

# RAFT IDEAS

**Topics:** Logic and Critical thinking;  
Mathematical Reasoning;  
Traditions and Cultures

## Materials List

- ✓ 12 portion cups
- ✓ A strip of matte board about 45 cm (18") long and 20 cm (8") wide.
- ✓ 2 larger containers to hold
- ✓ 36 marbles, stones, lids or other objects to be used as game pieces

This activity can be used to support the teaching of:  
CO Math Standard 2:  
Patterns, Functions and Algebraic Structures

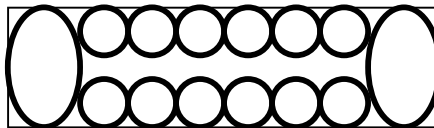
- Problem Solving, Patterns and Relationships

Grades: k, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6



# Mancala

## An Ancient Strategy Game from Africa



People from around the world play games of strategy. Most popular games, like Mancala, have roots going back hundreds of years. Using these games in the classroom is not only enjoyable for students, but also teaches logic, mathematical reasoning, and problem solving skills.

## Assembly

1. Hot glue the portion cups and point cups to the matte board to resemble the game board pictured above.
2. Place 3 game pieces in each portion cup to set up the game board for a game.

## To Do and Notice (Playing the game, one version)

1. One player starts by taking all of the game pieces out of one of their cups.
2. Going counterclockwise, that player places one game piece in each cup until they run out of game pieces, continuing to the cups on their opponents side, if necessary. Players place game pieces into their own "point holder" (or mancala, the large cup on their right), but not in their opponent's mancala.
3. If the player places a game piece into their mancala, they play again.
4. Players take turns moving game pieces in this fashion until one player has no pieces left on their side of the board. The second player takes all remaining pieces from their side and places them into their mancala.
5. The winner is the player with the most game pieces in their mancala.

## The Content Behind the Activity

Mancala can trace its roots to ancient Egypt (600 a.d.), and is still popular in parts of Africa. There are numerous variations of Mancala, each requiring slightly different strategies. All variations, however, have basic and simple rules that only take a couple minutes to learn. Mastering Mancala takes much longer. Players need to think ahead and play out possibilities. Mastering the game requires logic, critical thinking, and experience.

## Extensions

Challenge students to come up with different variations of the game, and teach other students their versions. The class can decide which version they think is the best and/or most challenging. A couple common variations incorporate the following rules:

- Players placing a game piece into their mancala do not go again in that turn.
- If a player puts his last game piece in a turn into a cup on his side that only has one piece in it, that player "captures" that cup, placing its 2 pieces into his mancala; and, they capture all opponent's pieces in the adjacent cup.

**Web Resources** - Visit [www.raft.net/more](http://www.raft.net/more) for how-to videos and more ideas!