

Cowboys & Indians Activity

For use with the **Western Story Playset**. Directions in quotations are from the original game by Todd Goff, © 2001, freely available on the Internet . Goff calls this an "entry-level wargame." http://boardgames.about.com/od/free8x8games/a/cowboys_indians.htm.

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Materials: chess or checkers board (large is better), Playset, a pair of dice, game instructions (laminated, in Toys & Games section of notebook), clipboard or notebook, pen or pencil

How-To (suggested):

1. Preparation –

- a. This game is played in teams of 2 or 3
- b. Each side should have a **designated Recorder**, who will not play, but who will record **comments made by players** on his/her side.
- c. Have each player or team brainstorm a response to this Question, as the recorder writes: **What do you know about battles between the Indians and the non-Natives? (consider: weapons, fighting methods, leaders, specific battles, outcomes)**
- d. Provide a few minutes for sharing of responses

2. Play –

- a. Note that there are two sides, Indians and non-Natives, who could be cowboys or soldiers or neither. Have students decide upon a side. (The Recorders should record how and why this is done).
- b. Distribute board, dice, Playset and instructions
- c. Divide pieces. Examine them. Recorders should record comments of the players.
- d. Note to students that there are no Cavalry in the set – have the teams decide upon a rule that will designate Cavalry for each side. Record this rule and the reason for it. For example:
 - i. Crouching figures are cavalry
 - ii. Red figures are cavalry
- e. Play the game, reading instructions aloud. (Note: students may ask for materials to make a Fort or Village).
- f. Recorders should write down comments **and significant actions** made by the player(s) on his/her side.

3. Reflection –

- a. Each side should review the comments recorded by the Recorders, then the brainstorming list prepared at the beginning of the activity.
- b. They should discuss these questions (and others):
 - i. What side did you expect to win?
 - ii. What inequities did you find in the playing pieces? How did this affect the game?
 - iii. What words or actions indicated that one side was "playing" differently than the other?
 - iv. Where did these words or actions come from? (that is hard to answer)
 - v. What comments in the Directions contain Indian stereotypes?

- vi. What aspects of the figures themselves are stereotypical? For example, are weapons and clothing accurate?
4. **Review & Extend** –Research and report on some actual confrontations, including Little Big Horn and Wounded Knee, and famous Indian leaders. Be sure to include photographs in the report.