

# Children's games in the 1960s

**In the 1960s, there were no electronic games or computers, iPods or DVDs to occupy children. Instead, they played more games in the street and the park. Here is a game that became popular in the 1960s (you may play it today), especially among girls.**

## Elastics, Chinese skipping or Chinese jump rope

### What you need

A hard, flat ground surface.

A rope made from a piece of elastic or stretchy rope tied together to form a loop about 3 metres long.

### Rules

Two people are the 'enders' and stand inside the loop of elastic. They stretch the elastic into a rectangle shape by standing with their feet slightly apart. To start with the elastic should be at ankle height.

A third person is the jumper. The jumper then has to jump in and around and on the elastic.

These jumps can be done whilst chanting skipping rhymes or songs.

If the jumper is successful in completing the rhyme (and the jumps) the height of the elastic is raised to the knees, then the thighs, then the waist!

Here is one jumping rhyme. The jumper jumps in time to the rhyme. The jumper and the 'enders' holding the rope chant the rhyme.

I had a little puppy  
His name was Tiny Tim  
I put him in the bathtub, to see if he could swim  
He drank all the water, he ate a bar of 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)

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### Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

### Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

### Using the worksheet

In the 1960s, children had few electronic toys and computers to play with, so they spent more of their time playing games like this.

Elastics is different from jump rope in that it is played with a stretchy rope (although it doesn't have to be) and the rope stays still while the jumper jumps around and on it. The jumper is out if they get tangled in the rope.

This game is thought to have first been played in China or Japan in the 1920s and 30s. It might have been brought to Britain during the Second World War by the American air force families who came here. It was very popular in the 1950s and 60s.

It is still played all over the world. In Spain it is called Las Gomas. There are lots of different rhymes and types of jumps. See [www.playgroundfun.org.uk/GameFacts.aspx?gameVersionID=38](http://www.playgroundfun.org.uk/GameFacts.aspx?gameVersionID=38) for more information.

Skippping games like this may still be popular at your school, but they had their heyday in the 1960s and 1970s. You may like to point out to the students that one reason games like this were popular was because they could be played anywhere and needed few materials.

You may like your students to try this out on the playground. If they already play it they can discuss different ways to play it and whether they would play it more often if they did not have computers and iPods, etc. You may also like to point out that this game requires physical energy, while indoor playing is more sedentary.

### Younger students

You may want the students to discuss other games that they play and to use secondary sources to research other games from the 1960s.

### Outcomes

The students can:

- Play a game that was popular in the 1960s.
- Understand the rules for a skipping game from the 1960s.
- Think about some reasons why children in the 1960s played more outdoor games.

### Older students

The students can use secondary sources to research other games that were popular in the 1960s.

### Outcomes

The students can:

- Play a game that was popular in the 1960s.
- Understand the rules for a skipping game from the 1960s.
- Think about some reasons why children in the 1960s played more outdoor games.