she could do it every time.

6. Before the girls stopped practicing, they helped CeCe. Tia and Tara slowly turned the ropes to give CeCe more time to jump in. It took CeCe many times to jump in without getting tangled in the ropes. When she did get in, she jumped in perfect rhythm with the chant. All the girls cheered one another on. They knew they needed to work together to look good next Saturday.

7. Each day during the week, the girls practiced after school. By Thursday, Anya was jumping perfectly with every turn and CeCe could jump in and out of the ropes with ease. Both girls could do their turns within the ropes. Tia and Tara kept perfect time while chanting their song over and over again. All four girls couldn't wait until the block party!

8. On Friday, the girls met at their spot for one last practice. Anya carried a small brown bag. She reached inside and brought out a handful of hair ties with red sparkly beads on them. "These," Anya said, "will make our double-dutch team perfect." "They're beautiful!" CeCe said. "Now we'll be like the older girls' teams. They all wear something matching." Tia and Tara hugged Anya. "This is perfect, Anya. Thank you so much!" said Tara. "I can't wait until tomorrow," said Tia.

9. The sun shined on Saturday morning. The girls' block was buzzing with people. The air smelled like hot dogs and hamburgers. Kids carried balloons. Boys practiced breakdancing on the corner. Next to them, the older girls had already begun taking turns doing their double-dutch routines. Tia, Tara, CeCe, and Anya walked slowly up to the girls. When one of the older girls saw the ropes in Tara's hands, she asked the younger girls to do their routine. The four girls looked at one another, tightened their red hair ties, and showed the older girls that there was a new team on the block.

Just Kickin' It

Comprehension Questions

Read *Just Kickin' It*, and answer the following questions.

1. Simon loved kickball. Kickball included elements of his two favorite games. He got to kick a ball like in soccer and he got to round bases like in baseball. Most of all, Simon liked being part of a team.
2. Simon's team was called Just Kickin' It. The team had boys and girls on it. His best friends, Kiana and Christopher, were on the team too. Christopher was the catcher. Kiana pitched. Simon played first base. They were all good at their positions. The rest of the team was good too.
3. But was Just Kickin' It as good as Keyon's Kickers? The two teams were the best in the league. They were going to play against each other in the championship game that weekend. Simon just knew his team could win.
4. Each day after school, the members of Just Kickin' It met at the Second Street fields. They all wanted to practice as much as they could. Each player practiced kicking, running, and fielding, or catching, the ball. They also practiced throwing the ball to one another. They needed all these skills to score points and to get the other team out.
5. As captain of the team, Simon told the other players what positions to play and the order in which they would kick. On Friday he praised the players for their best moments on the field. "Kevin, nice catch!" "Mac, excellent slide!" "Kiana, perfect pitch!" He knew that his team was better than Keyon's Kickers. So why was he nervous?

6. On Saturday morning, Simon's mom helped him feel better. She made him a nice breakfast of cereal and fruit. She had been watching the team practice each afternoon. She said, "Simon, don't be nervous. The Just Kickin' It players are great athletes. And remember, even if you don't win, that doesn't change your skills. Have fun playing the game." Simon thanked his mom and together they left for the field.

7. As Simon walked up to the field, he saw his team in their bright blue shirts. Kiana's dad, who is a printer, had put their numbers and names on their shirts. It really helped build team spirit! Keyon's Kickers had shirts too. Their shirts were red. Simon tried not to notice the other team as they practiced. He walked up to his own team and gathered them together in a circle.

8. Simon gave his usual talk. He even used some of the advice that his mom had given him. Then, Just Kickin' It said their team chant and took the field. From the very beginning of the game, Just Kickin' It looked great. They caught almost every ball Keyon's Kickers kicked. They threw the ball to one another to get runners out. But, most of all, each player on Just Kickin' It, kicked the ball to win. They had four homeruns by the sixth inning. They also had three base runs. They were winning 7–5.

9. The score at the end of the game was very close. Just Kickin' It won the game by a score of 8–7. Simon felt so good that he cheered with his team. "I knew we were better than them!" Kevin shouted. "Now wait," said Simon. "We did win and that's great. But we need to remember how close the game was. Let's go congratulate Keyon's Kickers." "You're right," Kevin replied. "Let's be good sports!" So Just Kickin' It lined up opposite Keyon's Kickers. Each team thanked the other for a good game as they slapped hands. As Simon walked through the line, he smiled. Congratulating the other team was maybe his favorite part of the sport!

Changes



Story by Andy Wolinsky
Illustration by James Bravo

CHAPTER 1

The whole day started out strangely. Adam woke to the sound of his alarm blaring, like it always did. He turned the alarm off and crawled out of bed. Yawning and stretching, he threw some clothes on and trudged to the bathroom to wash his face and brush his teeth. Then he walked downstairs to the kitchen.

Oddly, there was nobody around. Usually when Adam woke on Sunday mornings, his parents were already up and astir. Dad would be making breakfast. Mom would be reading the newspaper, doing the crossword puzzle, and drinking her orange juice. But today the kitchen was empty.

“Where is everybody?” Adam said, partly to himself and partly to the empty kitchen. He looked out in the driveway. Both cars were still there. “That’s odd,” he said. He was thirsty, so he went to the refrigerator and poured himself a glass of orange juice. Then he went outside to get the newspaper. It was a brisk fall morning. The paper was still lying on the lawn, waiting for Adam’s mom.

What was going on? Where was everyone? He wished his dad were up, making a hot breakfast. He walked back into the kitchen, sat down at the table, and started reading the funny pages.

About half an hour later, Adam's parents came downstairs. They seemed perplexed to find Adam already in the kitchen.

"You're up early," his mom said, giving him a hug.

"What do you mean?" Adam asked. "I always get up at 9:00 on Sunday mornings. It's part of my routine." Adam liked routines. He liked things to be the same all the time.

His mom said, "But it's only 8:30."

Adam looked at the clock on the wall. It said 8:30. He looked at his watch. It read 9:30. He scratched his head. "I don't get it," he said.

His father looked at Adam and let out a small snicker. "Hah!" he chuckled, "I think I know what's happening. Last night was the end of Daylight Saving Time. You were supposed to set your watch back an hour."

Adam had heard of Daylight Saving Time. But this was his first watch, so he wasn't surprised that he'd missed the date. Adam felt a little embarrassed. "Oh," he said quietly, as he set his watch back an hour. "Now I understand."

"Don't sweat it, Adam," his dad said cheerfully. "One year, I missed the date too. I was an hour early for work!" He laughed, and so did Adam.

Adam's dad set about fixing breakfast for the three of them. "Do pancakes sound all right, Adam?" he asked.

"That'll hit the spot, Dad," Adam said. Adam and his mom sat at the table reading the paper while Adam's dad poured batter, then cooked and flipped the hotcakes. When the pancakes were almost ready, Adam set the table. Then everyone sat down to eat.

Adam was working on his second pancake when he asked, "Dad, what time are we going to the ball game today?"

Adam's dad put down his fork and looked guiltily at Adam's mother. Then he spoke. "I'm sorry, Sport," he said. "Your mother and I have some important business today. We have to meet with some people at the house."

Adam frowned. "But we always go to the ball game on Sunday, Dad."

"I'm sorry, Adam, but things are different today. Your mom and I will explain everything after we have our meeting."

Adam was disappointed, but he tried not to show it. "Okay, Dad. We can go next week."

His dad said, "We'll see."

Adam didn't like the sound of that at all.

