

Make a Game of Pick-Up Sticks

Pick-Up Sticks is a game you can play on your own or with others that began in the 1800's! In this activity, we'll make our own set using materials available to us and learn how to play this long-loved game!

Ages: 5 & Up

Time: 1 hour

Supplies

- Wooden sticks- sticks from outside, wooden skewers/chopsticks, or popsicle sticks. The traditional game requires 41, but use however many you want!
- Markers, paint and paintbrush, or tape for decorating your sticks
- Paper and writing utensil to keep score

Making your Stick Set

Gather your wooden sticks and decide how you will decorate them. You can make your sticks different colors or patterns and assign each color/pattern a different point value. Below is an example of a point value chart you can use. Use this one or make your own!

- BLUE- worth 1 point
- YELLOW- worth 2 points
- RED- worth 3 points
- GREEN- worth 4 points
- PINK- worth 5 points



How to Play

- Gather all of your sticks into an upright bundle and hold them a few inches over your playing surface. You can play on the ground, inside or outside, or on a large table top.
- Release the bundle and let your sticks fall randomly onto your playing area.
- Gameplay begins! Player number one will begin picking up sticks, trying their best not to move any sticks other than the one they are picking up. If player one successfully removes one stick, they can attempt to remove another. This continues until that player makes a mistake and causes another stick in the pile to move or until they reach the maximum number of sticks to be removed in one round. You can set this number before playing! Add up player one's score at the end of their round.
- The next player then attempts to remove a stick. They continue trying to remove sticks until another stick is moved or the maximum score is reached. Calculate player two's score at the end of their round.
- The game ends when no sticks remain. Whoever has the most points is the winner!

Good luck and have fun!

