



19th-Century Toys and Games Activities Packet (Short Version)

Toys and Games pre- and post-visit activities can be supplemented with the **Family Life on a 19th-Century Estate Activities Packet**.

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Note: These activities/lessons are appropriate for elementary/middle school students and are somewhat generalized. BPMM educators encourage teachers to adjust the difficulty to fit the standards of the individual classroom or school as they see fit. Complete versions of BPMM activity packets include **Common Core** learning standards and additional activities. These may be found on our website <http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org/education/activity-packets.php>.

19th-Century Toys and Games

Pre-Visit Activity

Title: What's Happening Here?

Content: Photo analysis, 19th-century children's activities

Objectives:

- Work with information presented through visual media
- Collaborate with their peers to create a summary or narrative
- Produce and present a clearly written opinion piece that includes evidence citation and a statement of conclusion

Class Level: Grades 1–5

Time Requirement: 45–60 minutes

Materials: Writing utensil, paper, and picture of children playing graces (p. 4)

Introduction: Before electricity, children didn't have television and video games to amuse them, so they had to improvise with the materials and resources around them. At BPMM, you will learn about and play games that children enjoyed before electronics were invented. Can you figure out what is happening in this photograph of children playing a popular 19th-century game?

Activity:

1. Split the class into groups of 4 or 5. Give each group a copy of the picture of girls playing graces. (If you prefer, project the image rather than passing out copies.)
2. Each group should try to figure out what is happening in the picture—who, what, and where. **Who** is participating; who could be participating? **What** is being done; what is the activity and purpose of the activity? **Where** would this activity have taken place—the city or the country?
3. Still in their groups, have the students write a paragraph that details their conclusions. They should use information they have learned in class and details from the photo as evidence. Encourage the inclusion of linking words and a concluding sentence. For example, "Therefore, our group thinks that this activity is..."
4. Nominate a student from each group to read their paragraph to the class.
5. Have the class vote on which paragraph best describes the activity taking place in the photo. If possible, have the class (as a whole) describe why the paragraph that won was superior.
6. Explain to the students that this is a game called Graces, often played by girls (and sometimes boys) in the 19th century. It was played outside with sticks and small hoops. Don't feel the need to go into too much detail—during your visit to BPMM the educator will discuss the activity and you will play it on the grounds. (This is to get them excited about learning a new game as much as it is a writing activity.)

Extensions/Adjustments:

- Have the students make a list of games that they play often. Ask them to circle any activities that do not require electricity and make a class list with all the students' activities. How many are there? Probably fewer than the students might have assumed. As a class, discuss how electricity has changed everyday life and emphasize that it is still a luxury for some people in poor countries today.



Image 1: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum.

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Post-Visit Activity

Title: Essay Exercise

Content: Reinforce program themes, vocabulary, writing

Objectives:

- Practice the vocabulary learned during their visit
- Write a paragraph or essay that follows age-appropriate grammatical rules and guidelines

Class Level: Grades 2–5

Time Requirement: 45–60 minutes

Materials: Writing utensil, paper

Introduction: While at BPMM, the class played children’s games from the 19th century. To pass the time, children in the past also wrote letters to friends and relatives. In this activity, your class will practice writing skills and vocabulary learned on their visit to BPMM. This is an essay exercise so they should use and be graded on class-level appropriate grammar and language.

Activity:

1. Have the class list the pastimes they played or learned about during their trip to BPMM. The list should include things like: Pass the Slipper, hoops, graces, reading, playing the piano, riding horses, writing, etc. Write the list on the board for the students to reference.
2. For this exercise, they are going to place themselves in the 19th century as the Bartow children’s guests. Have the class write letters to their parents about their daily pastimes while visiting the Bartow mansion and their friends Clarina and Robert (two actual Bartow children). Have the students describe at least one game from the visit—they should mention whether it was an outside or inside game, where the activity took place, and what they liked most about it.
3. If your class is advanced enough to have learned the proper format for letters (i.e. salutations and addressing) then have the students do so. Also, have them draw a picture of the activity below their paragraph/essay.

Extensions/Adjustments:

- If the class/students would like to collaborate rather than work individually, they can make up a game. However, they have to follow 19th-century rules—nothing that involves electricity and nothing that they can’t build/use themselves with items from home.