CHAPTER 2

Later that day, Adam was in the living room watching the football game on television with his dad. He heard the chimes of the doorbell. Adam's mom came out of the back room. Adam's dad stood up. "They're here," he said.

"I guess so," said Adam's mom.

"Who's here?" Adam asked.

"Some people to look at the house," said his dad.

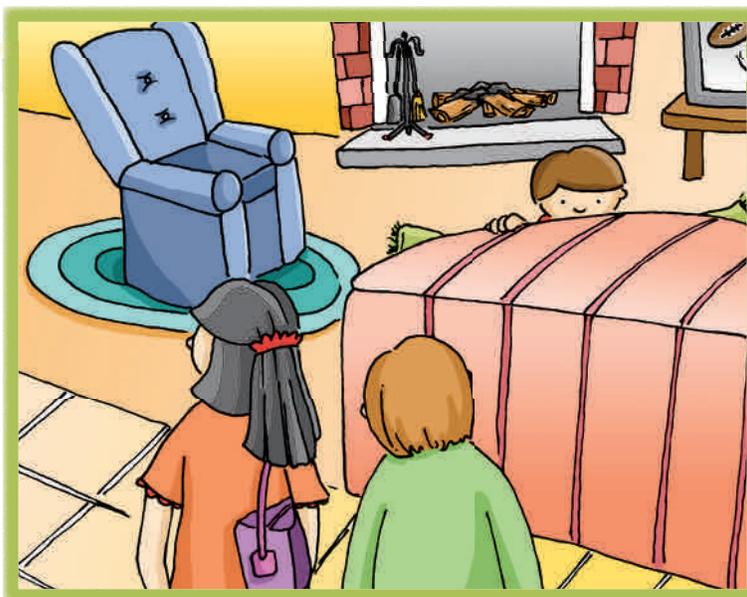
"I'll explain everything to you later."

Adam was perplexed. But whenever his dad said he'd explain everything later, Adam paid attention. As his parents walked down the hall to get the door, Adam tried to focus on the ball game. He couldn't. He kept wondering why strange people were coming to look at the house.

Two men and a woman were at the door. Adam heard his father greet them. "Good to see you, Marty. Hi, I'm Terrell Smith, and this is my wife Rebecca."

Adam heard a man say, "Hello, my name is Samir Patel, and this is my wife Vindra."

Adam wondered what was going on.



A few minutes later, they all walked into the room. Adam's father said, "Adam, I'd like you to meet Samir and Vindra Patel." He pointed to a young couple and then continued. "And this is my friend Marty Johnson. Everyone, this is our son Adam."

Adam politely stood up and shook everyone's hand, as he had been taught to do. Mr. Patel saw the game on television. He said, "I think the Bobcats are going to win. Don't you?"

Adam grinned, feeling a bit more at ease. "Yes sir, I do." Mr. Patel smiled back at him.

When Adam's mother said, "Let me show you the kitchen," everyone moved toward the door. Adam sat back down, but he couldn't concentrate on the game. Who were these people, and why were they looking at the house?

Adam heard the adults walking through the whole house—even the attic. He heard Mr. Johnson and his father talking about each room as they went. What was going on?

Eventually the strangers left. Adam's parents returned to the television room. His father turned off the set. "It's time to talk, Adam," he said. Both of Adam's parents sat down on the couch. Adam sat up straight.

Adam's mother spoke first. "Adam, you know that we love this house." Adam nodded. He loved his bedroom. He loved his backyard. He loved the street he lived on.

His mom continued, "But sometimes things change. Like now. We need to move to a different house."

Adam gasped. "Why?" he asked. "Is something wrong with this one?"

His dad laughed. "No, Adam. Nothing is wrong with this house. It's just not big enough anymore."

"I don't understand," protested Adam. "It's always been big enough for the three of us."

"Yes," said his dad, "but soon we will be four."

Adam didn't understand. "What do you mean? Is someone coming to live with us?"

"You could say that," his father said. "Your mom and I have decided to adopt a child."

Adam was stunned. He didn't know what to say.



His mother tried to help. She said, “As you grow up, you’ll have a brother to play with. Won’t that be fun?”

But Adam still had questions. He asked, “Who are you adopting?”

His father walked across the room. He picked up the globe and brought it over. “This country,” he said, pointing, “is called Thailand. Your brother was born there just a few weeks ago. His name is Ling. He will be moving in with us very soon.”

Adam had heard of Thailand in school. He began to grow interested in what his parents were saying. “So a baby from Thailand is moving in with us?”

“That’s right,” his mother said. “Ling. And we need a bigger house. We need room for all of us.”

“Will I still have my own room?” Adam asked.

“Yes,” his father said, “that’s one of the reasons we’re moving. You should see the new house. It’s neat. Your new room is the best.”

Adam still wasn’t sure how he felt about all these changes in his routine, but he wanted to learn more.

“How far away is this new house? Will I have to go to a different school?” Adam asked.

“No, the new house is in the same school zone, so you’ll be able to attend the same school. In fact, I think you’ll still be able to walk.”

“What’s the new house like?” Adam asked.

“We’ll go see it later today,” his dad promised. “We won’t be able to go inside. But I’ll show you the outside. There’s a great yard. You and I can play football in it. And you’ll love the house itself. Your mom and I chose to give you the entire basement. It will be gigantic, the biggest bedroom you’ve ever had. And do you know what else?”

“No. What?” Adam asked.

“You’re going to have your own bathroom. You won’t have to share one with your mom and me, or with Ling.”

For the first time, Adam was beginning to look forward to these upcoming changes. He decided that he’d try to keep an open mind for now. But still he wasn’t sure.

CHAPTER 3

Later that day, Adam and his dad sat in the car in front of the new house. It was cold outside, so the car windows kept fogging up. Adam's dad had a football game on the radio.

Adam was looking at the new house. He had to admit it was pretty neat. It was much bigger than the house he lived in now. There was an oak tree in the front yard. A tire swing hung from one of its branches.

"What do you think, Adam?" asked his dad.

"I don't know, Dad," Adam said, "Do you think I could climb that tree?"

"I bet you could."

Adam thought for a moment. Then he said, "I guess I'll try to be happy about all this, Dad. I don't really like change, though."

His dad said, "I know, Adam. I remember when I bought you the wrong color lunchbox. It was blue. Always before, your lunchbox had been red. You had such a fit! You certainly don't like change. But sometimes change can be good."

"We'll see," Adam said.

CHAPTER 4

At school the next day, Adam saw his friend Duke. Duke's family had recently had a new baby. Adam said, "Duke, I need to ask you something. You just got a new brother, right?"

"Yeah, I did. Two weeks ago. Why?"

"My parents are adopting a baby from Thailand. His name is Ling. So I guess I'm going to have a brother, too. What's it like?"

Duke said, "Well, it's different. Your parents will spend a lot of time with the new baby. That's what my parents do, at least. But they still tell me that I'm important, too. That helps. At first I was unsure about the whole thing. Now, I guess I don't feel so bad about it."

Adam said, "That makes me feel a bit better. I was really surprised when my parents told me. I only found out just yesterday. And that wasn't the only surprise!" Adam told Duke about the new house.

Duke raised his eyebrows. He was surprised. "Wow!" he said. "That's a lot of change all at once!"

"Don't I know it!" Adam said. Was he ready for it? He wasn't sure. But he knew he'd find out soon enough.

