

# Traditional Playground Games

## Stuck in the mud

A version of tag that sees the person that has been 'tagged' having to stand still - seen as being 'stuck in the mud'. They stand with their arms and legs stretched out wide unable to move until they are 'freed' by another player. To free a player they can go through the person's legs or under their arms.

This continues for about 5-10 minutes or until everybody is stuck. To increase the difficulty level you can use more taggers.

A simple but effective game that would see kids running all over the place, trying to avoid being tagged.

## Duck Duck Goose

Another version of a chasing game.

The whole group sit in a circle. The person who was 'it' would walk around the circle, tapping one person on the head while saying 'duck'.

When the tagger says 'goose' instead of duck, the player selected as the 'goose' would jump up and chase the other around the circle in the hope of catching them before the tagger takes their sits in their unoccupied space.

## What's the Time, Mr Wolf?

One child is chosen to be Mr (or Mrs) Wolf. They stand a good distance (3+ metres) away from the other players with their back to them.

The other players stand side by side in a line, facing Mr Wolf's back. All together they call, 'What's the time, Mr Wolf?'

Mr Wolf responds by selecting and calling out an o'clock time (between 1 and 12).

The other players take the required number of steps towards Mr Wolf. For example, '3 o'clock' would mean the players take three steps towards Mr Wolf.

These two actions are repeated resulting in the other players moving closer and closer to Mr Wolf.

When Mr Wolf is ready (usually when the other players are getting close), they change their response to the question from a time to 'Dinnertime!'

At this cue, all of the players must turn around and race back to the starting position with Mr Wolf chasing after them to try and catch his dinner. The player who is caught becomes the next Mr Wolf and the game continues.

## Oranges and Lemons

This playground game is based on a rhyme about the church bells of London. The lyrics can be traced back as far as 1744.

At the beginning of the game, two children join hands facing each other to make an arch. Each arch player chooses to be the leader of either the Oranges or Lemons – which must be kept a secret. Once they're ready, the other children run through the arch in a line as they sing:

*Oranges and lemons,  
Say the bells of St. Clement's.  
You owe me five farthings,  
Say the bells of St. Martin's.  
When will you pay me?  
Say the bells of Old Bailey.  
When I grow rich,  
Say the bells of Shoreditch.  
When will that be?  
Say the bells of Stepney.  
I do not know,  
Says the great bell of Bow.*

As the players continue running through, the two arches raise and lower their arms until they trap someone.

*Here comes a candle to light you to bed,  
And here comes a chopper to chop off your head!  
Chip chop, chip chop!*

Once a player is caught, they are asked “Oranges or Lemons?” They whisper their answer, holding on to the hips of the arch player they've chosen. The game repeats until everyone is holding on – then there's a tug of war between the opposing sides!

If your playground surface is hard, another version allows players caught out to make arches next to the original. As the game goes on, the tunnel becomes longer and escape more difficult – the winner is whoever lasts the longest.

## Grandmother's Footsteps

Grandmother's Footsteps is also known by other names including Black Cat, but again involves one player to take on the role of Grandmother – a game like Rock, Paper, Scissors is good to decide who gets to go first if there is any dispute.

Grandmother stands with her back to the group, who form a line about 12 metres away.

The players then creep forward with the goal of reaching Grandmother, but he or she can turn around at any point, and if they see you moving, you have to start again.