THE GAME OF THE GOOSE

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To Ana,

For that long ago summer when we went looking for “oca” boards all over Madrid’s Chueca and Malatesta neighborhoods that I could use with my students in the States. They worked.

Graciñas.

Xosé Manuel
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Introduction

A few summers ago I traveled to Spain to walk one of the Roads to St. James (Caminos de Santiago), mostly for secular reasons, but that’s another workshop.

Most European schools are in session until the end of June or the beginning of July; at least they were then. Consequently, I had the opportunity to visit some schools in different parts of the Iberian Peninsula. It was there that I encountered the ancient “juego de la oca,” or “goose game,” a table game adapted to the academic subjects the students were learning. I was very impressed as I saw how enthusiastically they played it; afterwards they taught me the game in boards they had proudly created as family projects. I remember thinking that this was the pedagogic find of a lifetime, as the game was easily adaptable for all ages, grade levels, and subjects. I knew there and then that I was going to teach it to my students in the States, adapted to the subjects I taught. I started conducting research on the game on both sides of the Atlantic, and have been using it with dynamite success with my students.

The purpose of this Idea Packet is for fellow-educators, students, and their families, to learn this multicultural/multilingual game, its history, significance, rules, potential, and how to use it in the classroom and at home; to buy into it, passionately and without reservations, and use it as an innovative vehicle to aid in meeting curricular objectives. It is encouraged to change, alter, and adapt the game as deemed necessary; no copyrights infringements apply (the ancient Greeks were too busy tearing down walls) and most likely the Goose Game Police won’t be around to notice.

This project contains a summary of the game’s millenary history, how to play it, bilingual Goose Game rules created specifically to be enlarged, laminated, and used, in classrooms and homes, related-Internet resources, sample game boards, literature, classroom activities, illustrations, and a bibliography.

Lastly and more than anything, it is a game. Have fun.

Saludos,

Xosé Manuel Alvariño

Brief History of the Goose Game
There are various interpretations of the origin of the “Game of the Goose,” or “Goose Game,” A.K.A. “Juego de la Oca” (Spanish), “Gioco Dell’Oca” (Italian), “Jardin de L’Oie” (French), “Gänsspiel” or “Ganzenbord” (Deutsch), “Joc de la oca” (Catalan), “Jogo do Ganso” (Portuguese), and more.

Published by Johann Raab in Nuremberg in the late 18th century, this print is documented as a hand-colored lithograph. It's more likely a woodblock print, since lithography was invented in 1796.

Researches have linked the game to various labyrinthical drawings found as far back as prehistoric times in various parts of the globe, Egypt being one. The goose, on the other hand, has been regarded as a wise, ancestral, animal, of symbolic importance; the only one that can walk, swim, and fly. Some document
the Goose Game to circa 3,000 B.C., the discus of Phaistus, and the siege of Troy; the argument being that Greek soldiers invented it to pass the time during the decade-long war.

It is also documented that Spain’s King Philip II received it as a gift from Florentine ambassador Francesco de Medici in the 1500’s, and that from the Castilian Court, it went on to become popular with noble and ordinary Europeans.

There are other sources that trace its beginnings to Russia, England, and France. By the 16th century the game is documented to have existed in Italy and Britain; in Mexico in the 1800s.
That having been said, independently of the source one chooses to believe, the fact is that it became a very popular, traditional, game, played mostly in Europe (these days losing ground to cyber-games, although Net versions of the Goose Game exist), as a family entertainment. Commercial versions appeared in the 19th century, featuring typical European characteristics as an old well and kids wearing period clothes. It is thought to be the prototype for many commercial European racing board games of recent centuries. For some unexplained reason(s) the game did not travel well to the Western Hemisphere, although it is known in various parts of Latin America.

Etching/engraving made by Mario Cartaro in Venice in 1588. The game squares, numbering up to 63, lead to the ships sailing in the centre of the board on the 'sea of suffering'.

