Yo-yos



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Chapter 1
History of the Yo-yo

Did you know that the yo-yo is the second-oldest known toy in the world? (The doll is the oldest known toy.)

The fun and challenge of spinning a yo-yo has been a popular activity for children and adults all over the world for thousands of years.

Crazes come and go. Sometimes yo-yos are extremely popular, then they seem to disappear. Suddenly, a new yo-yo is designed, or someone invents an amazing trick, and the craze starts again.





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Greece

We know from a vase in the Museum of Athens that young people in Greece played with yo-yo-shaped equipment at least 2,500 years ago.

The picture on the vase *(see right)* shows a young person using a *terracotta* 'disc'. The disc is similar to what we now call the yo-yo.



People in Ancient Greece had ceremonies where they offered gifts to their gods. Young people would give a favourite toy, such as a disc, to signify that they had grown up.

One of these terracotta discs is in the Museum of Athens. Dated at 500 BC, it is thought to be the oldest surviving 'yo-yo'.

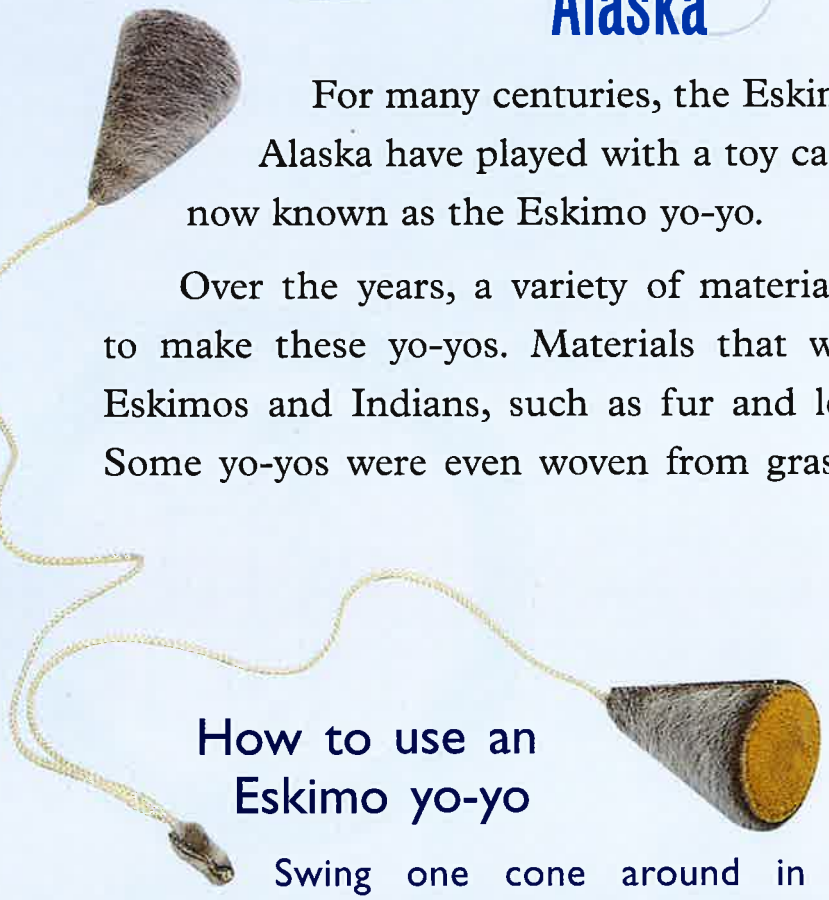


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Alaska

For many centuries, the Eskimos and Indians in Alaska have played with a toy called a 'chuk-chuk', now known as the Eskimo yo-yo.

Over the years, a variety of materials have been used to make these yo-yos. Materials that were handy to the Eskimos and Indians, such as fur and leather, were used. Some yo-yos were even woven from grass.



How to use an Eskimo yo-yo

Swing one cone around in a clockwise direction. Then swing the other cone around in an anti-clockwise direction. See how long you can keep both cones spinning.





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Europe

Two hundred years ago, yo-yos were very popular with children and adults in Europe.

This painting shows the Duke of Normandy as a young boy, playing with a yo-yo. This picture was painted in France in 1789.



In Paris, during 1791, yo-yos were called the 'jou jou de Normandie'. These yo-yos were mostly made from glass and ivory.

In June 1815, the Battle of Waterloo was fought between the French and the English. Many soldiers on both sides had a yo-yo to play with when they were not fighting.



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Philippines

The word 'yo-yo' originates from the Tagalog people of the Philippines. Yo-yo is the Filipino word for 'come come', meaning come back. In 1860, the word 'yo-yo' was recorded for the first time in a Filipino dictionary.

Hundreds of years ago, Filipino hunters used weapons shaped like giant yo-yos to stun animals, or capture them by getting them tangled up in the string.
Yo-yos have always been popular with children and adults in the Philippines. Some people carve their own yo-yos and decorate them with designs such as palm trees, birds or the sea.

