4th Grade

Lesson 5: Physical Education | 15-20 minutes

Activity 1: Sweep the Plankhouse

Summary:

Students play *Sweep the Plankhouse*, an active, community-building game where they move through space, listen for cues, and quickly organize themselves into small groups that represent actions from daily life in a Plankhouse community. Through individual movement and cooperative formations, students practice body awareness, spatial awareness, and teamwork. This game encourages flexible thinking, inclusiveness, and shared decision-making. Skills that help students participate in group responsibilities, much like how community members work together in everyday tasks.

This lesson helps students:

- Organize themselves in changing groups using movement, listening, and cooperation.
- Solve group formation challenges by working with nearby classmates, not just close friends.
- Participate in a shared activity where everyone contributes to the success of the group.

Key Discovery:

Students discover that working together quickly, kindly, and flexibly helps the whole group succeed, and that shared tasks require cooperation and awareness of the people around them.

Standards	• Primary: PE.1.4.5, PE.4.4.1, PE.4.4.2, PE.4.4.3, PE.4.4.4, PE.4.4.5:
Materials	• Sweep the Plankhouse Instructions • Teacher Quick Card for calls (optional)
Vocabulary	• **Round Dance**- A friendship dance done between friends or relatives at a gathering or celebration. • **Plankhouse:** A traditional cedar plank home used by Indigenous people of the region.



Something
4th Grade

Setup and Logistics

- Establish clear boundaries for safe movement.
- Practice the actions and formations so everyone knows how to join in.

Class Flow

Activity 1: Sweep the Plankhouse

Step 1: Introduce the Game and Practice the Movements

- Explain that Sweep the Plankhouse is a movement game where students start by "sweeping" individually and then quickly come together in groups when they hear a call such as:
    - "Sweep the Plankhouse." Individual sweeping motions while walking around the space.
    - "Look over the horse." 2 students: one on hands and knees, one looking over the horse to the horizon.
    - "Build a Fire." 3 students: one squats, two make fire motions by wiggling their hands and fingers.
    - "Do the Round Dance." 4 students make a circle and dance.
    - "Paddle the Canoe." 5 students form a line and paddle while stepping slowly forward.
- Invite the students to listen carefully, practice the moves, and safely in the space.

Ensure that students know they may join any nearby group, so everyone feels welcome.

Step 2: Play the Game

- Students begin by Sweeping the Plankhouse.
- When the teacher calls an action, students quickly form the matching group size, shape, and action.
- Students without a group are "out" for that round only.
- To keep the activity inclusive and movement-based, any student who was "out" comes back in when the teacher returns the call to "Sweep the Plankhouse."

Teacher tips:

- Vary the order and pace of the calls.
- Mix up odd and even numbers for group strategy.
- Allow students who get "out" to help call the next movement.



Step 3: Think and Share

- Gather students to reflect.

Prompts:

  - What helped your group come together quickly?
  - How did you decide who would be which part?
  - What did you notice about working with people close to you versus finding your friends?

Observations:

- This activity is both a movement game and a strategy game. Notice which students quickly choose roles such as the horse or the fire—students who crouch or take supporting roles often stay in the game longer because classmates naturally form groups around them.
- The game promotes cooperation, quick thinking, and flexibility. Many students find success by joining groups near them rather than searching for specific friends.
- Pay attention to emerging leadership behaviors, for example, students who prefer to stand at the front of the canoe. You may notice that effective leaders help make sure others have a place in their group.

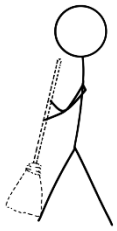


Fourth Grade - Physical Education | Sweep the Plankhouse

How to Play: Students begin by *Sweeping the Plankhouse* as they move safely around the space. When the teacher calls an action, students quickly form the matching group and pose in the described way. After each grouping, students return to the *Sweep the Plankhouse* action unless the teacher chooses to call another action right away.

Sweep the Plankhouse - Individual Movement

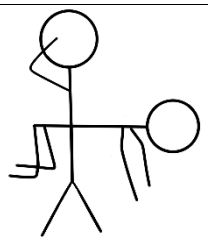
Everyone walks around the space pretending to sweep the floor. All students are "in" during this movement.



Look Over Your Horse - Groups of 2

- One student crouches on hands and knees to be the "horse."
- The second student stands close by and "looks over the horizon" with a hand over their eyes.

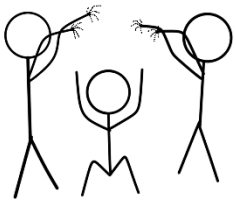
Students left without a partner are out for that round.