The Goose Game was the basis for a game and TV stunt show in Italy named “Il Grande Gioco Dell'Oca” (“The Great Game of the Goose”), as well as the near-identical Spanish version, “El gran juego de la oca” (same). The long-running Spanish TV version of the game, now seen as re-runs, ran from 1993 to 1995, and
again in 1998, as “El nuevo juego de la oca” (“The New Game of the Goose”).
(See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_gran_juego_de_la_oca). There are many
video clips of the Spanish version in You-Tube.

Did you know that ... In his 1899 novel, “Le Testament d’un excentrique,” Jules
Verne used the US as a giant real-life “Game of the Goose” board, on which
seven players race each other in pursuit of a $60,000,000 inheritance.
“Playing the Game”

By

H. Petrer Aleff

-Adaptation-

There are no strategies to learn in the Goose Game. It is, like much of life, all about luck.

Number of players: A minimum of two, a maximum of …

Equipment: Game board, one or two dice, and one pawn per player.
Rules for the traditional version of the Goose Game

To start:

Each player chooses a distinct playing pawn and rolls the two dice; the highest roll determines who plays first. Turns move clockwise.

The game board pattern is a spiral of 63 fields, from the outside to the inside. Many fields have special hazards or benefits for players who land on them. The object of the game is to travel along the spiral from fields 1 to 63. The first player who successfully lands exactly on field 63 is the winner. On each turn, a player rolls the two dice (or one dice, should the teacher want the game to last longer) and advances the pawn along the spiral by as many fields as the sum of the dice. The player must deal with any situation on the space landed on, be they hazards or benefits. These are described ahead.

Start with all players' pawns on the space outside of “start.” Take turns rolling the dice and moving. It is not necessary to roll any particular number to enter a counter onto the fields. Two playing pieces may not occupy the same field at the same time. Whenever you land on an occupied field, that player's counter goes back to the space you came from, and you get the vacated space. (In short, you trade places.)

Whenever you land on a field with a goose, you double your move. That is, you advance again the sum of the dice you just rolled. If that puts you on yet another goose, advance again, until you no longer land on a goose. (You may land in a trap yet, after all this wild-goose chasing.)

You must arrive on field 63 by an exact count of the dice. If you overthrow the required number, you must step forward into 63 and then move backwards the surplus number of points. If this lands you on a goose, continue moving backwards the same count again.

You may use the number of either of your two dice to reach field 63. If you reach it with an exact count, it is not necessary to use the number on the second die. If neither of the two dice has the exact number you need to reach 63, you must use their sum for your back track.

The spacing of the goose fields is such that a roll of 9 on a first turn would send a player directly home, so a special provision is made for a roll of 9 on the first turn: If the roll is a 6 and 3, move directly to field 26; if the roll is a 4 and 5, advance all the way to 53. This rule applies only to a player's very first roll of the game. Rolling doubles does not count extra and has no special benefit.
**The Special Fields:**

6. **The Bridge** -- If you land on 6, advance immediately to field 12.

19. **The Inn** -- The good food and drink makes you sleepy, and you lose 1 turn. (Exception: if another player lands at the Inn within the same turn, you change places and you go back to the space that player just came from.)

31. **The Well** -- If you fall in the Well, lose 2 turns—unless another player landing there releases you sooner, sending you back to the field that player just arrived from.

42. **The Maze** -- You get lost and go back to field 30.

52. **The Prison** -- If you land in prison, you stay there until another player landing there relieves you and you go back to that player's last field.

58. **Death** -- Your goose is cooked. Go back to the beginning and start all over.

**Rules for the Team Variation of the Goose Game**

Number of players: Two or more  
Equipment: Game board, 2 dice, 4 counters per player for up to four players, or 2 counters for five or more players.

Start and play as for the traditional game, with the following exceptions: when you roll the two dice, you may use each of the two numbers separately. You can use one number for one of your counters and the other number for another of your counters. When one of your counters lands in the Prison, only that counter is stuck. You are free to move the others. However, when trapped at the Inn or the Well, you lose those turns and cannot move any of your counters for the duration. This is a lively race, so stay alert.

You may reach field 63 with an exact count on either die. When one of your counters reaches field 63 by an exact count, bear it off the board. The first player to bear off all four counters wins.
Feel free to adapt the game to your student, program, or family, needs!

