

Learning objectives:

- To consider change over time
- To compare how children played in Norman Cornish's era to how children play now

Key vocabulary

traditional games, street games, inventive, individual, communal/team game, outdoors, social environment

Generate a discussion with the children starting with what they like to play – indoor games, outdoor games and even playground games perhaps.

Do the children play outside in the street when they go home? If so, what do they play? If not, why not? Perhaps the road is too busy with traffic/too many parked cars.

Use the PowerPoint to look at street scenes that Norman painted. Encourage discussion. What are the children doing in the images?

Look at the games they are playing and what they are playing with – bogie cart, ropes, kicking a football (or kicking a can sometimes), boolers (metal hoops which you rolled with a stick)

Talk to the children about street games that children played in the past. In Norman Cornish's time and in his paintings, children were expected to entertain themselves. There was little money for expensive toys. Nevertheless, children still played and enjoyed themselves.

Fortunately, there was little in those days so the street became a playground.

Norman Cornish himself once said:

'A street with slag heaps might not sound very nice or very appealing but to our inventive young minds, it was an adventure playground'

Typical street games would include:

Skipping (sometimes called Jump Rope) was a favourite game, either as an individual holding an end of the rope in each hand or in a group where the ends of a longer rope were held by two different people. Any number of children could come in and skip together and they would count to see how many turns were possible before someone stumbled over the rope and stopped it. Sometimes children would play at "calling in" a certain child by name and then vary the speed of the rope so that the child doing the jumping had to jump faster or in some sort of fancy manner such as high or low or on one foot.

Imagination was evident back then and games were largely played with friends outdoors.

In the past, the streets were the only place for children to have fun. For children, the street meant playing games, sharing and communicating. It was the best place to play football – especially the back streets, jump rope with friends, a ball game called 'Kerby' - a well-known street game involving two people throwing a ball across the street and aiming at the opponent's kerb.

The street was a social environment where children learned to take turns, to share, to communicate, to be inventive and creative – often making up new games together and even devising their own set of rules to play by. Street play was an important part of a child's development. Of course, children would sometimes fall out with each other but that was all a learning experience too – learning to forgive and forget, resolve conflict, move on and work together.

Nowadays, children tend to play individually rather than together in virtual reality worlds that games stations create – virtual games in virtual worlds.

Investigate some of the popular favourites mentioned below and have the children play some of them.

- Hopscotch
- Blind Man's Bluff
- Four Corners
- May I?
- Piggy in the Middle
- Dck, Duck, Goose – a circle game
- The Farmers in his Den – a circle game
- Lucy Locket – *a circle game 'Lucy Locket lost her pocket Kitty Fisher found it. There was not a penny in it but a ribbon round it... Now it's time to close our eyes, close our eyes, close our eyes. Now it's time to close our eyes, close our eyes, close our eyes. And look behind you! ' A chase round the circle then begins*
- Spud (similar to Dodgeball)
- Two-baller
- Chants often linked with Hand-clapping

There are opportunities to investigate old photographs of children playing in the 50s/60s for example.

Plenary

Recap on learning and compare with how children play now compared to how they played back in Norman Cornish's particular time, in his 'slice of life'.