At lunch that day, Adam ran into another friend, Maria. “Hey, Maria,” he said. “I need to ask you something.” Adam knew that Maria had recently moved into a new house. “What was it like to move?” he asked.

Maria said, “At first it was difficult. It was hard to get used to all the new sounds. But I have a great bedroom and a yard to play in. Plus, the city bus goes right by my house, so my mom and I can ride to the grocery store really easily. That’s fun. My mom says that one day I’ll be able to ride the bus by myself! Why do you ask?”

“I just found out that my parents and I are moving to a new house in town. My dad and I saw it yesterday afternoon. It has a tire swing in the front. It also has a big backyard.”

Maria said, “That sounds like fun! Change can be fun sometimes.”

“That’s what my dad says,” responded Adam. Then he told Maria about the new baby.

“Wow!” she said. “That’s a lot of change all at once!”

“That’s what Duke said, too,” Adam said. In his mind he added, “Maybe too much.”

When Adam arrived home from school that day, his dad was in his office working. Adam's father worked from home. Adam knocked on the office door.

"Come on in!" his dad called.

"Hey, Dad," he said.

"How was school today?"

Adam told his dad about the discussions he'd had with Duke and Maria. His dad listened closely. When Adam finished, his dad spoke.

"I know these upcoming weeks are going to be strange, and maybe difficult. You might feel left out of all these changes. But I want you to know that you can always come and talk to your mom or me about whatever you're thinking and feeling, okay? And remember that we're thinking about your best interests, too, in all this."

Adam said, "Thanks, Dad. I'm a little scared, but I'm trying to be positive. Like you said, change can be good. So I'll keep looking on the bright side of things. It's good to know I can come talk to you."

CHAPTER 5

The day of the move, and the day of the new baby, grew closer. One afternoon, Adam was studying in his cramped room. There was no space for a desk, so Adam had spread his books across his bed. He was sitting on the floor.

His mother walked by his open door and glanced in. She saw how Adam was studying. She said, “You know, Adam, when we move there will be ample space in your room for a desk. You won’t have to study on the floor anymore.”

Adam thought about that for a moment. “That will be a good thing,” he said. “I’m looking forward to that.”

“That’s what I like to hear!” his mom cheered. “Keep up the good attitude.”

“I’m doing my best, Mom.”

“I know you are, Adam. Your dad and I appreciate it.”

“I know,” Adam said. He thought about having more room to study and spread out. That sounded pretty good.

Maybe things wouldn’t be so bad after all.

Later that same day, Adam went looking for his dad. He found him in his office. Adam wanted to play catch. He was tossing a football up and down, up and down in his hands.

“Hey, Dad,” he said. “Do you want to play catch?”

“Not right now, Sport. I have some paperwork to finish for the new house. Maybe later?”

Adam dropped the football. He had been hoping that playing catch would help take his mind off the upcoming changes. But he had nobody to play with.

“I wish I had someone to play with,” he said.

His dad said, “In just a few years, you’ll have a younger brother to play catch with, right?”

Adam thought about that for a moment. “That’s right!” he said, grinning. Adam thought about all the things he could do with a younger brother. He thought about playing football, baseball, and soccer. He thought about building a tree house. “Change can be good,” he kept telling himself.

CHAPTER 6

When the time came for the move, Adam's task was to pack up his bedroom. His parents gave him boxes, tape, and a marker. Adam set to work. First he took down his favorite posters and carefully rolled them up. Each poster reminded him of good times. His football poster reminded him of going to see a game with his father. His rock-and-roll poster reminded him of listening to music in his room.

Next Adam packed his favorite toys. His blocks reminded him of building big cities and racing cars through their streets. His toy robots reminded him of pretending his room was a space lab from the future. His toy cowboys reminded him of the times he pretended his room was a rustic cabin in the Old West.

As Adam packed, he thought about all the good times he'd had in this room. He packed his books and remembered the long days he'd spent reading stories here. He was going to miss this room. But he kept packing.



The next day was moving day. It was very busy. Adam helped his parents as much as he could. He carried some of the lighter boxes out to the truck himself. He helped his dad carry some of the heavier boxes. The professional movers moved the big furniture.

“You’re a big help, Adam,” his dad said. Adam told him he was trying his best. “Well, you’re doing a great job,” said his dad.

“Thanks,” Adam said.

Adam and his parents followed the moving truck to the new house, where Adam helped move things in. Once again, the movers carried the big furniture. Adam carried the boxes that had his toys, books, posters, and clothes into the basement, where his new room would be. When he was finished, he tried to stay out of the way of the movers. It was a long day. By the time it was over, Adam was too tired to unpack all of his things.

His dad said, “Are you excited to be in your new home, Adam?”

“I’m both sad and excited, Dad,” responded Adam.

“That’s good enough, Sport,” said his dad.

The next morning, Adam's mom had to go to work. But Adam and his dad had breakfast in the new kitchen for the first time. Pancakes, just like at the old house.

Adam said, "The pancakes taste just as good here as at the old house. Do you like the new kitchen, Dad?"

"It will take some getting used to," Adam's dad said. "Some of the pots and pans are hard to locate, and I still don't know where I put everything when we unpacked. But I'm sure I'll get used to everything in time. How about you?"

Adam said, "To tell you the truth, I was a little anxious about moving, but I really like my new room. Now I'm ready for things to get back to normal. I want things to be routine again."

Adam's dad reminded him about the new baby. Adam responded, "Yeah, I remember. I'm looking forward to having a brother, I guess."

"You've been very positive about all these changes, Adam," said his dad. "As a reward, I've got yet another surprise for you."

"What's that, Dad?" Adam asked eagerly.

"I'll show you in a little bit," his dad said.

Later that day, Adam was busy unpacking his things. He was having fun deciding where his books should go, where his bed would look best, and where to put his posters. As he unrolled his football poster, his dad called from upstairs.

“Adam, I’ve got something to show you!”

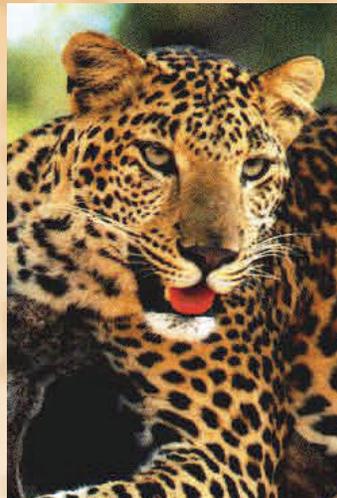
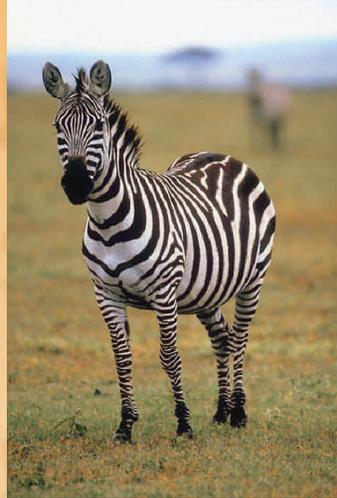
“I’ll be right there!” Adam called back. He finished hanging the poster and then bounded up the stairs. He wondered what the surprise was, and he was certainly looking forward to it.

His dad was by the front door. “Adam,” he said, “your mom and I are really proud of you for being so good about all these changes. There’s just one more change I need to tell you about, but this is one I know you’ll like.” Adam’s dad threw open the front door. Tied to the oak tree was a dog!

“A dog! We’re getting a dog?” Adam asked.

