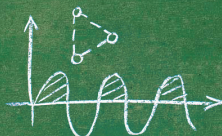




Opening The Windows Of Curiosity

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In a word

The word **marble** is derived from the Greek word *marmar*, which means “to glisten.”

In England, the game and the balls are called **taws**.

A person who plays marbles could be called a **mibologist** or a **mibster**.

The first marbles

Playing games with marbles or similar small balls has been around for thousands of years. Early cave dwellers are thought to have played with small round pebbles or balls made of clay.

Clay marbles have been found in Egyptians tombs, in Native American burial grounds and in ancient Aztec pyramids. The ancient Romans played with glass marbles.

In the 16th century, playing marbles was so popular that some European towns insisted that the game take place outside of town gates.

Marble scissors

Through most of their history, marbles were made of stone, bone, china, clay or real marble. Truly round marbles were rare and expensive. In 1846, a German glassmaker invented marble scissors (a mold to make marbles). With this instrument, a glassmaker could cut a rope of glass and form perfectly round balls.

In 1890, the first machine-made marbles were made in both Germany and the United States.

Akron, Ohio

For almost 100 years, Akron, Ohio was the industrial center of marble manufacturing in the U.S. Over the years, this city was home to 32 marble factories or corporate headquarters.

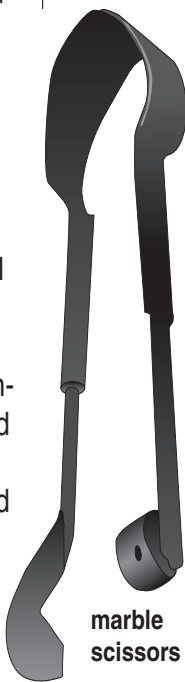
In the 1890s, **S.C. Dyke** mass-produced clay marbles. His factory could make about a million marbles a day. In 1903, **Martin Frederick Christensen** made the first machine-made glass marbles. The M.F. Christensen & Son Co. produced millions of toy and industrial glass marbles until 1917, when it closed.

WORLD OF WONDER Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology MARBLES

Marbles have been around since ancient times, and they are still played in many countries around the world. Marbles may be made from glass, clay, steel, plastic or agate. Highly collectible and fun to play, handmade glass marbles are appreciated for their size, shape, condition, color and historic value.

A sampling of different kinds of marbles

 Comet Opaque patch on opaque base	 Steely Looks like metal or steel	 Cat's-eye Transparent with swirl inside	 Tri-Lite Three color patches on opaque base	 Cub Scout Yellow and blue
 Black-eyed pea Opaque black and yellow	 Sunburst Yellow and red swirls	 Bumblebee Brown or black swirls on yellow	 Aggie Looks like an agate	 Robin Red and light blue
 Black Widow Black with red	 Dragonfly Light green and blue	 Swirl Covered in striped swirls	 Spider-Man Red and blue	 Cleary or Purie Transparent in any color



marble scissors

Shooting marbles

There are many ways to shoot a marble.

Some players make a pocket with their first finger and thumb. The marble is nestled in the pocket and then shot by flicking the thumb.

Others prefer to place the marble on the ground or in their hand and flick it with their first finger.



Did you know?

In 1950, Japanese manufacturers made the first cat's-eye marbles by injecting colored glass into a regular marble.

Neil Armstrong (the first man on the moon) described the Earth from space as a “big blue marble.”

Placing a hot, baked marble in cool water will achieve a crackled effect.

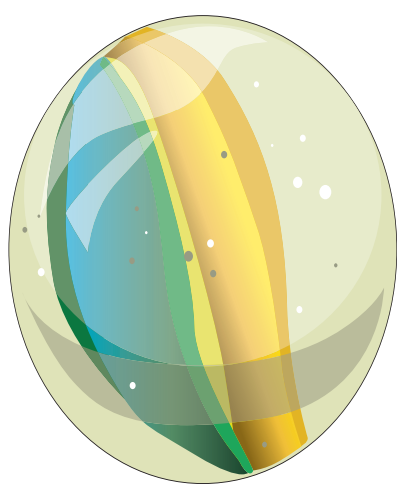
The average vintage marble can run anywhere from \$10 to a few hundred dollars. One of the most expensive marbles ever sold in 2015 for \$13,200.

Large marbles are sometimes called boulders, bonkers, mashers, thumpers, bumboozers or toebreakers. A “grandfather” is the largest marble, the size of a billiard ball or tennis ball.

Different games

There are hundreds of marble games, but today, the most common game played in tournaments is **ringer**.

To play ringer, two players (mibsters) arrange 13 marbles (ducks) in an X at the center of a 10-inch-diameter ring. The players take turns shooting into the marbles, scattering them. Shooters made of metal are not allowed. Any marbles knocked out of the ring are worth 1 point each. Each player continues until his or her shooter leaves the ring; then it's the next player's turn. Once all 13 marbles have been knocked out, the marbles are arranged in an X again. The game ends when one player has 50 points.



This **core swirl marble** is achieved with different-colored glass canes twisted to create swirls.

Vocabulary of play

“That mibster knuckled down with a taw and shot for my aggie duck.” If that sentence makes no sense to you, the partial list of terms below will help you understand it better.

Aggies – Marbles that are made from agate (a type of stone).

Bombing – Dropping a marble onto another marble.

Core – The inside of a marble.

Dubs – When a single shot knocks two or more marbles out of the ring.

Ducks or mibs – Marbles to be shot at.

Fairsies or friendlies – This is a rule (decided before play begins) stating that each player gets back all his or her marbles at the end of play.

Fudging – A minor form of cheating when a shot crosses the line of play.

Keepsies – This is a rule (decided before play begins) that states each player keeps any marbles they win.

Knuckle down – The player begins at the taw line with his or her knuckle against the ground.

Lagging – To decide who goes first, players shoot or bowl a marble from the pitch line to the lag line. The closet to the lag line goes first.

Lag line – This is the line you throw toward when lagging.

Mibster – A person who plays marbles.

Pitch line – The line you stand behind to lag.

Jumpsies or skipping – When a marble jumps into the air and hits the target marble without hitting the ground first.

Shooter or taw – A larger marble used to shoot.

Slip – When a marble slips out of a player's hand accidentally.

Target marble – The marble you are aiming at.

Taw line – The line that you shoot behind.

Quitsies – Any player may quit the game without losing their marbles.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; <http://www.american toy marbles.com>; <https://arizonahistoricalsociety.org>; <https://en.wikipedia.org>; <https://antiques.lovetoknow.com>; <https://www.neatorama.com>; <https://www.mentalfloss.com>

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