

Intended for Grades: 1 - 3

Est. Time: 30 – 40 minutes

Date: June 2023

Lesson Title: HUMAN JAN KEN PO

Lesson Purpose: Students will:

- * Learn about different forms of communication
- * Become aware of personal leadership styles through play interaction
- * Build connection (pilina) within a team by having fun (icebreaker)

Materials & Preparation:

- * Space for teams to line up across each other
- * Prepare a list of teams (about 4 per team)
- * Attached illustration

Background Information:

You've probably played the quick decision-making game commonly called "Rock, Paper, Scissors". In Hawai'i, this game is called *Jan Ken A Po*. Paper beats rock, scissors beats paper, and rock beats scissors. The chant goes:

"Jan Ken' a Po (show hand sign), I canna' show!" (show hand signs)

This Human Jan Ken Po version has teams using their whole body and corresponding sounds to show their chosen animal (use illustration):

1. *Mo'o* (gecko, lizard) *The mo'o (gecko) wins over the makika (mosquito).*
2. *Makika* - (mosquito) *The makika (mosquito) wins over the 'Īlio (dog).*
3. *'Īlio* (dog) *The 'Īlio (dog) wins over the mo'o (gecko).*

Steps:

1. Create 2 or more teams of students. Try to have no more than 4 per team to start. The activity difficulty increases with larger groups.

2. Demonstrate the body movements and sound to represent the three animals, reminding them which creature wins over which. (use illustration)

- *Mo'o* (gecko/lizard): hands wide open, facing forward and moving alternately up and down with their feet marching, like a gecko crawling on a window, while clicking their tongue against the roof of their mouth.

- *Makika* (mosquito): hands flapping in the air, like wings flying, and saying "bzzzzzz"

- *'Īlio* (dog): crouch like a sitting dog, and "bark"

Then have them practice the chant to precede the motions: "Jan ken' a po, I canna' show" or "1-2-3-show", whichever works best for your grade level. Next, allow each group to practice the motions for each creature all together till they "get it."

3. Have two teams start while the others observe. Teams are given a brief huddle time to pick their animal (count down slowly 5-4-3-2-1). Then all chant together: “Jan ken a po, I canna’ show” or “1-2-3-show.” Each team will simultaneously demonstrate the creature they chose at the end of the phrase, and determine which creature won! Have them do at least five rounds, noting the winning team. Allow the others teams to challenge one another, while the class observes. You can have the winning teams challenge one another. Or, if you only have three teams, the winning team can challenge the waiting team. If you only have two teams, they can just keep going and having fun with it.

Optional Variations:

- For older students: Instruct students not to speak, so they need to figure out other ways to communicate with their team when they huddle.
- After some experience, split the class in half and try activity with two large teams, which is usually a little more of a communication challenge.

Reflection Questions:

- * *What did you like about this activity?*
- * *Share about any challenges you had.*
- * *Did you notice if someone became a leader in your group?*
- * *Was it easier or harder to complete the activity without speaking? Why?*

- Discuss communication skills and what’s important when working with others.
- Point out that there are no “right or wrong” roles in a group, just preferences.
- Explain that roles can also change, depending on the activity.

Resources:

Many websites share about the history of this activity and the current game in Japan.

HUMAN JAN-KEN-PO