His dad said, “No, Adam, you’re getting a dog.”

“Thanks, Dad!” he shouted as he ran across the lawn to pet the puppy. The puppy barked happily. Yes, Adam thought to himself, change can be very good.



Leopards

by Dr. Nick Brown

Where to find a leopard

Leopards are very adaptable animals. They can be found living throughout parts of Africa, Asia, India, China, and Russia. Their adaptability has helped leopards to survive. When humans take over land where leopards are living, leopards simply move on to another location. They can live in both warm and cold climates and in many different types of environments, including mountains, forests, jungles, grasslands, and even deserts. Because they use trees for protection, leopards especially like to live in or near a forest.

How to spot a leopard

Leopards come in different sizes, depending on where they live. They can range from five to nine feet in length and weigh from 60 to 140 pounds. Even though this sounds huge (imagine having a pet cat that large), leopards are actually smaller than other types of big cats like lions and tigers. All leopards have spotted fur, but not all leopards look alike. The color of their fur can range from yellow to tan to dark brown to blend in with the color of their environment. Leopards that live in forests, for example, have darker fur than those that live on the grassy plains. Even their spots are different. Some leopards, like those found in the Samburu Wildlife Reserve in Kenya, have round spots, while in other places, the spots are square.



A leopard's fur helps it blend into its environment.

2

What's for dinner?

Leopards are meat eaters that hunt other animals for food. Some of the leopard's favorite foods are medium-sized animals like monkeys, but it will also attack and eat animals much larger than itself like zebras and giraffes. If it's very hungry, or if it can't find animals to hunt, leopards will eat birds, fish, or even insects. Every leopard sets up a zone where only it is allowed to hunt called its territory. The leopard marks the boundaries of its territory with scents that warn other leopards to stay away.

“Leopards are meat eaters that hunt other animals for food.”



“There's a cat stuck in that tree!”

Even though leopards are very large, they are very good at climbing trees. After a leopard kills an animal, it often carries the food into a tree to eat. This way, other animals, like lions, can't steal any of it!

Night life

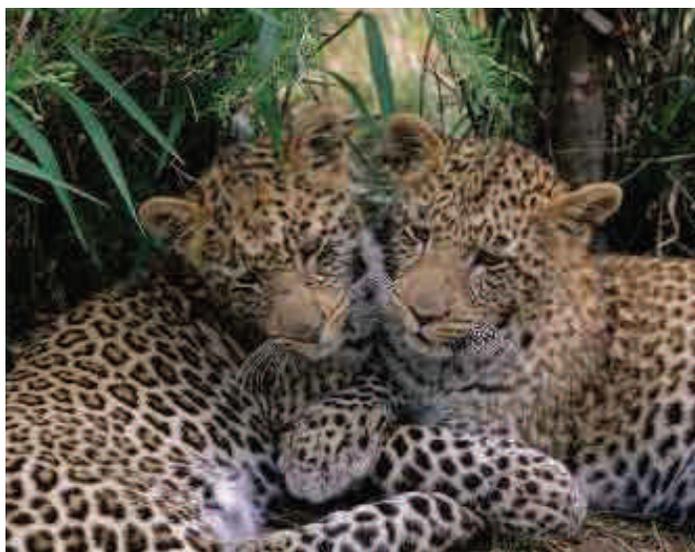
Leopards are usually nocturnal animals. They sleep for most of the day and hunt at night. Leopards can see in the dark, giving them a huge advantage over the animals they hunt. Even if an animal has some ability to see in the dark, the leopard's spots camouflage it, so its prey can't see it coming until it's too late.

Baby leopards

Baby leopards, or cubs, live with their mother until they are two years old. For the first three months of their lives, their mother feeds them. Once they reach the age of three months, cubs start hunting with their mother. Cubs practice their hunting skills by pouncing and jumping on their mother's tail. The mother leopard also cares for her cubs by cleaning them with her tongue and carrying them to safety when there is danger.

Leopards in danger?

Although leopards are not an endangered species, they still need human protection—from hunters who kill leopards for their fur, from farmers who set out poisoned food to kill leopards so they won't eat their cattle, and from people who destroy the leopard's habitat by cutting down forests and building on the land where leopards live.



A leopard cub starts hunting at age three months.

4

“Usually leopards are nocturnal, but in Samburu they can be seen out and about during the day!”

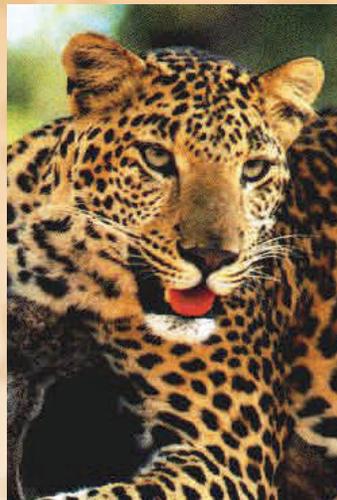
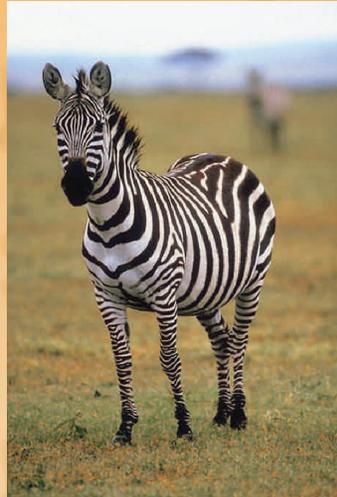
Samburu leopards

Leopards thrive in the Samburu Wildlife Reserve. The reserve has a mixture of environments for leopards to live in, including a scrub desert (a desert with some small bushes and trees), a savannah (dry grasslands), and small hills. There are many animals for the leopard to hunt, such as monkeys, zebras, and antelopes. Samburu leopards are special.

Usually leopards are nocturnal, but in Samburu they can be seen out and about during the day! The reason for this may be that the color of their fur blends in so well with the colors of Samburu that leopards can hunt there both day and night. The Samburu Wildlife Reserve is very important because it is a place where leopards can live freely in a natural, protected habitat.



In the African language Swahili, the word for leopard is *chui*.



There's a Wild Thing in My Bedroom!



Bakiri's Challenge

There's a Wild Thing in My Bedroom!



Range:

Africa

Description of Assassin Bugs:

The assassin bug is a predatory insect. It is about 1" long and mainly black with bright yellow legs and two white spots on its wing cases. Although it has wings, the assassin bug cannot fly. It catches its prey by a combination of stalking and ambush. It leaps on the prey, grasping with its two front legs, and follows by stabbing with its sharp, needle-like mouthparts and injecting a venom, or poison, which paralyzes the prey. The male and female assassin bugs look just about the same.



The African two-spot assassin bug has wings but cannot fly.

To Keep Assassin Bugs You Need:

Use a small glass or plastic aquarium with a well-ventilated lid. Line the floor with paper. Put moist vermiculite in a clean margarine tub in the aquarium. The assassin bugs should use the tub for egg-laying. Pieces of wood and plastic plants can be added to the set-up to give the assassin bugs places to climb and hide, and to make the set-up look pretty. Add a heating pad to keep the atmosphere warm.

Feeding Assassin Bugs:

Assassin bugs are predators of other insects and will tackle anything they can subdue. They can be fed live crickets, mealworms, giant mealworms, and small locust hoppers. Baby assassin bugs, which are called nymphs, should first be fed smaller insects, such as fruit flies, aphids, micro crickets, and buffalo worms (tiny mealworms), and can be offered larger insects as they grow. They can be given a light spray of water each evening and will drink from droplets that accumulate. Also a shallow water dish in the set-up will allow constant access to water as required.

