Teacher Background

As part of a larger conversation about American history and society, it is important for students to discuss and address racism and racial stereotyping.

Gallery Connections

One of the main ideas of the Mihtohseenionki gallery is the notion of bringing the cultures into the present day. Many people, young and old, have ideas of Native Americans as either frozen in the past or completely living in a modern society with no ties to the past. In reality, many Native Americans living as part of the modern world have maintained ties to the past. Because of the period in which they were made and the techniques used (many painters used non-Natives as models), it is difficult to find historical images that are fully accurate. As students explore the fine art images as well as the fine art pieces throughout the museum, have them use the questioning techniques they will develop in this lesson.
Tough Decisions: 
Propaganda, Advertising and Stereotypes

Indiana Academic Standards: Grade 8
Social Studies: Standard 5 – Individual, Society and Culture (8.5.9, 8.5.10)
Language Arts: Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking (8.7.7, 8.7.8, 8.7.13)

Objectives
Students will:
1. think about, talk about, and write about issues of racial stereotyping;
2. understand issues of propaganda in advertising; and
3. research and discuss current topics and events.

Time Needed
4 to 5 class periods

Materials Needed
• Copies of illustration provided
• Illustrations—from magazines, sports cards, the Internet
• Writing materials
• Research materials (ideally, access to the Internet)

A. Propaganda & Advertising

Procedure
What do your students think about Native Americans? What do they know—REALLY know—about American Indian cultures? Where do they learn about American Indian cultures—from the people themselves? From books? From newspapers? From Hollywood movies? From museums? Understanding the role that these kinds of visual images play in expressing and promoting popular ideas is critical to developing “media savvy” students.

1. Ask students to bring in images of Native American people that they can find at home or in their daily environment, such as newspaper clippings about sports teams with Indian names, products that feature images of Indians or Indian culture (Land O Lakes Butter, Calumet Baking Powder, Red Man Beef Jerky). Show and discuss these images in class. Ask students to come up with a list of adjectives—positive and negative—about American Indian cultures that they can learn from these images.

Encourage students to ask the following questions: WHO, WHAT and WHY. For example:
• WHO is the intended audience for these stories, products and images?
• WHAT stereotypes about Native American culture are either reinforced or challenged by these visual images?
• WHY are these kinds of Indian images used—do they help sell products or newspapers? Do they appeal to the general public? If so - WHY?

2. Develop a broader understanding of “propaganda” with your students by identifying the five basic techniques used in propaganda and advertising:
• “bandwagon,” persuading people to do something by telling them that others are doing it;
• “emotion,” using words or images that will make you react very strongly about someone or something;
• “testimonial,” using the words of a famous person to persuade you;
• “transfer,” using the names or pictures of famous people, but not including direct quotations from them; and
• “repetition,” repeating a central idea or product name at least three or four times.

Are any of these techniques used in the advertising and media images of Native Americans brought in by your students?

3. Look specifically at the illustration included in this booklet from Harpers Magazine (1870s) entitled “An Indian Foray,” depicting a violent (and fictional) attack on white settlers. ASK students to think again about WHO, WHAT and WHY.
• WHO is the intended audience?
• WHAT is the story this illustration is trying to convey?
• WHAT propaganda techniques are used in this illustration?
• WHY do students think Harpers Magazine included this illustration?
• WHAT kind of illustration would NATIVE AMERICAN artists draw about the encounter between Native and nonnative societies in the late 1800s?

B. Let’s Talk About It

Divide students into teams (pro and con). Present students with the following topic to debate: “The use of American Indian images by professional sports teams is disrespectful to Native American people.”

Research professional sports team websites and Native American responses to these issues; all this research can be easily conducted on the Internet. (In Whose Honor, available from New Day Films, www.newday.com, is an excellent source.)

1. Write up thoughtful responses to these issues and present in debate-style in class. Encourage students to remain “media savvy” — what elements of “propaganda” do they find in the materials they are researching? What techniques of propaganda are they using in their own arguments? What arguments could they find that contradict their position?

