

imagine

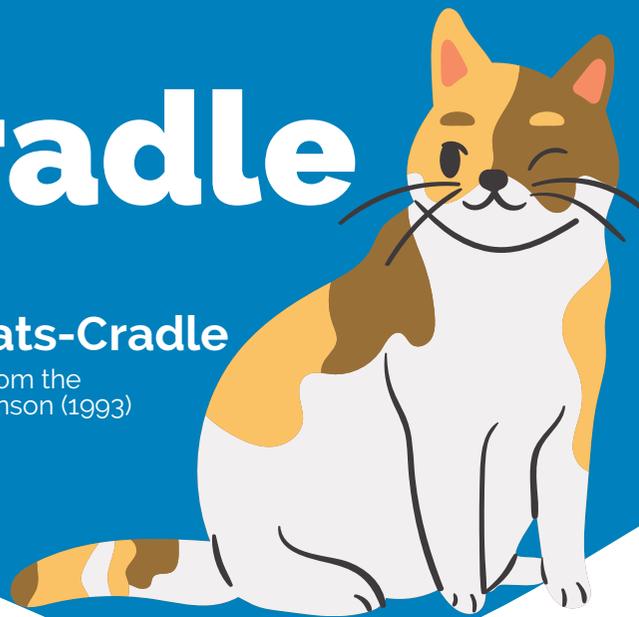


LIBRARIES

Cat's Cradle

Explore further at tinyurl.com/ImagineIF-Cats-Cradle

All Cat's Cradle illustrations and text adapted from the **Klutz Cat's Cradle Book Kit** by Anne Akers Johnson (1993)



Background



Cat's Cradle is one of the oldest **games** in human history. It is a type of **string figure**: the art of making pictures or telling stories with string and your hands (or sometimes feet).

String figures are a **storytelling tradition** in many cultures around the world including among Arctic Indigenous Peoples, Aboriginal Australians, East Asians, Pacific Islanders, Africans, Europeans, and Indigenous Americans. The game Cat's Cradle is a European version of string figures.

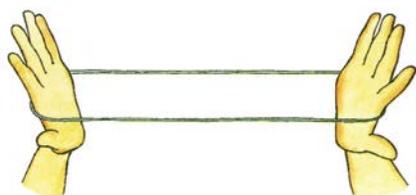


Cat's Cradle is played with a **circle of string looped around a player's fingers**. The player or players manipulate the string by looping, shifting, and adjusting it to form shapes. Multiple players pass the string **back and forth** between their hands.

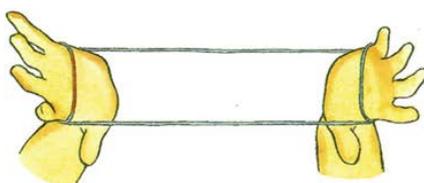


Images by Associate Press, published by The Japan Times; Jennifer Hubble, published by TheFancyNavajo; and Noah Echalook, published by the Canadian Museum of Civilization

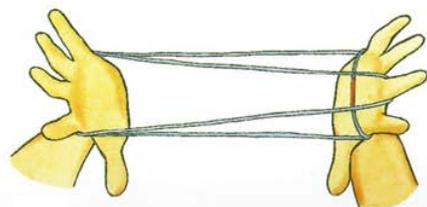
Basic Cat's Cradle



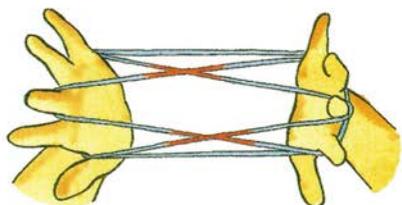
1. Loop the string around both hands, leaving your thumbs out of the loop.



2. Loop the string around both hands again so that it wraps around the back of your hands twice and crosses your palms once.



3. Reach across with the middle finger of your right hand and catch the string that runs across your left palm. Pull your hands apart.



4. Repeat step three with your left middle finger. This shape is called **Cat's Cradle**.



Did you know?