Handling Assassin Bugs:

Assassin bugs should not be handled, because they can give a very painful bite. Also, they can shoot their venom up to a distance of 12" with great accuracy (even backwards over the shoulder), which can cause skin irritation and even temporary blindness if the venom hits the eye.

Dangerous Beauty: the Poison Dart Frog

Range

South and Central America

Description of Poison Dart Frogs

There are many varieties of poison dart frogs living in the rainforests. They are all brightly colored or patterned. Their colors vary from bright blue, to black with yellow spots, to green, gold, copper, or red. However, these colors are not just for show. They serve as a warning to other animals that the frogs are poisonous and dangerous to eat. These frogs are small, ranging in size from less than an inch to two and a half inches.

How Humans Use Poison Dart Frogs

For centuries, native people of South America have used the frog's poison as a weapon. For hunting, they coat the tips of their darts or arrows with the poison. This is where the poison dart frogs get their name.

The poison in these frogs is strong enough to kill a human almost instantly, but it cannot hurt you if you just touch it. However, if the poison gets into a cut on your hand or you put your hand in your mouth after touching the frog, you could die.

How Poison Dart Frogs Become Dangerous

Unlike certain snakes, scientists do not think that poison dart frogs make their own poison. It is believed that they become poisonous from the food that they eat. In the rainforests, poison dart frogs eat spiders, ants, termites, and other small insects, some of which may be poisonous or may have become poisonous from the plants that they ate. The poison does not affect the frogs, and they are able to use it for their protection. Poison dart frogs have few predators that are able to survive the frogs' poison.

How to Keep Poison Dart Frogs

Despite its dangerous-sounding name, the poison dart frog is a common aquarium pet. Without its diet of rainforest insects, the frog does not become poisonous. Poison dart frogs need warm temperatures and a lot of humidity to stay healthy. A large aquarium with a layer of dirt and plants should give these frogs a comfortable place to live.

Misting machines can give the frogs moisture throughout the day, and tanks can be heated to a constant temperature. In captivity, poison dart frogs will eat fruit flies or pinhead crickets. A bowl of water or a small fountain will give the frogs a place to lay eggs and hatch tadpoles.

Amphibian in Tiger's Clothing

Comprehension Questions

Read *Amphibian in Tiger's Clothing*, and answer the following questions.

Range

North America

Description of Tiger Salamanders

Tiger salamanders (SAL-a-man-ders) are amphibians with yellow, gray, or yellowish-brown bodies and black or gray markings that look like tiger stripes. The largest land salamanders, these amphibians can grow up to fourteen inches long, although the average is between six and eight inches long. Salamanders may look like lizards, but they have no scales and are amphibians, like frogs.

Life In and Out of Water

Like all amphibians, tiger salamanders start life as larvae in ponds or calm streams. As larvae, tiger salamanders have gills and stay in the water until they develop lungs and legs. Then they are ready to move onto dry land. Tiger salamanders live in many habitats, usually near ponds and streams. Adult salamanders make burrows deep in the ground or move into other animals' burrows. Some tiger salamanders, called water dogs, never grow into adults and live their whole lives as larvae in the water.

Keeping a Salamander as a Pet

Tiger salamanders are popular pets. A tiger salamander needs a large tank. An aquatic, or larval, salamander will need a tank filled with about six inches of water with rocks to hide in. An adult salamander needs to burrow, so there should be dirt, bark chips, and moss in the tank instead of water. Salamanders need their homes cleaned often to stay healthy. They have very sensitive skin. Aquatic salamanders will eat water insects or worms; while adults can eat feeder insects.

Humans and the Tiger Salamander

Tiger salamanders have a habitat that stretches across North America, but in many places they are losing their homes. When humans cut down forests or drain wetlands, tiger salamanders are left with fewer places to live.

Acid rain, which is caused by pollution, also affects the salamanders because it turns their ponds acidic. These animals are also victims of roads and cars. Many are struck by cars as they travel to breeding grounds. Tiger salamanders are protected by the government in many locations.

Sports and Games You Might Not Know

By Terrence Parker
Illustration by James Bravo



INTRODUCTION:

Have You Ever Heard of...

You probably know of baseball and football. You've probably seen a basketball game. You're probably familiar with checkers, bingo, or even tic-tac-toe. These are popular sports and games here in the United States and across the world.

But there are some sports and games you might not have heard of. For example, have you ever heard of curling, cricket, or jai alai? How about mahjong, pachisi, or halma? These are sports and games that are popular in certain places across the world. Learning about interesting and unique games is fun. Not only do you learn different sports and games you can play, but you also learn about how different people all over the world entertain themselves. You learn how they keep their minds and bodies active and fit. Let's explore sports and games, some of which are unique, that you might not know.



PART I: SPORTS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW

Brooms on ice?!

Our first stop is in Canada. Canada is our neighbor to the north. They play a lot of hockey in Canada. You might have seen hockey. But they also play another game. It's called curling. At first curling appears to be a really strange sport. But it's also really fun.



Here's how curling works. There are four players on a team. There are two teams. They compete on a sheet of ice. It's called a curling sheet. There are circles painted on each end. One player, or curler, has a polished granite stone. He pushes the stone across the ice. Two other curlers have brooms. They follow the stone. They brush the ice in front of the stone as it glides. This helps the stone go farther. That's pretty strange, huh? The final curler waits at the other end. He yells instructions to the two curlers with brooms. "Brush left!" he might yell. "Now right!" The different curlers take turns after each throw.



The object of the game is simple. Each team wants to throw their stones in the center of the circle. The team with the most stones in the center of the circle wins. It's fun. Curling is really popular in Canada. It's also popular in other cold places. Did you know that curling is an Olympic sport? Curling has been one of the most popular sports to watch during the Winter Olympics. That's how popular curling has become.

Dirt bowling!

Now let's go to Italy. There are some old men playing a game called bocce (BAH-chee). Bocce is sort of like bowling. It's also sort of like curling. It's really neat.

Here's how bocce works. The bocce court is a long strip of dirt, grass, or another surface. There are two teams. A team will have either one, two, or four players. We'll focus on a team with only one player. Each player has four wooden balls. For example, there's a red team and a green team. The red team goes first. Red throws a separate, tiny ball, called a jack or a pallino (pah-LEE-no).



He throws it to the far end of the court. The object is to get as many of your own balls as close to the jack as possible. So red will then throw one red ball. Now it's green's turn. Green will throw a ball. He'll try to get the green ball close to the jack. He may also try to use his ball to hit the red ball. You can do that. You can knock other balls out of the way. The teams go back and forth until all balls are thrown. You get points for having more of your balls close to the jack.

Bocce came from Italy. It is related to old throwing games from Egypt. These games became popular in Italy during the Roman Empire. But now it's popular in a lot of places. Many American cities have big Italian populations. The Italian neighborhoods in these cities sometimes have bocce courts. If you can find some wooden balls, you can play bocce just about anywhere!



A sport that lasts for days?

Let's go over to England now. There's a cricket match going on. Cricket is more like baseball than anything else. Like baseball, cricket is a bat-and-ball sport. But it's also different and very popular. Let's learn about this sport.

Cricket is played on a huge, grassy field called a pitch. In the middle lies a large strip of clay or grass. At each end are wickets. Wickets are three wooden stumps nailed into the



ground. Other pieces of wood lie on top of the stumps. A batsman stands by one wicket.

