



**GeoCivics Lesson: The importance of Batu:
an ancient Taino ceremonial game**

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Teacher(s): Rosa M. Jiménez Otero	Lesson Title: Civic Project: The importance of Batu: an ancient Taino ceremonial game	Grade Level: 4th grade
<p>Notes: In this lesson students create and carry out a civic action project. We anticipate this lesson to take four 50-minute class sessions. Students will recognize the various pre-Columbian societies in Puerto Rico. They will do research on the economic, social, political, and religious aspects of the Tainos and identify contributions to Puerto Rican culture.</p>		
<p>Pre-existing Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 		
<p>Overview of Content:</p> <p>The Taino are Arawakan-speaking people who at the time of Christopher Columbus’s exploration inhabited what are now Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic), Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Once the most numerous indigenous people of the Caribbean, the Taino may have numbered one or two million at the time of the Spanish conquest in the late 15th century. The Taino had an elaborate system of religious beliefs and rituals that involved the worship of spirits (<i>zemis</i>) by means of carved representations. They also had a complex social order, with a government of hereditary chiefs and subchiefs and classes of nobles, commoners, and slaves.</p> <p>https://www.britannica.com/topic/Taino</p> <p>Imagine traveling back in time, 500 years to be exact, to the islands of the Caribbean. There you find beautiful sandy beaches with turquoise waters, palm trees, warm weather, soft winds and green mountainous landscapes. In the distance, you hear the sounds of drums and maracas. You follow the pulsating music and reach the outskirts of a village. The people you meet are moving about excitedly in preparation for a ball game they call batu. The game is played in a rectangular playing field called a batey. The batey is surrounded by huge stone slabs with carvings that bear a semblance to those found in other regions of the Americas, yet these are distinctly unique to the Caribbean. Two teams of players enter the batey. The teams have come together from different communities - perhaps to cement their</p>		

political or social bonds, or just simply for the love of the game. In any event, these games are central in the Taino social structure. The villagers begin praying and chanting to Koromo, Achinao, Rakuno and Sobaoko, the four directions. The rules of the game have long been established, but the players are reminded once again that one cannot touch the ball with their hands or feet. Only hips, elbows, shoulders and head are allowed. A heavy rubber ball is tossed in the center ... and the game begins.
<https://ictnews.org/archive/batu-the-ancient-game-livezs-on>

Purpose: *What will students learn?*

Students will learn about the Taino heritage and how the Tainos played games of Batu. They will also be able to identify characteristics of this game to similar games they might play today, and learn about the importance of socializing and interacting with others, and how this can benefit all that live within their community

National & State Social Studies Standard(s):

National & Puerto Rico

1. Change and continuity - studies the life of societies in the context of changes and transformations that occur over time.

- 4.cc.1 - It distinguishes historical places of Puerto Rico, indigenous ceremonial parks, caves, archaeological settlements, fortifications, colonial style architecture, among others.

National & State Geography Standard(s):

National:

- People Places and Environment - Analyzes the interaction between people, places, regions, and the environment, and develops the ability to apply and modify geographic perspectives that affect human life.
- The World in Spatial Terms - How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

Puerto Rico:

- 4. PLA. 7 - Recognizes the relationship between geographic space and human cultural, and social activities.
- 4.PLA.2.1 - It presents examples in the Taino, African and Puerto Rican context, understanding the chronological process of these events and the duration in different periods of time.

ELA Standards:

- Literacy in History/Social Studies
 - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - 4. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
 - Research to Build and Present Knowledge
 - 4. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

ISTE Teacher and/or Student Standard:

Students:

- 2.6.d model and nurture creativity and creative expression to communicate ideas, knowledge or connections

Language Functions:

- **Summarizing and Informing:** Students use language to identify, report or describe information.
- **Comparing and Contrasting:** Students use language to describe similarities and differences in objects or ideas.

Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies:

Different Perspectives

- **CONNECTION:** Lesson/activity incorporates real-life connections and representations from various cultures and life experiences.
- **VOICE:** Lesson/assignment allows places for students to work together collaboratively or share their learning experiences, etc.

Objective(s):

Students will be able to:

- Develop knowledge about the importance of social organization for the Tainos.
- Analyze and comprehend texts that are related to the existence of the Tainos in Puerto Rico and what they have contributed to us in the context of different cultural aspects such as vocabulary, religion, traditions, food, music and games.
- Research how the influence of Taino words and traditions are still present today in Puerto Rico.
- Describe differences and similarities to the game of “Batu” to other games that are played today.
- Engage in a civic action project to share with their community about the importance of social organization and the “Batu” game for the Tainos.