Goose Game Rules
Classroom Posters in English and Spanish

The Goose Game Rules
The Goose: 5, 9, 14, 18, 23, 27, 32, 36, 41, 45, 50, 54, and 57. When your dice fall on one of the above, say “from goose to goose I move as I choose,” as you keep on playing.

The Bridge: 6 or 12. Go forward or backward as you say: “from bridge to bridge come see if I miss.”

The Dice: 26 or 53. Go forward or backward as you say: “from dice to dice I slide and get by.”

The Labyrinth: 42. Return to 30.

The Hostel: 19. Lose a turn.

The Jail: 52. Lose three turns.

The well: 31. Can’t play until other players pass by.

The skull: 58. Return to the beginning.

Reglas del juego de la oca
La oca: 5, 9, 14, 18, 23, 27, 32, 36, 41, 45, 50, 54, and 59. Dices, “de oca en oca y tiro porque me toca”. Vete a la siguiente casilla y tira de nuevo.

El puente: 6 y 12. Adelanta o retrícède al puente, tira nuevamente y dices, “de puente a puente y tiro porque me lleva la corriente”.

La Posada: 19. Pierdes un turno.

El pozo: 31. No puedes seguir jugando hasta que todos los jugadores pasen.

Los dados: 26, 53. Avanza o retrocede a una u otra casilla. Tira nuevamente diciendo, “de dado a dado y tiro porque me ha tocado”.

El laberinto: 42. Retrocede a la casilla 30.

La cárcel: 52. Pierdes tres turnos.

La calavera: 58. Empieza de nuevo.
Goose Game

Boards and Pawns
The board traditionally consists of a track with consecutively numbered spaces (usually 63), and is often arranged in a spiral with the starting point at the outside.
El Juego de la Oca vamos a aprender la /NW/

Salida

Tira otra vez

Recoge tres casillas

Avanza siete casillas

Avanza a la meta

Recoge cinco casillas

Recoge dos casillas

Tira otra vez

Retorna a la salida

Meta

http://orientacionandujar.wordpress.com/
A Game of the Goose Novel
Review by Richard, sixth grader, Minimbah* State School.
(http://minimbahss.eq.edu.au/wcmss/)

“Fred, Rowley and Rabbit didn’t know each other until the fence between the houses got taken down. On an innocent walk down to the shops Fred buys the Game of the Goose. Then it begins. Each child is transported into a different world. Fred is in a dungeon, Rowley with an old knight and Rabbit is in a ship. No-one knows how to win, who’s going to win or when! The Game of the Goose is a short listed book and it deserves it. Recommended for 11-15 year olds. I give it 10 stars – it’s a great read! I’ve read a couple of Ursula Dubosarsky’s books, including “My Father is Not a Comedian” and this is her best.”

*MINIMBAH means place of learning and is a word of the Wonnarua clan from New South Wales, Australia.
Teacher’s Notes on
Ursula Dubosarsky’s
“The Game of the Goose”

By Dr Wendy Michaels,
Lecturer, School of Humanities,
University of Newcastle -
Ourimbah Campus.

Produced in conjunction with the
inaugural Ourimbah Campus
Childrens’ Literature Festival
2004 - Weaving stories -
Spinning Yarns.
This adventure story takes three children into other worlds through the magical device of the board game and the throwing of the dice.

Before reading (aloud) the novel with the students, encourage them to talk about board games that they may have played, such as “Snakes and Ladders” and “Monopoly.” Have students identify features of these games, particularly the notion of luck in the throwing of the dice which controls where you can move on the board.

Explain that the novel uses the idea of a board game as the basis of its plot. But because it is also a journey story it has a serious motif of learning from the journey. Each of the characters will encounter adventures during the game and will learn important life lessons from these experiences.

