

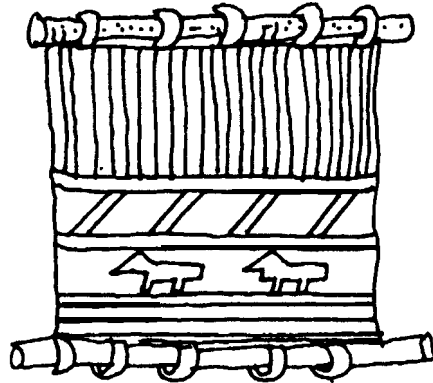
Native American Indian Crafts

Native American Indian Crafts: Weaving

Many Indians made their baskets with reeds of the same width in an over and under, over and under pattern. This method is called plaiting.

Paper placemats for Thanksgiving can be created using this method.

Wall hangings can be created on a cardboard loom using a variety of yarn, weeds, dried flowers, and cloth strips.



Native American Indian Crafts: Pottery

Native Americans dug clay from the earth and mixed it with water and sand to form clay. They molded this into pots and allowed a two- to three-day drying period. Beautiful designs were painted on the outside. For paint, dye was often made from berries, seeds, and plants. Brushes were made from weeds and animal hair.

HOMEMADE CLAY RECIPE

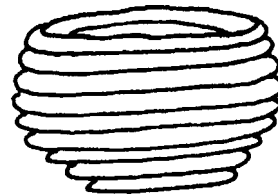
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 2 cups baking soda
- 1-1/4 cups water
- Pan
- Cookie Sheet
- Vegetable dye or food coloring
- Damp cloth

Procedure: Combine the cornstarch and baking soda in the pan. Slowly add the water while stirring the mixture. Cook over medium heat, while continuing to stir. When mixture becomes thick, add coloring. Then, spoon it out onto a cookie sheet. Knead gently. Cover with a damp cloth until cool.

POTTERY BOWL PROCEDURE

Use commercial clay, plasticene, or homemade clay recipe.

1. Make snake-like coils from the clay.
2. Make a round, flat piece of clay (about the size of the bottom of an average drinking glass).



Place the coil around the edge of the circular clay piece, and keep building up and up, layer upon layer, until the desired height is reached. The end of one coil can be joined with another during the building process. Scratch designs into the clay.

Native American Indian Crafts: Mask Making

Masks were used for ceremonies and festive occasions. They were made from corn husks, wood, gourds, leather, straw, and other items from natural surroundings. This can be an occasion for designing festive masks from butcher paper or from brown paper bags.

Native American Indian Crafts, Cont'd

Masks can be decorated with paint and feathers and other objects that convey a special message from the owner.

From Thread to Cloth to Thread

Have students examine loosely woven cloth (burlap is good for this activity) to note the warp and weft strands. Some of the early Navajo Indians traded items for bolts of material which they carefully pulled apart, and then reweave these threads using their own designs. Students can work together to make a fringe around large squares of loosely woven cloth, or burlap. Use these items in the classroom for decorations.

Tribes: Living Together, Sharing, Caring

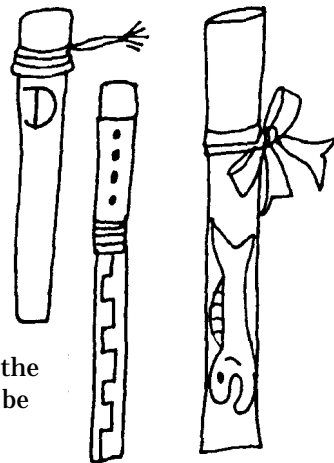
Indians lived in groups called tribes, and were faithful and loyal to their elders. Traditions were passed down from generation to generation. Discuss the meaning of traditions, and have students list some that we enjoy today. For example, it is a tradition in America that we celebrate Thanksgiving. In what way do we celebrate this holiday that reflects the ways of ancestors? (It is a day of giving thanks, a day of counting blessings, a day of feasting on certain foods, a day of getting together with family and friends.) This would be a good opportunity to review what students know about the first Thanksgiving that took place with the Pilgrims and Indians.

Today, Thanksgiving is one of the most heavily traveled periods by car and by plane. Why? People are traveling to be with family and old friends. Today, new traditions are being formed such as traditional football games on television for sport fans. Students can be invited to share their holiday customs.

We Can Make an Owner Stick

Some Indian tribes made owner sticks, and left them by the animal which they had just hunted in order to make their claim. In that way, others respected the ownership and did not touch the food. Indians carved animals and birds and attached them to the stick. They also used strings to weave handles or designs.

We can make an owner stick by using an actual stick or a 12-inch dowel rod. Decorate it, and add to it by using macrame yarn, beads, feathers. The owner stick can be gently placed by an unfinished project when a person has to leave. It gives the unspoken message, "I'll be back. Please do not touch." It is not to be used as a weapon, or it loses its owner.



Select an Indian Middle Name

Some American Indians have a middle name that reflects something special about them. For example, John Raincloud Smith might have been born on a day when the rainclouds were gathering overhead, or when it was actually raining. Traci Rose Petal Reynolds might have been born at a time of year when roses were in bloom. Ask students to speculate about these names: Daniel Singing Bird Hill, Emily Sunshine Kiri, Claire Still-Water Kyle.

Native American Indian Crafts, Cont'd

Students can think about selecting a middle name in the style of the Indians. It can be related to their birth month, the season of their birth year, their birthplace, or something that they especially like. It should be a very special name and selected with care. Have students make a new nametag for their desk which incorporates their new name.