2. Role-play: Imagine how different people would respond to this issue. What would be the position of a professional baseball team manager? Of a 19th-century farmer in northern Indiana? Of a contemporary American Indian student in their school? Remember to ask WHO, WHAT AND WHY!

Adapting the Lesson

Grades 3, 4 and 5: The concept of racial stereotyping is important for students at all levels to discuss. One way to adapt this lesson for younger students might be for the teacher to bring in a variety of ads or products that depict Native Americans, in both positive and negative ways. The teacher can have the students decide which objects are positive or accurate depictions of Native Americans, and which ones are negative or inaccurate.

High School: Secondary students will benefit from and enjoy this lesson. The role play at the end of this lesson would be an excellent way for high school students to employ the concepts they learned in Activity A.

Assessment

Students should be assessed on their understanding of stereotypes and their participation in the debate. Students will:
• identify stereotyping by bringing something to class;
• identify media propaganda in class discussion; and
• debate and role play current social issues.

Resources

• Berkhofer. The White Man’s Indian.
• Dippie. Vanishing American.
• Doxtator. Fluffs and Feathers.
• Erasing Native American Stereotypes <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/outreach/sterotyp.html>
• Hilger. From Savage to Nobleman.
• Native American Children’s Literature in the Classroom: An Annotated Bibliography <http://library.humboldt.edu/~berman/naclit.htm>
• Pike. The United States and Latin America.
• Rollins and O’Connor. Hollywood’s Indian.
• Stedman. Shadows of the Indian.
• Racial Stereotypes and Images in American Media <http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/ethnicstudies/media_stereotypes.html>
Woodlands Beadwork

Grade 3

–Sue Davidson

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will reproduce a simple bead pattern of their own designs on a piece of cloth.

Teacher Background

Perhaps one of the most popular questions asked at the museum is “Where did Native Americans get their beads?” The answer depends on the time period in question.

Before contact with Europeans, beads were made of natural materials, such as bone, stone, shell, copper, ivory, clay and seeds. The holes in the beads were either made by forming the bead that way (using clay) or by drilling a hole in the bead. Some beads were strung on thongs for use as jewelry and other things, and some were appliquéd, or “spot-stitched,” to hides, usually to adorn clothing. Shell beads were used not only to decorate clothing and for jewelry, but were also woven into wampum belts, which were used as ceremonial records of significant events of the tribes. (Contrary to the stereotype, and old Hollywood movies, wampum was not used as money among the Northeast peoples, but was used to record information and was given as gifts or in token of important events.) While not all of these natural materials were available in the Indiana region, many made their way to this area through Native trade routes.

Europeans brought glass beads of many colors to North America and by the 18th century they were readily available through the Fur Trade. (Glass beads were primarily manufactured in what is now the Czech Republic and Italy.) As they were easier to use than beads of their own making, Native Americans quickly adopted them for adorning clothing, shoes, bags and other items, both for their own use and for trade. As their land base diminished and they were removed to different parts of the country, natural resources became scarce and Native Americans were forced to rely solely on items from trade.

Contemporary artists like Joe Baker (Delaware) purchase beads from stores, through mail order or over the Internet. They fashion both traditional designs and new ones.

In the Indiana Woodlands region, the Miami, Potawatomi, Delaware and their neighbors, such as the Ojibwa, used beads of different materials in different ways. Some were woven using a loom technique. Some were appliquéd, or “spot-stitched,” to hides or fabric. Designs in this area were both geometric and abstract as well as representative of plant and animal-like figures. Contemporary regional artists like Katrina Mittin (Miami) and Linda Yazel (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi) both create works of art using beads and teach beadwork to others in the community.

