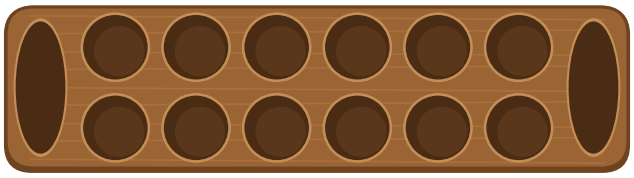
Oware

Name _____

Read about the seed-sowing game of West Africa.



An oware board: two rows of six pits, with a store at each end.

Oware is a seed-sowing game from West Africa. It is played most of all in Ghana, where the Akan people have played it for hundreds of years. It belongs to the mancala family, a group of hundreds of games played across Africa and beyond. The word mancala comes from an Arabic word that means "to move."

An Akan story explains the name. A man and a woman loved playing oware so much that they could not stop, so they got married and kept on playing. In the Twi language, oware is often said to mean "he (or she) marries."

An oware board is usually carved from a single piece of wood, with two rows of six pits. Players use 48 seeds, pebbles or shells. Mancala boards cut into rock have also been found at sites across Africa, but they are very hard to date, so nobody knows exactly how old these games are.

Oware also traveled across the Atlantic Ocean. In Antigua and Barbuda it is called warri, and it is the national game. Today people play oware all over the world, and there are clubs and tournaments for the best players.

Questions

1. Which family of games does oware belong to?

2. What does the word mancala come from?

3. What does the Akan story say about the name oware?

4. What is oware called in Antigua and Barbuda?