He holds a long, flat, wooden bat. An opposing pitcher, or bowler, stands at the other end. One of the batsman's teammates stands next to the bowler. The bowler tries to knock the wicket over with the ball. The batsman tries to hit the ball into the field.

The bowler throws the ball. The batsman swings and misses. The ball knocks over the wicket. That batter is out. The next batsman plays. The batsman hits the ball into the outfield. The batsman and his teammate start running. He runs to one end of the clay and back. That's how he scores. He runs until another player tags him out with the ball. That's how you play cricket. An inning lasts until all the players are out or injured, or the captain declares the inning is over.

Most sports last a couple of hours. But cricket matches can last all day. Some even last for several days! And here's another interesting fact about cricket. At four o'clock, even if there's a game going on, the players all stop for tea! Cricket is popular in England and in India, Australia, and other countries that the British colonized.



The Sport of Kings

Let's stay in England for awhile. There's a polo match going on. Polo is a game played with horses. Polo was once called the Sport of Kings because it was thought that only kings could afford enough horses to have a polo team.

Here's how polo works. It is a team sport. There are two teams. Each team has four players. Each player rides a horse and carries a long, wooden stick. This stick is called a mallet. There is one ball. It is made of wood or hard plastic. Each team tries to knock the ball into the opposing goal with their mallets. They ride their horses back and forth, back and forth, over the field. It is very fast paced and very exciting. When the game ends, the team with the most scores wins.

No one knows exactly when or where people started playing polo. Experts think it came from Asia. It may have



begun as a way to train cavalry, or soldiers who ride horses. Now it's played mostly in English-speaking countries, a few South American countries, and India. The enjoyment of polo has led to the creation of other similar sports such as water polo, canoe polo, and elephant polo.



Scrumming in the Mud

Another sport that's popular in England is rugby. Of course, rugby is played in other countries too. Rugby is one of the most action-packed and most tiring sports in the world. Rugby is much like American football, but also very different. The



biggest difference between them is the most amazing. Rugby players don't wear pads! Yet they smash into each other as much as football players do. Rugby is really rough.

Here's how rugby works. The field is about the size of our football field. There are two teams of fifteen players each. Teams score by getting the ball across the opponents' goal line. But here's the catch. You cannot pass the rugby ball forward. You can run with it. You can kick it. But you can't throw it forward.

Rugby players constantly knock one another down. They do this to get the ball. They do this to block other players. It's very rough on the players. Many rugby players have missing teeth, bruises, and broken bones. Remember, they're not wearing ANY pads! It takes a really tough person to be a rugby player.



Sporting Tradition:

The New Zealand All Blacks rugby team performs a traditional Maori dance called a *haka* before each game. The All Blacks use it to challenge the other team. Fans love the blend of tradition and their favorite sport.

Like volleyball, but with feet!

Let's make a stop in Thailand. In Thailand they play a game called takraw (TAK-row). Takraw is like volleyball. But players play it with their feet instead of their hands! That's right—they kick the ball over the net with their feet!

In takraw two teams play against each other. These teams are called regus (RAY-gooz). Each regu has three players. The takraw ball is very lightweight. It is made of woven reeds. That makes it easy to kick.



A net about five feet high separates the regus. The object is to kick the ball over the net in such a way that the other team cannot return it. Every time the ball hits the ground on the opposing team's side, the kicking team scores. In that way, takraw is like volleyball. But remember, the players cannot touch the ball with their hands. They must kick it over the net! They can also use their shoulders and heads, but not their hands. That must be really difficult.

Takraw is becoming more and more popular all over the world. Because it's so unusual, more and more people are becoming interested in it. Even some people in the United States have begun to play it. Central California now has a takraw league. Who knows how popular takraw will become?

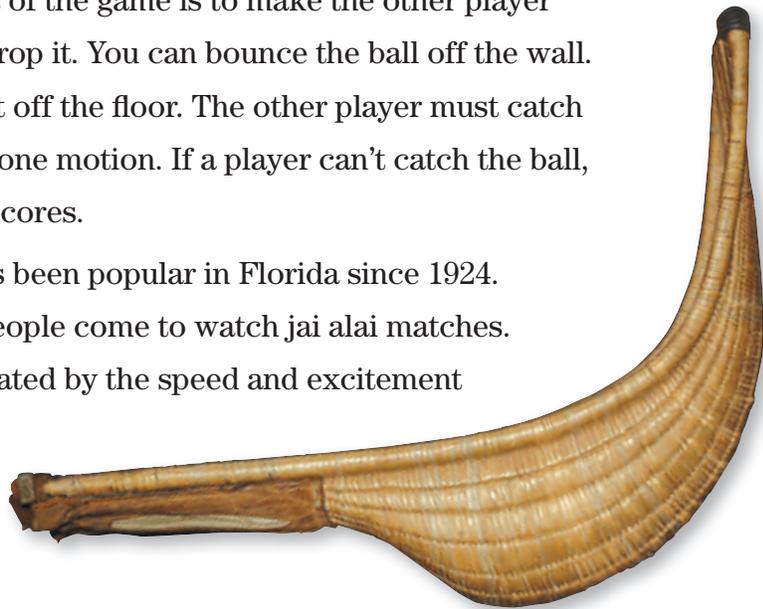
The Fastest Sport on Earth

There's a sport that's popular in France, Spain, and Mexico. It's gaining ground in the United States as well. It's the fastest sport on Earth. It's called jai alai (HIE uh-LIE).

Like tennis, jai alai can be played one-on-one or two-on-two. Let's look at a one-on-one game. Two players face off. They are in a clay arena. The arena sometimes has only one wall. Each player wears pads, a helmet, and a mask. Each player carries something called a cesta, or wicker basket glove. This glove enables the players to throw the ball very, very fast. Good players can throw the ball up to 180 miles per hour. That's why people call jai alai the fastest sport on earth.

The object of the game is to make the other player miss the ball or drop it. You can bounce the ball off the wall. You can bounce it off the floor. The other player must catch it and throw it in one motion. If a player can't catch the ball, the other player scores.

Jai alai has been popular in Florida since 1924. In Miami many people come to watch jai alai matches. People are fascinated by the speed and excitement of the sport.

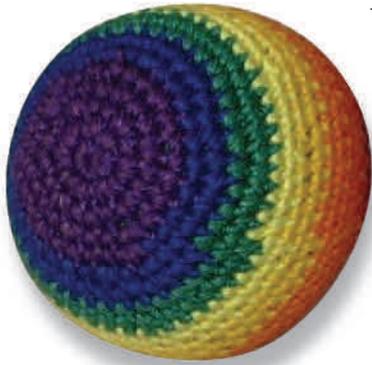


No Hands, No Apologies

Soon we'll move on to board games. But we have one more sport to learn about. This one, unlike any of the others, is not really a sport. Nobody wins. Nobody loses. Everybody works together. The sport is called footbag.

Footbag is all about cooperation. Here's how it works. There can be any number of players. Most often there are between four and eight players. They stand in a circle. Someone kicks the footbag into the air. The footbag

is about as big as a golf ball. It's covered with leather or wool. Inside it has plastic or wooden beads, or sand.



The object of the game is to get a hack. A hack happens when everyone in the circle touches the footbag before it falls to the ground.