- Read (aloud) the first three chapters and allow the students to talk about their first responses to the three children and their parents.
- Have them draw a map of the three properties with the fence down between them.
- Have they ever been involved in clubs like the one the children are making? What do they think of the rules of the children’s club?
- Do they think the burning of the factory was simply chance or bad luck – or was there some other force that was involved?
- Read (aloud) chapters 4 and 5. Invite the students to share their impressions of the characters. Why do they think Fred was so persistent in bullying Rabbit into handing over all his money and giving up the Noah’s Ark that he wanted? Is there some force beyond her control that made her so persistent? Have students respond to the image of the goose on the box – p.21.
- Read (aloud) chapters 5 and 6. In these chapters the children select their pieces and the game begins. Have students discuss the three pieces – the key, the dagger, and the silver shoes – and the three paths. What ideas are suggested by each of these pieces and different paths? What predictions are they making about what will happen as the students enter into the game?
- Read (aloud) chapters 7 and 8. In these chapters Rabbit journeys in a boat over the sea, through a storm, to an island full of nameless children. Have students discuss their responses to Rabbit’s journey. Where do they think he is? Did they expect him to respond in this way? How would they react if they were in his place? What do they think will happen to him? What may he learn from this experience?
- Read (aloud) chapters 9, 10 and 11. These chapters tell of Rowley’s experiences as he is drawn into the game and meets the Last Crusader. Have students discuss Rowley’s response to the position that he finds himself in. How would they respond if they were in this situation? What do
they think has happened to the knight and all his comrades? What do they think Rowley could learn from this experience?

• Read (aloud) chapters 12 and 13. These chapters tell of the delay in entering the game for Fred. She has to come to terms with the inscription on the game before she enters. Have students discuss what they think the meaning of the inscription is: ‘The race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong. But whoever hopes the most …’ What do the students think will happen to Fred in her journey through the game?

• Each of the children has entered a different path into the game. Have students compare and contrast the paths and the places with the kind of child each one is. How does their path fit, or not, their personality?

• Read (aloud) chapters 14, 15, and 16. In these chapters we see the next phase in the journey for each of the characters – all still separated. Have students talk about how the events show what is happening to each to develop their character. Have students predict what may need to occur to bring them back together again.

• Read (aloud) chapters 17 and 18. In these chapters Fred and Rowley are united and the knight is desperately weak. Have students discuss how Fred assists in this situation. What has she already learned?

• Read (aloud) chapter 19, which tells how Rabbit gets to leave the island. Have students discuss how Rabbit has begun to change from his experiences. How will he be united with the others?

• Read (aloud) chapters 20 and 21. These chapters form the climax of the story. Have students discuss the events and what it shows about the characters. How do they think the story may end?

• Ask students to write their version of the next chapter. Give them the first sentence(s) of the chapter and have them work in pairs to develop their own version of what could happen. Remind them that they must use the events that Dubosarsky has set up for the story.

You may want to say that Rabbit and Rowley stepped inside the gates of heaven. Ask the students what is heaven like? Nobody knows; afterwards, Rabbit and Rowley could only remember they had been there. They didn’t feel frightened. They had a funny sort of feeling that they had never felt before.

Allow time for sharing of the stories and discussion of the versions of the chapter before reading Dubosarsky’s version. Compare these different versions. Did any of the students predict that the children could be catapulted back in time to the shop where they first bought the game?

• Read (aloud) the final chapter of the novel. Ask the students what they think each of the characters has learned from the experience. Did they also notice that the man in the shop had become more generous? The narrator
also tells us that what happened to the children had long lasting effects even though they never spoke about it again.

• Encourage the students to discuss their responses and articulate the main message(s) of the story.

• Have the students work in groups to develop a board, book(s), or computer game(s), based on the events of the story. They may write their own rules for the game.

• Have students write an adventure story in which a character has a range of experiences and from which the character learns how to be a better person. Allow time for the development of the stories and the sharing of them with the rest of the class.
Classroom
Project
GOOSE GAME PROJECT

This is a fun, educational, family project.

The deadline to turn it in is 2 weeks from today, the first class day of the week of ____________.

I UNDERSTAND THAT MY PROJECT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IF I CHOOSE TO TURN IT IN AFTER THE DEADLINE.