Gallery Connections

In Mihtohseenionki and throughout the Native American galleries, visitors can see examples of loomed and stitched beadwork from several cultural groups. They will see a range of designs, from geometric and abstract to representational. In the Mihtohseenionki gallery, encourage students to browse the Curator’s Notebooks for items made using beads and to watch on video contemporary artist Joe Baker (Delaware) creating a bandolier bag for the Eiteljorg Museum. A portion of the bag is on view in the gallery (explain to students that beadwork is quite time-consuming and Joe will be sending portions of the bag to the museum as he completes them). Before glass beads were readily available, many Native Americans used large panels of dyed and natural quillwork to decorate clothing. Have visitors search for older pieces using quillwork and compare the dates of those pieces to ones using beads.
Woodlands Beadwork

Indiana Academic Standards: Grade 3
Visual Arts:
Standard 1 – Responding to Art: History (3.1.2)
Standard 7 – Creating Art: Production (3.7.1, 3.7.2, 3.7.3)
Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production (3.9.2, 3.9.3)

Objectives

Students will:
1. name at least one of the Indiana Woodlands cultures that use(d) beadwork;
2. locate the general area of Woodland Peoples of the Indiana region around 1780;
3. identify the materials and purposes for which Native Americans used beads in the past;
4. recognize the fact that beadwork is still being done by artists today; and
5. produce their own simple pieces of beadwork design, using the appliqué or “spot-stitching” technique.

Time Needed

In an art class of approximately 30 to 40 minutes, this activity will take several sessions —3 minimum.

Materials Needed

- Overhead transparencies of Curator’s Notebook pages
- Pencils and paper for drawing ideas
- Small squares of burlap or other loose-weave material (6 inches square)
- Washable fine tip markers to put design onto the burlap
- Pony or crow beads (can be bought in bulk)
- Large plastic tapestry needles
- Heavy thread or very thin yarn
- Scissors
- Masking tape
- Small paper cups (bathroom size will work nicely)
- Optional—small embroidery hoops

Procedure

1. Ask students to theorize about where Native Americans got their beads. Explain how the answer depends on the time period. Place the overhead transparency of the older bandolier bags on the overhead projector (or obtain pictures from books listed under Resources) and discuss the materials and sources used for beads in the past. Have students compare the older Delaware bandolier bag, made when the Delaware were still living in the East, to the later bandolier bag made after the Delaware had been forced to Oklahoma. Place the overhead transparency of Joe Baker’s bandolier bag on the projector and discuss the use of beads today.

2. Explain that some beadwork is done on a loom (wampum, necklaces, bracelets, etc.) or by finger-weaving, but that other beadwork is done by stitching individual beads to a background cloth (the style that contemporary artist Joe Baker uses), and that is what we will be doing. This method is called appliqué or “spot-stitching.”

3. Give students paper and pencils and have them create simple designs that will be done in outline with beads on their cloth. Like artist Joe Baker (Delaware), encourage students to be inspired by designs they see in their lives. Suggestions might be a flower or leaf design, a small animal, a cross or spiral or other simple shape.

4. When students have decided on their designs, have them carefully reproduce the drawing onto the squares of burlap using the washable fine tip markers.

5. Have students choose beads to complement their designs. Small paper cups are great to hold the beads for each individual. If desks are slanted, the teacher might want to secure the paper cup to the desk with a bit of masking tape.

6. Teach students how to thread the needle and roll the bottom to form a knot. If knotting is too difficult for some, tape the thread or yarn to the back of the burlap.
7. Teach students how to come up through the back of the burlap with their needles, put a bead onto the thread and go back down through the burlap to secure the bead. Students can then cover their design lines with beads. Show students how to knot their work at the end, or if they run out of thread. Again, if knotting is too difficult, just tape the thread on the back.

8. If additional time remains, show students how to fringe the edges of the burlap to give the piece a finished look. Another option would be to stitch the burlap onto a contrasting piece of fabric.

Adapting the Lesson

Grade 4: Use the same basic idea, but have students fill in their designs with beads, so that the entire shape is filled in. This may entail additional time and materials.

Grade 5: Students can work on more complex designs that may even cover the background. Introduce the ideas of more complicated floral motifs and abstract designs. Some students may be able to work with smaller beads and finer thread. If these are used, the burlap may be too loosely woven, and a tighter weave material might be needed.