But here's the catch: you can't touch the footbag with your hands. You can use your shoulders, head, neck, knees, and feet, but not your hands. Some groups like to make it even more challenging. They say you cannot use any part of your body above your waist to hit the bag! People come up with interesting ways to launch the ball into the air.

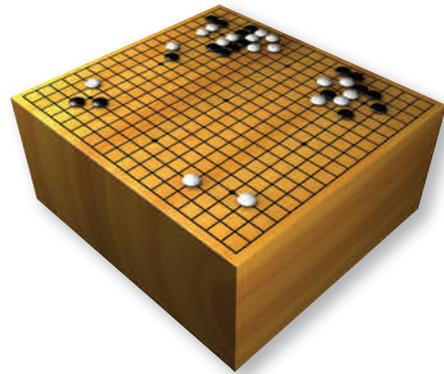
There's only one other rule in footbag. That rule is: no apologies. Everyone gets along in footbag, so if you make a mistake and let the footbag hit the ground, so what? Don't apologize. Just start the hack again!

PART II: GAMES YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW

Go? Go where?

Now that we've learned about some sports, let's learn about some board games that are played in different parts of the world. The first game we'll learn about is a game simply called go. Go is an ancient game. It was first played in China thousands of years ago.

Go is played on a square, wooden board. The board is called the goban (go-BAHN). The goban can be any size. It can be really small. It can be really large. That's up to the players. The board has a number of squares on it. It looks sort of like a checkerboard.



There are two players. One has black stones. The other has white stones. The first player puts one stone on any of the lines. Then the next player goes. He too puts a stone on a line. The object of the game is to surround your opponent's stones with your own. If a white stone has a black stone above it and below it, or to the left and to the right, black captures the white stone and replaces it with a black stone. It sounds simple, but don't be fooled! Good go players know it takes a long time to learn a winning strategy. Do you think you could master the go board?

The Oldest Game

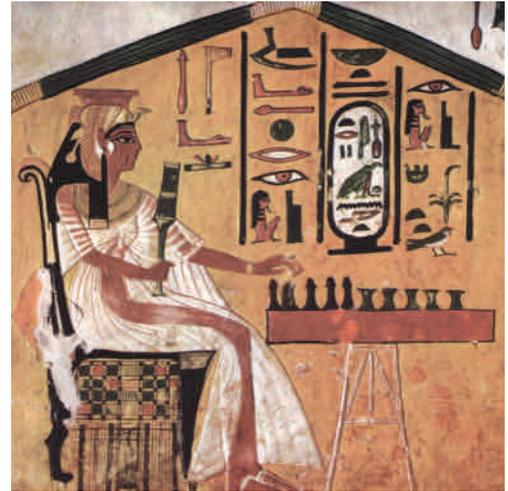
Let's learn about another board game.

It's the oldest known board game in the world. It came from the Middle East. It was played several thousand years ago. It's called backgammon (BACK-gam-on). Have you ever heard of it?

Backgammon is played on a colorful board. There are two players who face off. They each have a group of checkers of different colors.

The board has different-colored triangles on either side. These triangles are each a different number of points. First, the player rolls a pair of dice. That roll tells the player how many spaces she can move. Let's say she rolls a 6 and a 4. She can then move one piece ten places. Or she can move one piece six and another four. There are different clever ways to play the game. These ways are called strategies. Everyone plays differently. But the goal is to get all of your pieces off the board.

The basics of the game are really easy to learn. But expert players say that it takes a lifetime to master this game. If you want to master it, be prepared to play again and again for a long time!

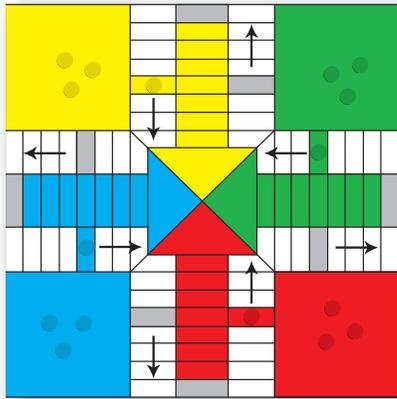


From India to the Rest of the World

While we're learning about ancient games, let's learn about an ancient game from the country of India. This board game is called pachisi (pah-CHEESE-ee) and often called the national game of India.

Pachisi is played on a board shaped like a cross.

Like a backgammon board or a go board, the pachisi board has spaces on it. Players move their pieces around the spaces on the board. But unlike the other games, more than two players play pachisi. Four players, in two teams of two, play against each other. How does a team win pachisi? The object



of the game is to be the first team to get all of their pieces around the board and back to the starting point first.

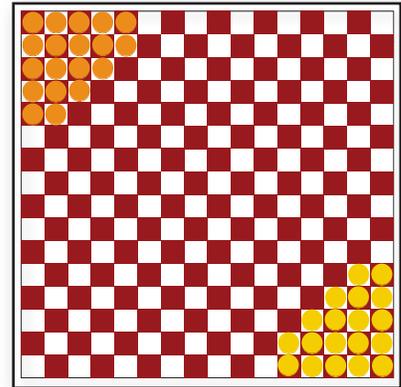
Here's another interesting fact about pachisi. In many board games, a dice throw tells players how many spaces they can move. In pachisi it's different. Players throw six small

seashells. If four seashells land upside down, the player can move four spaces. If five seashells land upside down, the player can move five spaces. You can play pachisi with dice instead of shells. Pachisi is popular all over the world, and many game makers have made the game simpler for younger players. You can find versions of this game in almost any store that sells board games.

Hop Across the Board

We've learned about ancient board games. We've learned about board games from the Middle East and from India. Let's learn about another board game. This game was invented in 1883. It was invented by an American doctor named George Howard Monks. The game is called halma (HAWL-mah). The inventor based it on a game called hoppity. But most people now call it halma.

Either two or four people can play halma. A halma board has 256 squares. Generally, in one corner the squares are painted red. In another they are blue. In another they are white, and in another they are yellow. Each player has a number of marbles. In a four-person game, each player has thirteen marbles. In a two-person game, each player has nineteen marbles. Each player's marbles are painted the same color as the corner he or she sits on.



The goal of halma is very simple. Each player wants to move all of her marbles over to the opposite corner. Each player takes turns. Players can move marbles by hopping over other marbles.

This game may sound similar to checkers. There are a few differences. In checkers you can jump only your opponent's checkers. In halma, you can jump anyone's marbles. You can even jump your own! There is another difference. In checkers you remove a piece if you jump over it. All the pieces stay on the board in halma. People have been playing halma for more than 120 years!

Another Variation

If you've ever played Chinese checkers, this game may seem familiar. That's because Chinese checkers is just halma played on a star-shaped board!

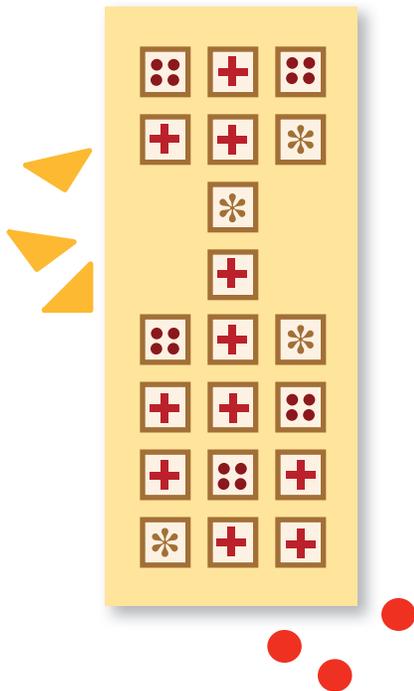
Another Ancient Game

Now that we've learned about the American game of halma, let's go over to the Royal British Museum. There we'll find some ancient game boards. These game boards come from ancient Mesopotamia. The countries now known as Iraq and Syria were once Mesopotamia. The game is called the Royal Game of Ur. It is also known as the game of twenty squares. People played The Royal Game of Ur for thousands of years before it was lost. Some scientists think backgammon replaced it.