- I WILL RECEIVE THREE GRADES -

1. Overall project design, and all information and materials requested (MAX: 100 points)
2. Class presentation (MAX: 100 points)
3. Demonstrating I know how to play the game (MAX: 100 points).
PROJECT GUIDELINES

1. I have to include “BY first/last name” on the front of the board.
2. I may keep or change the rules but must include all the symbols (bridges, skull, geese, etc), as often as I want.
3. I can write the questions on the game board spaces, cards, etc.
4. I may use funny and/or serious illustrations (photos and/or drawings and/or cartoons, etc), of any size and/or color. They may be downloaded from Internet, from magazines, and/or other sources.
5. The complete heading, rules, and answers to my questions, may be typed and must be sturdily pasted to the back of my game board, which can be of any shape or size.
6. I must have 4 copies of my rules, questions & answers, handy, to use as I play. Pasting a manila envelope on back of my game board to keep them in would be a great help.
7. I need to include 2 dice and 4 pawns in a plastic bag stapled to the back of my game board.
8. I can keep, alter, or change the game’s name.
9. Game boards and spaces need to be nicely decorated. The more attractive the design, the higher the grade.

Do I have any questions, comments, or suggestions?
1. US History

Ol’e Abe ‘n the Goose Game

I will include at least 25 illustrations of Abraham Lincoln on my board. They may not be repeated. I need to make up questions about Lincoln for each space.

Questions and/or suggestions?
2. Civics

WHERE IN THE STATES AM I?

Each space must have the name of at least 1, of 25, US states or capitals located in different time zones (Eastern Standard Time, Central Standard Time, Western Standard Time, Pacific Standard Time).

At least two questions or more SHOULD be asked.

For example:

1) What is the state’s or capital’s name? If you wrote the capital on the board, the player must say the state’s name, and vice versa.

2) What’s the absolute location (east, south, north, or west)?

3) In what time zone is it located? Each space has to be illustrated with an important landmark.
Questions and/or suggestions?

3. Math

TIMES TABLES GG

I want to reinforce my math FCAT skills. My game board will have at least 25 HIGHER THINKING SKILLS multiplication problems from 10 different multiplication tables. Two questions or more MAY be asked (I DECIDE): 1) what is the answer? and 2) what’s the answer multiplied by one or two HIGHER multipliers? They may not be repeated.
I will choose illustrations of at least 25 US presidents. They may not be repeated. I need to include at least TWO (OR MORE, I DECIDE) questions about each president on my board.
5. Science

Psych the Sci

I want to review my Science FCAT skills. I will include at least 25 terms to define and/or questions am now studying in my science class, on each game board space.

Questions and/or suggestions?
- Goose Game Project Evaluation and Grades -

Overall Project:                   Class Presentation:                  Knowledge of Game:

-CHECK LIST-

1. ___ I included “BY first/last names” on the front board.
2. ___ I did/did not change the rules*.
3. ___ I included all the symbols at least once.
4. ___ I wrote the questions on the board spaces, cards, and/or __________.
5. ___ I illustrated my board spaces
6. ___ I illustrated the board.
7. ___ I included the heading on the back of the board.
8. ___ Included my game rules.
9. ___ The questions and answers I researched are included.
10. ___ There are 4 copies of the questions & answers.
11. ___ There’s a plastic bag stapled to the back with 2 dice and 4 pawns.

12. ___ I named my game: ________________________________.

13. ___ Spaces and boards are nicely illustrated.

14. ___ I aim to get a grade of _____ for my class presentation.

15. ___ The work I put into my project should earn a grade of _____.

16. ___ *Extra credit: if you changed the rules, write a detailed paragraph indicating why and how.

