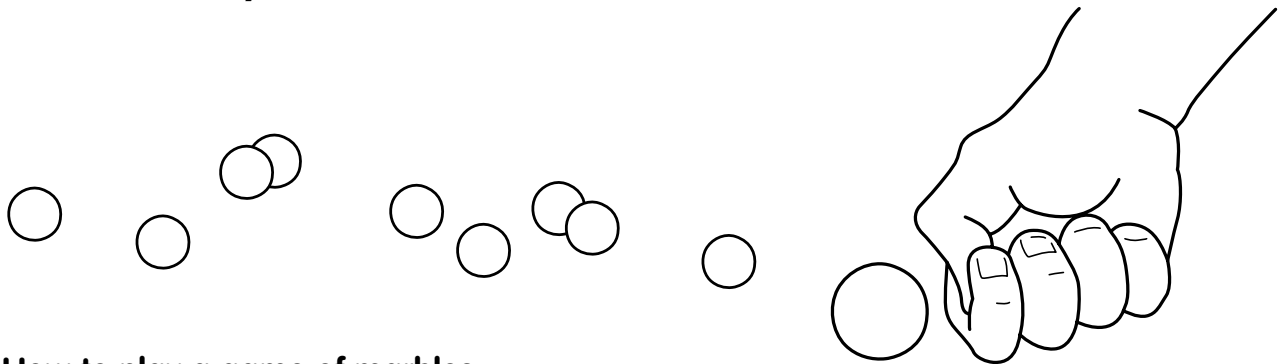


Make your own toy

As rationing grew more severe, it became difficult to buy toys, so many children made their own toys instead. Here is one popular homemade toy.



How to play a game of marbles

You and a friend will each need 10 small marbles and one large marble. Each person must keep track of which marbles are theirs.

Draw a circle outside on the pavement (or any other hard outdoor surface) with chalk. Or, mark out a circle inside with a piece of string.

Place all of the marbles in the circle.

One person takes a large marble and, placing it on the ground inside the circle, flicks it at the smaller marbles with their thumb and forefinger. The goal is to try and knock the small marbles belonging to your opponent out of the circle.

If you knock your opponent's marble out of the circle, you get to keep it, and take another turn. If you knock your own marble out of the circle, or do not knock any marbles out of the circle, then it is your opponent's turn to try.

Take turns until all the marbles are gone. The person with the most marbles wins.

To make your own marbles

1. Take a small piece of clay and roll it into a ball. If you want multicoloured marbles, use 2 or 3 colours. You will need to make about 10 small marbles, and 1 larger one.
2. Bake or dry the marbles according to the directions on the package of clay.

Teacher's sheet

Based on pages **38 to 41** of *Children in the Second World War*

Make your own toy

Age range

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

Resources

Copies of the worksheet, string or chalk, clay.

Using the worksheet

During the war toys were in very short supply because the materials needed to make them were needed for the war effort. What toys could be found were very expensive and most people saved their money for more important things, such as food. So children turned to playing simple games and making their own toys.

You may like to begin by asking students what they would do for entertainment and for games if all of their computers, playstations and other toys were taken away. What games could they think of to make with simple materials? You could then suggest that during WWII, this is exactly what happened (even though electronic games were not available, there were other shop-bought toys). Most children during WWII did not receive new toys for their birthday or Christmas. However, they thought of making their own toys as a way they could help with the war effort.

Marbles were a popular game in the 1930s and 1940s. When children played they usually played 'for keeps', that is, whatever marbles they won in the game they kept and took home. They would then use these in other games. Most children would have had their own marbles from before the war, but if they lost all their marbles, they would make more from clay.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Follow instructions to make and play a game.
- Learn how children during wartime made their own games.
- Understand that during wartime many goods, even toys, were in short supply so everyone had to make do.

Further activities

The students might like to think up other toys or games they could make. For example, they could invent their own board game and draw the board on a piece of card. In the 1940s, making paper dolls would also have been popular for girls. They would use pieces of scrap paper and draw on uniforms to dress them.