

LESSON NINE: Beadwork

Time 30 minutes

Trunk Resources

Objects

Beaded rosette
Moccasin

Books and brochures

The Pawnee by Dennis Fradin
Traditions brochure (located in the back of manual)
Powwow supplement (located in the back of manual)

Activity

Pattern cards from bead loom

Teacher Resources

Different shapes of macaroni, quilting thread or dental floss, 4" diameter circle template, darning or embroidery needles, paint/brushes or markers, felt, table covering (optional)

Objectives

1. Students will identify three types of decoration used by Native Americans.
2. Students will design and construct their own rosette.

Historical background

When European explorers arrived in this country, they brought glass beads. These beads became a popular trade item with Native Americans. The Indians were anxious to trade quillwork and buckskin clothing for these "new" decorating materials. The early beads were rather large and called pony beads. Then a very small bead, called a seed bead, became popular. After 1870 a larger seed bead was introduced and is still in use today.

Different tribes used different methods of working with beads such as loom work, lazy stitch, overlay beading, and straight-line beading.

The Plains Indian women became experts at beadwork, decorating moccasins, shirts, and other apparel. Beaded designs were usually made on separate strips of hide that were attached to leggings or other items. Beadwork replaced the older art of quillwork.

(NOTE TO TEACHER: For more details on Native American beadwork, see *Traditions* brochure included in the back of the manual.)

Source: *Traditions* brochure, KSHS

Vocabulary

Beadwork – Ornamental decoration made using glass or plastic beads.

Loom – A frame for interlacing threads or yarns to weave cloth.

Overlay – A decorative and contrasting design or article placed on top of a plain one.

Pony bead – A larger sized bead brought to America with the Europeans.

Rosette – A circular shaped decorative piece usually covered with beadwork or quillwork. Native Americans attach them to clothing and wear them as jewelry.

Seed bead – A smaller sized bead brought to America with the Europeans.

Straight-line – Having the principle parts designed in a uniform way.

Activities

1. Review the techniques used by Native Americans to decorate clothing and other items. (Painting and quillwork are described on pages 41 and 44.)

Explain that when Europeans came to America, they brought with them many things the Native Americans had not seen before. One of these items was glass beads. The Native Americans gave things they had made to the Europeans in exchange for the glass beads. The Native Americans then learned to sew the colorful beads into beautiful designs to decorate clothing, pouches, jewelry, and other items. The beaded designs looked similar to quillwork designs.

Show students the beaded rosette, the moccasin, the photograph of beadwork on the cover of the book *The Pawnee*, the pattern cards in the bead loom activity, and the photographs in the powwow supplement. Point out how tiny each bead is and how long it must have taken to create these pieces.

2. Explain that students will create a “rosette” from macaroni beads that they may use as decoration or jewelry. (Rosette refers to circular shaped beaded or quilled decorative pieces.)
3. Using several different colors, have students paint macaroni pieces and allow them to dry.
4. Using a round object about four inches across, trace a circle onto felt and cut out.
5. Have students thread their needles and tie a knot in one end of the thread. (Double thread may be used for younger students.)

6. Have students stick the needle through the center of the felt circle and pull through until the knot catches. String one piece of macaroni onto the thread and stick the needle through the felt to the other side. This will firmly hold the macaroni “bead” to the felt circle.
7. Now have students bring the needle back up through the felt to the right side and then string another macaroni “bead” onto the thread. Continue this process in a circular formation until the felt circle is covered with “beads.”
8. Students may thread a piece of yarn or string through their “rosettes” to make a necklace, hair piece, or bracelet.

NOTE TO TEACHER: For younger children, it may be easier to string macaroni beads and not attach them to the felt.

Extended Activities

Creating beadwork patterns

Trunk Resource

Bead loom

Activity

- a. Using the bead loom from the trunk, have students create designs with the beads. Pattern cards are included or students may make up their own designs.
- b. Make sure that students read the instructions on the lid of the bead loom box.

Beadwork rosette

Trunk Resources

Worksheet #20 Beadwork rosette

Beaded rosette

Teacher Resources

Photocopy worksheet #20 for each student. Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils

Activity

- a. Give each student a copy of worksheet #20 and explain that this circular design is called a “rosette.” Rosettes are usually beaded or quilled and are made into necklaces or attached to clothing or worn as jewelry.
- b. Have students color the beadwork design on worksheet #20.