17. ___ Extra credit: Evaluation: optional. Write a paragraph indicating your opinion of this project. Give details.
Goose Game
Bilingual/Multicultural
Internet Resources
English-Language Internet Resources

Introduction to the Goose Game  http://www.recoveredscience.com/gooseintro.htm

Goose (Game of) Online Encyclopedia Britannica:
http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/GOA_GRA/GOOSE_GAME_OF_.html


Museum of Childhood: Game of the Goose:
http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/collections/games/board_games/gameofgoose/index.html

Game of the Goose Spanish TV Version (“El Gran Juego de la Oca”):
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_gran_juego_de_la_oca

Phaistos Disc:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaistos_Disk
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Phaistos_Disc
http://www.flickr.com/photos/aiscube/3050168565/


The Umanovisie Goose Game: a new entertaining way for cultural integration: [http://www.umanovisie.nl/Teksten/international__article.pdf](http://www.umanovisie.nl/Teksten/international__article.pdf)


THE GREAT GAME OF THE GOOSE IN MIRANO SQUARE

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Spanish-Language Internet Resources


Disco de Festos – Wikipedia:


Encarta

El Juego de la Oca [http://sirauras.iespana.es/sirauras/temas/juegosmesa.htm](http://sirauras.iespana.es/sirauras/temas/juegosmesa.htm)


Abolengo del juego de la cca
Fichas de lectoescritura
http://orientacionandujar.wordpress.com/2009/03/09/fichas-de-lectoescritura-el-juego-de-la-oca-2/

El juego de la oca, ¿diversión o misterio?
http://funversion.universia.es/curiosidades/sorprendente/juego_oca.jsp

La oca de la convivencia
http://www.homoprosocius.org/archivos/Oca_convivencia.pdf

El Grand Juego de la Oca Wikipedia

Juegos de mesa:
http://www.escuelai.com/spanish_culture/topicos_espana/juegodemesa.html

Juego de la oca para scouts http://asde.scouts-es.net/gs545/juegos/index.php?r=1&a=4


El juego egipcio del senet:
http://www.institutoestudiosantiguoegipto.com/juego_del_senet.htm

El laberinto del juego de la oca:
On-Line Goose Games

(Scroll down) http://www.oviedo.es/personales/comecoco/oca/oca.htm

Goose Game board images:

http://images.google.com/images?hl=en&q=juego+de+la+oca&um=1&ie=UTF-8&ei=q-L0SeD1DJThtgefo8SpDw&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&resnum=4&ct=title


http://paginadenoemi.blogspot.com/2008/04/juego-de-la-oca-matematica.html
Juego de la oca (Game of the Goose). Game board shows 63 numbered spaces, or “casillas,” each illustrated with people, birds, animals, and objects, arranged in a spiral toward the center. The four corners, outside the game, show scenes of children playing outdoors. Instructions for playing the game are in the center of the spiral. This game with which many generations of Mexican children amused themselves, reached a circulation of approximately five million copies. Relief etching, with text in letterpress, by José Guadalupe Posada for Antonio Vanegas Arroyo, publisher, Mexico City, between 1890 and 190

**Goose Game Board Downloading**

The Goose Game (download boards)

- [http://modaruniversity.org/goose-game-board.pdf](http://modaruniversity.org/goose-game-board.pdf)

Goose Game Educational Activities [http://www.moebius.nl/game-goose](http://www.moebius.nl/game-goose)

Board game making:

Goose Game-related Games


Spanish language Goose Game Math Activities

http://redescolar.ilce.edu.mx/redescolar2008/educontinua/mate/nombres/mate1q.htm

http://redescolar.ilce.edu.mx/redescolar2008/educontinua/mate/lugares/ma2_06.htm

http://concurso.cnice.mec.es/cnice2006/material077/oca/portada_content.html

Goose Games Available Through the Net

http://www.boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/2785

http://www.amazon.com/Prendas-Snakes-Ladders-Spanish-Version/dp/B00104JINK

http://www.oviedo.es/personales/comecoco/oca/oca.htm


BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cristóbal, Pilar, El juego de la oca, Ediciones Jaguar (ISBN 84-96423-57-3)

http://www.agenttravel.es/pdf/eljuegodelaOca.pdf

Enciclopedia Sopena Universal, Tomo VI, Barcelona, Editorial Ramón Opena, 1964


Martínez de Lezea, Toti, El jardín de la oca, Maeva, 2007 (ISBN 9788496748279)

Martínez Vazquez de Parga, María José, El tablero de la oca: juego, figuración, símbolo, 2008 (ISBN 9788496822160)

LAST BOARD GAME SAMPLES BEFORE...
...THE END!