SIOP

SIOP Elements		
Preparation Adapting content Linking to background Linking to past learning Strategies used	Scaffolding Modeling Guided practice Independent practice Comprehensible input	Grouping Option Whole class Small groups Partners Independent
Integrating Processes Reading	Application Hands-On	Assessment Individual

Writing Speaking Listening	Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	Group Written Oral
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Evidence of Mastery (Measurable):

Formative - Students will work in small groups to do research on the Tainos game of Batu and to answer the following guided questions:

- *What things did the Tainos do to exercise and entertain themselves?*
- *Who was the leader of the game?*
- *How did they play "batu"?*
- *Where did they play the game of "Batu"?*
- *What were some rules of the game?*
- *To what game that we play today, can we compare "Batu"to?*

And then the groups will share out their research findings to the class and the teacher will make note of a formative assessment of student learning.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/units/1991/2/91.02.06/9>

Summative: After students give their civic action project presentation to the school and community members, the teacher will have the students think about their civic action project and share their thoughts about it by writing down answers to the following questions: **Questions:**

- *Why do you think it is important to recreate the ways that the Tainos played and lived as a community and to share this with the school and community?*
- *What are the positive and negative aspects of sharing out/playing this game and sharing how it impacted the Tainos' everyday lives? The teacher will use the Civic Action Reflection Rubric to assess students' learning with a score of indicating mastery.*

Civic Action Reflection Rubric

Levels of Accomplishment	Criteria	Points
Exceeds Expectations	Both questions are completely and fully answered in complete sentences with accurate spelling and grammar and provides a detailed and well explained explanation for why you feel it is important to recreate the ways the Tainos played and lived as a community and why it is important to share this information with the school and community and provides real examples from your presentation given. It also gives a detailed and clearly expressed explanation with 4 or more positive and negative aspects of sharing out and playing the game and sharing how it impacted the Tainos' everyday lives.	4
Meets	Both questions are answered in full sentences giving a clear	3

Expectations	explanation for why you feel it is important to recreate the ways the Taiinos played and lived as a community and why it is important to share this information with the school and community. It also clearly gives at least 2 positive and 2 negative aspects of sharing out and playing the game and sharing how it impacted the Tainos' everyday lives.	
Approaches Expectations	Both questions are answered with a sentence that explains why you feel it is important to recreate the ways the Taiinos played and lived as a community and attempts to tell why it is important to share this information with the school and community, but does not provide a detailed explanation. It also gives only one positive and one negative aspect of sharing out and playing the game, but lacks an explanation for how it impacted the Tainos' everyday lives.	2
Fails to Meet Expectations	Both questions lack a clear explanation for why you feel it is important to recreate the ways the Taiinos played and lived as a community and why it is important to share this information with the school and community. It also lacks giving a positive and negative aspect of sharing out and playing the game and does not explain why sharing how it impacted the Tainos' everyday lives.	1

<p>Key Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Batey: A sacred space in Puerto Rico for celebrations and meetings where Taíno Indians interacted socially through the Batu ball game ● Batu: An ancient ceremonial ball game. ● Cacique: a tribal chieftain of the Taíno people ● Ceremonial: marked by, involved in, or belonging to ceremony ● Yucayeque: Taino word for village or city. ● Civics: The rights and obligations of citizens in society ● Civic action: Working as a citizen to help make a difference in the civic life of one's community 	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● K-W-L Chart (know, want to know, learned) drawn on classroom whiteboard ● Copies of K-W-L Chart Handout - one per student (In Lesson Materials Document) ● Maps of Puerto Rico (In Lesson Materials Document) ● Teacher access to computer and projection device to show videos to the class ● Video: Batu Oricu Ancestral (Link in Sources below) ● Video: The Taíno Batú ceremonial ball game: (Link in Sources below) ● Student access to computers/laptops to conduct research - at least one per group ● Class notebooks for students to write down notes/record research in ● Sources for student research of the Tainos' Batu game (Links in Sources below)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student access to PowerPoint, Google Slides or Charts to create a presentation of their research to the class and to create and carry out their civic action project for the school and community members.
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<p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maps of Puerto Rico: File:United States in its region (Lower 50 and Puerto Rico special).svg - Wikimedia Commons / File:1903 map of Porto Rico (Puerto Rico).jpg - Wikimedia Commons ● Video: Batu Oricu Ancestral : Batu - YouTube ● Video: The Taíno Batú ceremonial ball game: The Taíno Batú ceremonial ball game. ● Sources for student research of the Tainos' Batu game: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 91.02.06: The Heritage and Culture of Puerto Ricans ○ Batu is a Taíno Ball Game ○ The Voice of the Taino People Online: Batu: The ancient game lives on <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.teachingforchange.org ● https://www.zinnedproject.org/if-we-knew-our-history/whose-history-matters-taino ● https://sheg.stanford.edu/sheg-materials-spanish 	
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Engage:

<p>Teacher Will: (NOTE) Partner/group ELLs/SPED, gifted students strategically to provide language and learning support as needed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students what games they like to play with their friends or family. <i>Are there any games that have been passed down through your family? Which game is your favorite? Why? Does it have any special meaning?</i> 2. Now, ask the class questions related to what students may know about the Tainos and how they celebrated ceremonies and played games. 3. Begin to fill out a K-W-L chart (know, want to know, learned) on the whiteboard using the students' responses as a model for the students, and ask students to also share out what they want to learn. Pass out copies of the K-W-L Chart Handout and have students fill in their charts with their 	<p>Students Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about and answer the teacher's questions about their knowledge of the Tainos people. <p>(Preparation: Linking to background/Linking to past learning) (Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Students will then share what they want to know and learn. They will observe the teacher modeling how to fill in the K-W-L Chart and fill out their own chart with their individual answers, and will decide how they will do research on the topic and how they will present it to the class. <p>(Grouping: Whole Class/Independent or Partners if needed) (Integrating Processes: Listening/ Reading/Writing) (Application: Hands-on/ Promotes engagement)</p>
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own answer, and have students think about how they can do research on the topic and how they can then present it to the class.

(SCAFFOLDING: Modeling)

4. Provide the students with some needed background knowledge of the Tainos as native people of Puerto Rico (see teacher resources) and show and discuss with the class the maps of Puerto Rico. Explain that they will now watch the following two short videos related to the Tainos and how they lived and played the game of “Batu. After watching these, have a class discussion of the videos and what they knew and what they just learned after watching it.

- [Video: Batu - YouTube](#)
- [Video: The Taíno Batú ceremonial ball game](#)

3. Observe and reflect on the maps and information provided by the teacher about the Tainos of Puerto Rico, and then watch the video shown by the teacher and engage in a class discussion of the videos, telling what they knew and what they just learned after watching it.

(Grouping: Whole Class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to past learning)

Explore:

Teacher Will:

IQ 1# Why was the game Batu an important cultural activity of the Taino?

1. Present Inquiry Question #1 to the class and then present the guided questions on the board to get students started on researching information so they can do group presentations to the class. **Guided Questions:** *What things did the Tainos do to exercise and entertain themselves? Who was the leader of the game? How did they play “batu”? Where did they play the game of “Batu”? What were some rules of the game? To what game that we play today, can we compare “Batu”to?*

(NOTE) The teacher will have the students work in small groups to conduct their research, and will strategically group ELLs/SPED, Gifted students to provide language and learning support as needed.

2. Introduce the following key vocabulary words to the class by writing the words and

1. Listen to Inquiry Question #1 and reflect on what they know about Batu so far and what they will need to learn more about to be able to answer the question completely. Reflect on the guided questions asked by the teacher and then work in small groups to do research using their computers and laptops, and use their class notebooks to record their research findings.

(Grouping: Whole class/Small Groups) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/ Reading/Writing) (Application: Hands-on/ Meaningful/Promotes engagement)

2. Students will work in their groups to create a group presentation either using PowerPoint, Google Slide, or Charts, to present their findings to the class and

<p>their definitions on the board and discussing them with the students. (Batu, Batey, Cacique, Ceremonial, and Yucayeque.) Make connections to what students have just learned.</p> <p>3. When done conducting their research, the teacher will have the groups work together to think of a way they will present their findings to the class (using PowerPoint, Google Slides or Charts) and to create an activity for the class to do based on their presentation of their research findings, such as drawing a picture of what you think or presenting statements and rules of the game to classify them as true or false statements.</p> <p>(NOTE): The teacher will provide students with resources to use to be able to find what they need to conduct their research and find the information needed. (See Sources for student research of the Tainos' Batu game - links in Sources above)</p> <p>(Scaffolding: Guided Practice)</p>	<p>discuss the information learned. They will also think about and create an activity for the class to do, based on their presentation of their research findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Draw a picture of what you think * Present statements and rules of the game to classify them as true or false statements. <p>(Grouping: Small Groups) (Application: Hands-on /Meaningful/Promotes engagement)</p>
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Explain - Formative Assessment:

