



THE GAME OF MANCALA

TEXT TYPE: Non-fiction: Procedure—Instructions
GUIDED READING LEVEL: N

SUMMARY: How to play the game of Mancala is clearly explained using multi-step instructions, photographs, and diagrams. Strategies to increase your chances of winning are included, as are easy-to-follow instructions on making your own Mancala game board.

Note: If students are having difficulty understanding the instructions, they might do the 'Playing' section as a small-group shared reading. Or, have students read a step independently, then discuss the step with them before having them read the next step.

TEXT FEATURES

- procedure demonstrated in both text and corresponding illustrations
- captions, headings, bold print
- various font sizes and styles
- bulleted lists
- strategy boxes

VISUAL LITERACY

- labelled illustrations
- sequenced diagrams

TEXT SUPPORTS

- illustrations and corresponding descriptions clearly describe how to play the game
- short chunks of text make instructions easy to follow
- headings draw attention to specific strategies

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- multi-step instructions and strategy tips on the same page could be confusing
- challenging game vocabulary: 'opponent's,' 'automatically,' 'counter-clockwise'
- correctly interpreting the information in the sequenced diagrams

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- self-monitoring

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- sequencing
- synthesizing

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Ranking Ladder strategy
- discussing with a partner
- sharing ideas
- create a 'pitch' encouraging others to play Mancala (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: uses context (text and visual features such as pictures and diagrams) and some basic strategies such as background knowledge to work out word meanings
- word solving and building: frequently uses meaning connections to solve a range of unfamiliar words and construct meanings

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- make connections to game playing
- analyze text and illustrations to confirm comprehension
- synthesize the information presented to play the game effectively

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Self-monitoring Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

BEFORE READING

ESL NOTE: Ask students if they have played this game in their native country. Ask them to talk about who they played with, how old they were when they learned, and so on. If they remember how to play, have them share a few details of the game.

Making Connections: Text to Self and Text to World

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Tell students that this book explains how to play the board game, Mancala. Ask students if anyone has heard of this game. If no one is familiar with the game, explain that Mancala is thought to be a 3000-year-old Egyptian game that is a count and capture game. As a Ranking Ladder activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*), ask students to form small groups and think of other games that they know of where they have to count or try to capture their opponent's pieces (backgammon, checkers, chess). Have the groups rank their listed games starting from the more well-known ones, and then share with the larger Guided Reading group.

Word Solving and Building and Language Predictability

Introduce supports and challenges

- Have students brainstorm vocabulary words they might come across when playing games or reading game instructions (strategies, rules, opponent, winning). Ask if all students understand what each of the words mean. If not, ask them what strategies they can use to figure out unfamiliar words? Encourage them to come up with strategies such as rereading the sentence, finding words they know within the larger word, making connections to what they already know, or skipping the word and then going back.

Text Features and Sequencing

- Ask students to look at the sequenced diagram on page 3 and explain that these pictures outline a strategy they might want to use to play the game. Explain that when reading sequenced diagrams, the pictures are read in order from top to bottom, and that the words describe what is happening in the pictures. Point out to students that the diagrams should clearly illustrate the meaning of the words to increase the reader's understanding. In this case, the picture changes to show how the game board would look if you were to steal your opponent's game pieces.

Self-monitoring

Set a purpose for reading

- Explain to students that as they read, they should make pictures in their head about how to play the game. Give students two colours of sticky notes. Ask them to use one colour to flag the key points they need to remember to set up and play the game (the rules) and the other colour to flag the strategies they need to play, and possibly win.

Provide for early finishers

- Encourage students who finish early to reread the sections on setting up and playing the game as well as the different strategies for winning.

Have them check their understanding to ensure that they know the steps necessary to set up and play the game, and some of the strategies they might use while playing.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Ask students to read ‘The Game of Mancala’ on their own. Encourage students to stop at the end of each set of instructions to ensure that they understand what is required to set up, play, and win the game.

Observe

- Observe and listen to students as they read the explanations and look at the corresponding illustrations in the sequenced diagram. To check on understanding, offer prompts such as: *What might you do to steal your opponent’s pieces? How can an empty pocket help you win? What happens when you pass your opponent’s store? How do you know when the game ends?* Note students’ successful use of reading strategies and any difficulties they encounter.
- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the *Self-monitoring Strategy Checklist* and the *Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record* in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*.)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- In partners, have students decide who should be partner A and who should be partner B. Have all of the A partners get together and share the set-up and rules they highlighted. Have A partners talk among themselves to ensure there is a common understanding and language about how to set up and play the game. Have all A partners record their understanding of the set-up and rules in point form. Have all of the B partners get together and share the strategies they highlighted and then talk among themselves to ensure there is a common understanding about the strategies used to play the game. Afterwards, have each A partner find a B partner. The A partner should then share their understanding/notes of the set-up and rules and ask the B partner to ask any questions they might have about how to play. Then the B partner should share their understanding/notes of the strategies needed to effectively play the game and the A partner could ask any questions that they still might have.
- In their partnered groups, have students use the supplies suggested on page 4 (the bottom of an egg carton, 2 empty cups, and 48 marbles or beads) to play the game. If materials to create a board are not available, please hand students copies of ‘The Game of Mancala’ BLM, found

Self-monitoring

online at www.movingupwithliteracyplace.ca, for a printable version of the board. See if they can apply the rules and strategies they listed and shared to play. Have them refer back to their notes or to the book if there is any confusion about the rules or how to use a particular strategy. Remind them that as questions or challenges arise, to self-monitor what strategy might be best suited to help solve a question.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Revisit any challenging words students encountered and discuss the strategies they used to figure them out. Have students find the word in the book and discuss which strategies students found most successful to solve unfamiliar words.

Note successful strategy use

- Highlight an example of a student using a strategy effectively. For example, *At first Kim was overwhelmed by the diagram on page 3. So she paused and thought understanding it would be easier if she went slowly through the five steps, thinking about how one step was connected to the next. She felt that the sequence of the instructions was helpful.*

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Self-monitoring

- Have students create instructions for a different count and capture game that they know how to play. They should include the rules, labelled diagrams, and the strategies for playing.

Artistic

Sequencing

- Have students create and decorate their own Mancala board using the materials suggested in the book (the bottom of an egg carton, 2 cups, 48 beads or marbles). The BLM can be used as a board if needed. Students might want to use Egyptian hieroglyphics and art to reflect the history of the game, or they might choose to make their board uniquely theirs and decorate it as they choose.

Oral/dramatic

Synthesizing

- Have students create a ‘pitch’ encouraging other students to learn and play the game of Mancala. Students should create a short, one paragraph speech clearly outlining why other students should learn how to play the game and why it is a great game to play. Students can then give their speech to classmates, offer to teach them the game, and see if other students are interested in learning how to play.