Build a Fire - Groups of 3

- One student squats to form the fire pit.
- Two students stand beside them and make upward "fire" motions with wiggly hands.

Up to two students may be out during this round.



Do the Round Dance - Groups of 4

- Students make a small circle (holding hands if permitted)
- They dance or step around together.

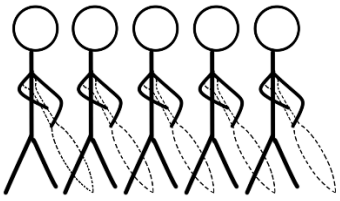
Up to three students may be out during this round.



Paddle the Canoe — Groups of 5

- Students stand in a straight line.
- Everyone makes a single-sided "canoe paddling" motion (not a rowboat motion).

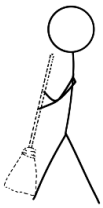
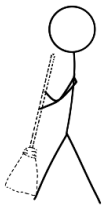
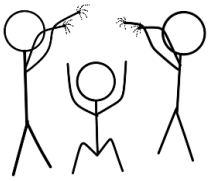
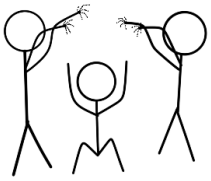
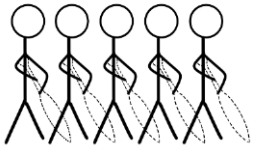
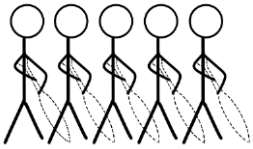
Up to four students may be out during this round.

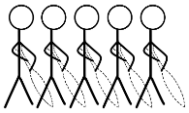
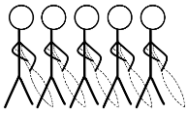


Game Flow & Pace Options

Teachers may:

- Return to *Sweep the Plankhouse* between each action so all students rejoin.
- Call actions back-to-back without sweeping to increase the pace.
- Mix up the order of the calls or vary the speed.
- Let "out" students help call the next action as a way to stay engaged.

Sweep the Plankhouse Student Quick Card	Sweep the Plankhouse Student Quick Card
 **Sweep the Plankhouse** Walk around sweeping. Listen for the teacher's call. Make the group and pose.	 **Sweep the Plankhouse** Walk around sweeping. Listen for the teacher's call. Make the group and pose.
 **Look Over Your Horse** *Group of 2* One is the horse. One looks over the horizon.	 **Look Over Your Horse** *Group of 2* One is the horse. One looks over the horizon.
 **Build a Fire** *Group of 3* One is the fire pit. Two make fire hands.	 **Build a Fire** *Group of 3* One is the fire pit. Two make fire hands.
 **Do the Round Dance** *Group of 4* Make a small circle. Dance or step.	 **Do the Round Dance** *Group of 4* Make a small circle. Dance or step.
 **Paddle the Canoe** *Group of 5* Stand in a line. Paddle on one side.	 **Paddle the Canoe** *Group of 5* Stand in a line. Paddle on one side.
Remember Move safely. Be kind. Help your group.	**Remember** Move safely. Be kind. Help your group.

Sweep the Plankhouse Teacher Quick Card	**Sweep the Plankhouse Teacher Quick Card**
Setup: • Clear space. • Review safe movement • Pre-teach group poses	Setup: • Clear space. • Review safe movement • Pre-teach group poses
Base Movement **Sweep the Plankhouse** Walk and sweep. Everyone stays in. Teacher calls a movement. 	**Base Movement** **Sweep the Plankhouse** Walk and sweep. Everyone stays in. Teacher calls a movement. 
Look Over Your Horse *Group of 2* One crouches as a horse. Partner looks over the horizon. 	**Look Over Your Horse** *Group of 2* One crouches as a horse. Partner looks over the horizon. 
Build a Fire *Group of 3* One is the fire pit. Two make fire hands. 	**Build a Fire** *Group of 3* One is the fire pit. Two make fire hands. 
Do the Round Dance *Group of 4* Form a small circle. Dance or step. 	**Do the Round Dance** *Group of 4* Form a small circle. Dance or step. 
Paddle the Canoe *Group of 5* Stand in a line. Paddle on one side. 	**Paddle the Canoe** *Group of 5* Stand in a line. Paddle on one side. 
Game Flow Options: • Return to sweeping or call actions quickly. • Mix order of actions • Out Students help call	**Game Flow Options:** • Return to sweeping or call actions quickly. • Mix order of actions • Out Students help call
Teacher Reminders: • Encourage teamwork and safety. • Notice strategies. • Celebrate creativity	**Teacher Reminders:** • Encourage teamwork and safety. • Notice strategies. • Celebrate creativity