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have each group give their presentation to the class, sharing research findings, and encourage students to record any new information in their notebooks gained through their classmates' presentations. As the groups give their presentations, the teacher will make note of each group's information presented for use as a formative assessment of student learning, and will then engage the class in a discussion answering Inquiry Question #1 and summarizing the findings of all of the groups. <p>(Preparation: Linking to past learning)</p>	<p>Students Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present their research findings to the class as a group and will take down notes of information learned from their fellow classmates' presentations if not already in their own research notes. Students will then engage in a class discussion of Inquiry Question #1 and will work together to summarize the class's research findings. <p>(Assessment: Group/Oral)</p>
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Elaborate:

Teacher Will:

IQ #2: How can we use our knowledge of the Tainos' game "Batu" to engage in civic action in our community?

1. Ask students: *have you done anything for your family, friends or community to help in some way? Have students share experiences. Do you think that those kinds of acts represent good citizenship? What makes a good citizen?*
2. The teacher will then introduce the vocabulary words **civics** and **civic action** and explain the meanings of these to the class, and tell students that they will have an opportunity to engage in civic action by using what they have learned through their research. Engage the students in a conversation about what they have learned about the Tainos and their playing of the "Batu" game and how this could be of value for others in the community to know about.
3. Present students with the idea of creating an activity for the school and the community based on what they have learned about the Tainos and present students with the idea of creating an activity for the school and the community. *Some activity Possibilities:* An exhibition of videos and posters regarding Tainos forms of entertainment, and planning and organizing a game of Batu for the community to engage in.
4. The teacher will then guide students through the readings of their research notes and information, and encourage and guide them to work as a group on a civic project that can impact their school and community, by having students discuss, plan, and organize an activity to present to the school and involve people from the community.
5. When completed, the teacher will organize and prepare for the students to carry out

Students Will:

1. Listen to and observe the vocabulary words and their meanings presented by the teacher and think about how they will be able to engage in Civic Action themselves using what they have learned. And reflect on and discuss with the class how they believe what they have learned about the Tainos and the Batu game could be of value for others in the community to know about.

(Grouping: Whole Class) (Preparation: Linking to past learning)

2. Listen to the teacher's discussion and ideas for how they will use what they have learned to create a civics action project that includes an activity for others at the school and in the community to participate in and learn about Tainos form of living.
3. Work in their groups to use their research information and develop a plan with an activity that will involve school peers and community members in learning about the form of living of the Tainos and how they entertained themselves through "Batu" games.

(Grouping: Small groups) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing)

(Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)

4. Carry out their civic action project by presenting it to other students at the school and to community members who have been invited to attend.

(Grouping: Small Groups/Whole Class)

(Integrating Processes: Speaking/Listening)

(Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement/Linked to Objectives)

their plans to other students at the school and to community members invited to come for the students' presentations.

Evaluate - Summative Assessment:

Teacher Will:

1. After presenting their civic action project presentation to the school and community members, the teacher will have the students think about their civics action project and share their thoughts about it by writing down answers to the following questions:

Questions:

- *Why do you think it is important to recreate the ways that the Tainos played and lived as a community and to share this with the school and community?*
 - *What are the positive and negative aspects of sharing out/playing this game and sharing how it impacted the Tainos' everyday lives?*
2. The teacher will then engage the class in a discussion of their ideas for other activities that they can plan for in the future to increase their knowledge about engaging in civic action projects and its impact on the community.

(NOTE) The teacher will use the civic action project Reflection Rubric to assess students' learning with a score indicating mastery.

Student Will:

1. Students will reflect on what they consider are the positive aspects of involving the school and the community in their Civics plan and will write down their answer to the questions asked by the teacher and turn these in to be assessed.

(Assessment: Individual or partners if needed/ Written)

2. Share out their ideas for other activities in the future that they feel would help them increase their knowledge about engaging in civic action projects and about their impact on the community.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Preparation: Linking to past learning/Linking to background)

Extensions: Students can be given opportunities to do further research on the life and culture of the Tainos. Students can also be engaged in creating more civic action projects based on issues in their community of concern to them.