Grade 8: Students can be expected to work with small seed beads, smaller needles, finer thread, and finer textured cloth. Designs can be much more intricate and detailed, color choice might be expanded, and the attempt at good craftsmanship can be emphasized.

Assessment

Since assessment of the visual arts is done differently in various school corporations, and even within a given corporation, the individual teacher will need to establish the criteria for evaluation. Suggestions might include:

• an effort-based evaluation of individuals;
• a simple test that might incorporate vocabulary and a general map of the United States (see handout).

Resources

• Dubin. *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment*.
• Penney. *Art of the American Indian Frontier*.
• Prindl. http://www.nativetech.org (beads and beadwork examples)
• Newmann. *Ready-to-Use Activities and Materials on Woodland Indians*.
• Stanley-Millner. *Authentic American Indian Beadwork and How to Do It*.
• Sita. *Indians of the Northeast, Traditions, History, Legends and Life*. 
The Indiana Woodlands Indians

1. Out of the following list, circle 2 names of tribes that were in the Indiana Woodland area (there are 5 correct answers in the group):

   MIAMI  POTAWATOMI  PLAINS
   HOPI    PIANKASHAW  CLANS
   DELAWARE  CORNHUSK  WEA

2. Tell one material from which beads were made in the past:

3. True or false: Indians only lived out West a long time ago and don’t live around here anymore.

4. On the map below, circle the area to show about where the Woodland Indians lived in the 18th century.
Beadwork Sample Designs
Grades 3 and 4
Bandolier bags

Compare these two Delaware bandolier bags, made 50 to 75 years apart. They're different because the materials available to each maker were different. Glass beads and fabrics from the fur trade caused an explosion of color and design. As the Delaware moved west to the Plains, their designs got larger and bolder – and easier to recognize over open distances.

Made of deerskin dyed black

Thin, plain shoulder strap

Three levels of reality:
- Above World
- World We Live In
- Below World

Budding plants probably represent the three Delaware clans: Wolf, Turtle and Turkey

These symbols may represent underground rivers and springs

Wide, boldly designed shoulder strap

Glass beads

Tabs may represent the three Delaware clans

Three levels of reality: Above World, World We Live In, Below World

Pouch (Delaware), ca. 1800
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Henry L. Batterman Fund and the Frank Sherman Benson Fund, 50.67.15

Bandolier bag (Delaware), middle 19th century
Richard Pohrt Jr.
The idea for that bag presented itself to me 5, 6, 7 years ago when I visited NJ, which is a part of our original homelands. While I was there I spent some time in the woods, alone, and I gathered leaves. And among those leaves was the sassafras leaf. So I decided to utilize the 3 lobe shape of the sassafras leaf as the design motif, the stylistic symbol that reappears throughout the bag, in the form of the 2 straps as well as the bag itself.

I’ve always found in the process of making a bag which evolves and grows and expands and happens over a long period of time, that current events also somehow influence the direction of the bag.
Woodlands Ribbonwork

Grade 4

–Sue Davidson

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will use paper strips to form designs that have the appearance of the ribbonwork of the Woodlands Indians.

Teacher Background

Ribbonwork is a way to decorate clothing that is unique to the Woodlands Indians. Plains Indians are known for the large panels of beadwork on their clothing. The Woodlands tribes are known for their ribbonwork. The designs used by various cultures are believed to have evolved from earlier, pre-contact designs. The materials, however, have changed. The Fur Trade era brought factory-made thread, ribbons, cloth and steel needles to Native Americans, who combined innovation and tradition to create the new convention of ribbonwork embellishment. Two cultures that excelled at ribbonwork were the Miami and the Potawatomi. Historic pieces of ribbonwork are rarely seen because the ribbons are fragile and cannot survive much exposure to light. Artists today are not only commissioned to create ribbonwork for regalia, but are also creating pieces that are on display in museums.

