

## Marbles



Early marbles were made of clay or stone. The clay marbles were sometimes painted, but the paint soon wore off. Children called these fired clay marbles "crockies," or "commies" because they were the cheapest, common marbles. The stone marbles were often made of a polished form of quartzite or agate. The beautiful stripes of the stone made lovely patterns in the marbles. They were called "aggies." Later, patterned marbles were made of glass. These "glassies" could be one solid color, a milky glass with stripes, or clear glass. Some glass marbles were clear glass with a swirled pattern inside. Some of these were handmade and imported from Germany. They had a twisted spiral of colored filaments inside. Some children also used the steel ball bearings from machines as marbles. These were called "steelies."

Children played a variety of circle games with special marbles as "shooters" and other marbles tossed into a ring. The players tried to knock marbles out of the ring by hitting them with their shooters. Other games were also enjoyed. Marbles were dropped from eye level into a container with a hole in its cover. If the player succeeded in dropping a marble in, he or she scored points or in some cases won the marbles that were already in the container. Papa and Hildegard once played that game by inverting Grandma's only clay flower pot. When a marble hit the base, it cracked the pot and promptly ended that game.

Sometimes, a guessing game was played by holding a certain number of marbles in one or both closed hands and letting a partner guess how many. If the guesser was correct, he or she won the marbles the other player had in the fist. If the guess was incorrect, the guesser had to make up the difference with marbles from his or her collection.

Marbles were also used as game pieces in games such as Chinese Checkers.

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