

Capture the flag is a popular recess game in American schools. The basic principle of the game involves two teams trying to obtain the other's flag. Players who stay on their own side are safe, but when a player crosses midfield and enters the opponent's territory, he or she can be tagged out. Those that are tagged while attempting to secure the opponent's flag are considered "out" and sent to "jail." The "jail" is a place where players sit out until they are "freed." Players in the jail often form human chains to make it easier for a teammate to free them. Players on a team often plan strategies to obtain the opponent's flag such as using diversions and decoys. If a player on the team obtains the flag and brings it back to his or her territory without being tagged, the team wins. "Stealing Sticks" is a variant of Capture the Flag played in the United Kingdom and Australia. In this version, a pile of sticks replaces the flag and only one stick at a time can be brought to enemy territory. Forms of Capture the Flag have recently become popular with adults living in cities. In these kinds of games, each team's territory is much larger than half of a field and participants may use GPS devices and cell phones to track down the other team's flag.

The general idea for Capture the Flag comes from a common practice on many battlefields: the bearing of the flag. In many battles, the lowering or capturing of a country's flag signaled the loss or forfeit of the battle. Many countries, states, or regiments took great pride in their flag as a result, and would do anything to protect it. In wars such as the Civil War, Union and Confederate soldiers would each have a color bearer or guard run through the battlefield with their side's flag. The role was important in that it allowed soldiers to determine the location of their units and the pace of the march in the turmoil of the smoke-filled battlefield. Color bearers were typically unarmed and thus suffered a high casualty rate.

In the present day, flags are not flown in such a way as they were in those battles; however, the symbolic aspect of such rituals are preserved. Color guards today often present their institutional flags at symbolic events, such as sporting events or conferences. So, next time you are running through rival territory in a game of Capture the Flag, remember the historical significance of what this game represents!

1. **Which of the following is a rule for Capture the Flag? Select all that apply.**
  - a. Players can form human chains to make it easier for a teammate to free them
  - b. Once a player obtains the opponent's flag, the game is over
  - c. Players are safe in their own territory
  - d. Players can be tagged out in their own territory
  
2. **In general, the first paragraph involves...**
  - a. a discussion about the history of Capture the Flag.
  - b. a discussion about the rules of Capture the Flag.
  - c. a discussion about a new type of Capture the Flag.
  - d. a discussion about the symbolism of Capture of the Flag.
  
3. **Which of the following sentences in the first paragraph reflects the fact that Capture the Flag requires thinking?**
  - a. The "jail" is a place where players sit out until they are "freed."
  - b. If a player on the team obtains the flag and brings it back to his or her territory without being tagged, the team wins.
  - c. The basic principle of the game involves two teams trying to obtain the other's flag.
  - d. Players on a team often plan strategies to obtain the opponent's flag such as using diversions and decoys.
  
4. **What is the main idea for the second paragraph?**
  - a. The Flag is very important in Capture the Flag
  - b. Flags have long histories
  - c. Flags have been historically significant in wars and battles
  - d. Capture the Flag has a long and interesting history
  
5. **What was the purpose of the color bearer in battle?**
  - a. To help soldiers know the location of their units
  - b. To help soldiers know where to aim their weapons
  - c. To help soldier know which side was winning the battle
  - d. To sacrifice for the sake of his army
  
6. **Which is NOT true about color bearers?**
  - a. They helped soldiers determine the locations of their units
  - b. They had a hard time defending themselves
  - c. They helped set the pace of the march
  - d. Color bearers only became important after the Civil War
  
7. **What does "turmoil" mean in the sentence below?**

The role was important in that it allowed soldiers to determine the location of their units and the pace of the march in the **turmoil** of the smoke-filled battlefield.

- a. confusion
- b. speed
- c. destruction
- d. aftermath