

Hopscotch Encyclopedia Article

Hopscotch by Julio Cortázar

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Hopscotch

Children in Europe and in North, Central, and South America, as well as in Russia, China, and India, play the same hopping game, with only minor variations, and variously called hopscotch, potsy, paradise, heaven and hell, airplane, and hop-round. The game is played on a pattern chalked on a sidewalk or traced in dirt. The pattern consists of several single and occasional side-by-side squares or circles, which are often sequentially numbered. Play begins when a player tosses an object (usually a rock) into the pattern, then hops into the pattern, careful to skip the square containing the rock and to land without touching the lines in all the empty squares. Scholars believe the game may be as much as a thousand years old, suggesting that the pattern derives from the figure of the labyrinth, a motif found as far back as the iron age, and through which youth were required to walk during an initiation ceremony.

Further Reading:

Bancroft, Jesse H. *Games*. New York, Macmillan, 1937.

Lankford, Mary D. *Hopscotch around the World*. New York, Morrow, 1992.

Sutton-Smith, Brian. *The Folkgames of Children*. Austin, University of Texas, 1972.