Diné/Navajo people only make string figures during the winter when spiders are dormant.

From Cat's Cradle to Soldier's Bed



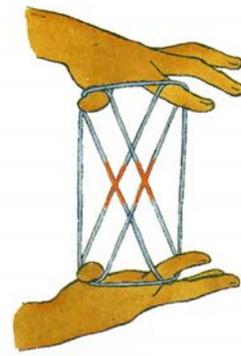
1. Invite your partner to make Cat's Cradle. Looking straight down at their hands, see the two places where the strings cross in an X shape. Pinch the Xs where they cross.



2. Keeping pinching the Xs and pull them out past the side strings.

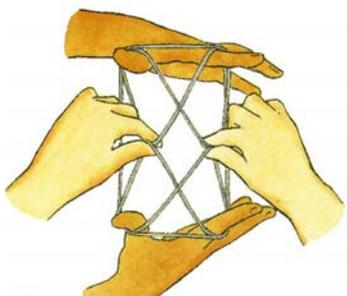


3. Keep pinching the Xs and turn your hands over, pushing your fingers down outside the side strings then up into the open center.

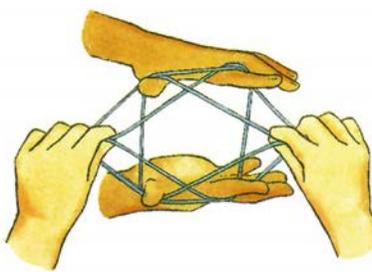


4. Pull your hands apart and have your partner drop the strings to their hands are free. This shape is called **Soldier's Bed**.

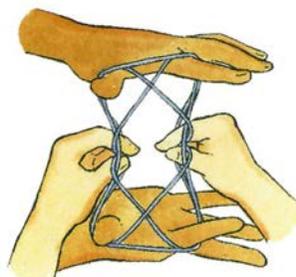
From Soldier's Bed to Candles



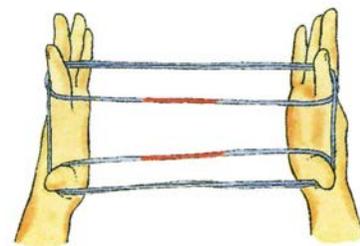
1. Invite your partner to pinch the places where the Xs cross.



2. Keeping pinching the Xs and pull them out over the outside strings.

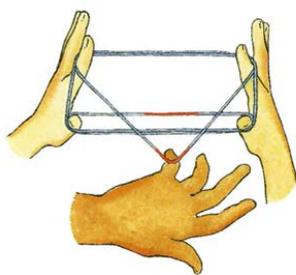


3. While still pinching those Xs, duck your fingers under the outside strings and push them up into the open center.

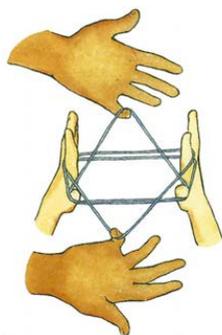


4. Pull your hands apart and have your partner drop the strings to their hands are free. This shape is called **Candles**.

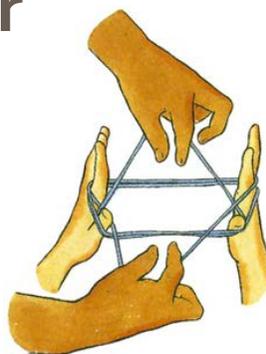
From Candles to Manger



1. Use your right pinkie to hook the left middle string and pull it way out over the outside strings.



2. Next, hook the right middle string with your left pinkie and pull it out over the outside string. You should see two little triangles.



3. Hold your pinkie strings tightly and turn your hands over so the palms face down. Pinch your thumb and first fingers together and push them down into the triangles and under the outside strings and up into the center.



4. Keep holding the pinkie strings tightly and spread your thumbs and first fingers apart as you pull your hands apart. Have your partner drop the string from their hands. This shape is called **Manger**.



Watch string figures in action at tinyurl.com/ImagineIF-Cats-Cradle