Here's an interesting fact about the Royal Game of Ur. Although people have found ancient boards and pieces, nobody knows how the game was played. Scientists do know that people used small circular stones to play. They also used small,

triangular pieces. The board itself has twenty squares. Game experts believe that players moved their pieces up and down the board of twenty squares. But that's just about all people know about the game.

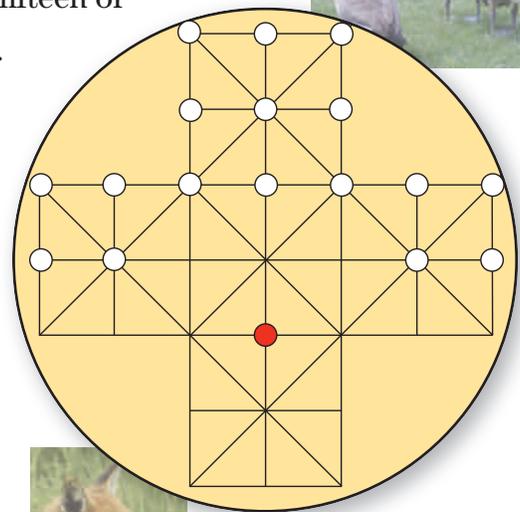
Many people have figured out new rules for the game of ur. Some people play by themselves. Some play against other people. Maybe right now someone is playing ur just like they played it thousands of years ago.



Unequal Teams

Let's now learn about the game called fox and geese. Fox and geese is also a board game. Two people play against each other in fox and geese. But fox and geese is unlike the other board games we've learned about. In most of those games, players start with the same number of pieces. In fox and geese, one person controls the geese. There are fifteen or more geese. The geese are white marbles. But the other player is the fox. There is only one marble for the fox! So the teams aren't equal at the beginning of a fox and geese match.

Players can move across the board by jumping over other pieces. If you are the geese, you have one goal. You want to surround the fox with the geese. If you do this, the fox can't move. You win. But the fox has a different goal. He wants to capture the geese. He does this by jumping over them. Each time he captures a goose, he removes that piece from the board. That makes it harder for the geese to surround the fox. The game of fox and geese has been around for hundreds of years. In England people still play it today!

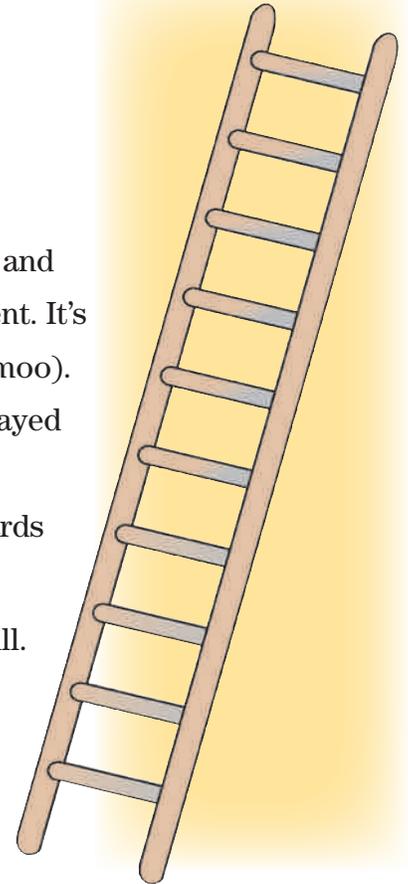
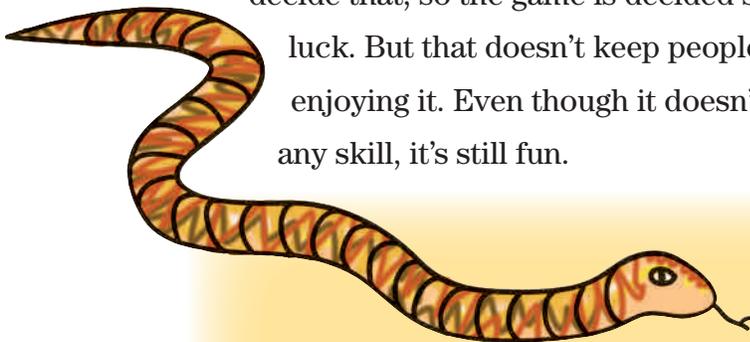


Difficult choices or luck?

Many of the games we've learned about require skill and strategy. But the next game we'll learn about is different. It's a game called moksha patamu (MOKE-shaw po-TAW-moo). This game, like pachisi, comes from India. It is also played in English-speaking countries. In those countries, it's called snakes and ladders. Often, moksha patamu boards have colorful artwork and fancy designs on them.

Playing moksha patamu doesn't require any skill. Rather, it requires good luck. Here's how it is played. Two or more players start at the bottom of the board. They roll dice to see who goes first. The dice show how many places to go forward. The goal is to reach the square numbered 100. If a player lands on a snake, or a moksha, she slides back down toward the bottom. But if a player lands on a patamu, or a ladder, she climbs up the board faster.

Players can't control whether they land on a snake or a ladder. The numbers on the dice decide that, so the game is decided solely by luck. But that doesn't keep people from enjoying it. Even though it doesn't require any skill, it's still fun.



A Teaching Game

Moksha patamu was originally created to teach children how good acts are rewarded, while bad acts are punished. What kinds of acts do you think the moksha represents?

With others or alone!

All the sports and games we've learned about have winners and losers. Now we're going to learn about a game that people can play with others, or play a variation of it by themselves. It's a Chinese game called mahjong (MAH-zhong).

The official way to play mahjong is with four people. Here's how it works. The game is played with tiles. Most people play with 136 tiles. Just like in a deck of playing cards, there are different suits, or types of tiles, that have different pictures on them. The tiles are put face down on the table, and each player takes thirty-four tiles. They arrange them face down in a wall in front of them.

Then the players take turns taking tiles from the wall



until they have twelve in their hands. They then choose tiles and discard tiles in order to make matching suits. They get points for the types of suits they make and how many they have. The person with the most points at the end of the game wins!

Another popular way to play mahjong is to play mahjong solitaire. You can play this by yourself. Most people play it on the computer. The mahjong tiles are arranged in stacks of different shapes. The player then tries to match tiles and remove them from the stack. The game is over when you can't make anymore matches.

Play Online!

Play a fun version of mahjong online at www.thekidzpage.com/freekidsgames/games/mahjongg/groovymah.html.

It's all for fun!

All over the world people play interesting sports and games. They take part in fascinating sports like takraw, curling, and jai alai. These sports help people exercise, stay active, and stay fit. Learning about them tells us more about the people who play these sports.

People also pass the time with fun board games like fox and geese, go, and pachisi. People play these games to pass the time. They also play the games to make themselves smarter. Learning about these games tells us more about the people who play them.

Are there any sports or games in this book you'd like to learn? Where do you think you could go to find out even more about these games? These sports and games are all fun. Learn how to play one, and you'll have a new way to stay fit and pass the time!