Ribbonwork was done using layers of ribbon that were cut into strips, each with a design cut out of the edge. Then the strips were layered and stitched down to a background piece of fabric. There are several different styles of ribbonwork. Two most common to the Indiana region were the shingle style and the appliqué style. The shingle style, associated with the Miami as well as others, uses geometric figures such as diamonds. One layer slightly overlaps another, like the shingles on a roof. The positive style, associated with the Potawatomi as well as others, uses both geometric and representational designs of appliquéd ribbons joined by a center seam. The designs are often symmetrical and reflected and there is often a play of positive and negative design space and colors.

Ribbonwork is still being done today, not only for use on Native American ceremonial clothing, but also on items for sale, such as pillows, bags, vests, jackets, and quilt-like throws. Contemporary artist Scott Shoemaker (Miami Nation of Indiana) uses the shingle style traditionally used by the Miami. Scott designs his own pieces and is inspired by older works. He uses both traditional Miami colors as well as other color combinations, but generally sticks to the fine, narrow, elongated diamond-type shapes seen in older Miami pieces. Many of Scott’s ribbonwork pieces have more than 20 strips of cloth. He sews by hand and uses a piece of interfacing underneath the ribbons.

Contemporary artist Penny Bishop (Citizen Band of Potawatomi) uses the postive-style traditionally used by the Potawatomi, but she uses a sewing machine and fabric-fusing materials. She is often inspired by older pieces as well as by nature. She likes to use colors that symbolize something, either to her or to the person she is making the piece for.

Gallery Connections

In Mihtohseenionki, visitors can see examples of old and newly made ribbonwork done in the shingle and positive styles. Miami ribbonwork comparisons can be made when one looks at the moccasins that once were worn by Frances Slocum (Miami) and the moccasins made in 2002 by Scott Shoemaker (Miami Nation of Indiana). Comparisons from old and new can also be made when one views the positive-style technique on clothing in the Potawatomi section to that of the woman’s wearing blanket made in 2002 by Penny Bishop (Citizen Band of Potawatomi). Visitors can learn more about the tradition of Miami ribbonwork in an interactive station—“Meet Scott Shoemaker”—where individuals can try the basics of the layered, shingling technique. Visitors can also see a short video of Scott and Penny in the Miami and Potawatomi sections discussing their research, inspiration and methods. Examples of both types of ribbonwork are also in the Education Collection for hands-on learning.
Woodlands Ribbonwork

Indiana Academic Standards: Grade 4
Visual Arts:
Standard 6 – Responding to Art: Aesthetics (4.6.2)
Standard 8 – Creating Art: Production (4.8.1, 4.8.2)
Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production (4.9.2)

Objectives

Students will:
1. name one of the Indiana Woodlands tribes who use(d) ribbonwork;
2. show the general location of the Indiana Woodlands as part of the larger Woodlands region on a map of North America;
3. recognize that ribbonwork was done in the past, but is still being done today by contemporary artists;
4. understand the layering process by which much ribbonwork was done; and
5. produce a paper design using one of the basic layering methods.

Time Needed

2 to 3 class periods in an art class of approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

Materials Needed

• Overhead transparencies of the Curator’s Notebook pages on Scott Shoemaker and Penny Bishop
• 12 x 18 inch construction paper, black being a traditional choice for the background
• 9 x 12 inch or 12 x 18 inch assorted colors of construction paper (Teacher can pre-cut strips if desired, or use this as a measuring lesson and have students cut their own. 3 or 4 inch x 12 inch strips work well with this age student.)
• Pencils
• Scissors
• Rulers
• Elmer’s or other classroom glue
• Optional—decorative-edge scissors in different patterns (especially useful for students with physical or developmental limitations)

Procedure

1. On the overhead projector, place the Curator’s Notebook pages for Scott Shoemaker’s ribbonwork moccasins and Penny Bishop’s ribbonwork blanket. If these are not available, there are many pictures of ribbonwork clothing in books on Woodlands Indians (see resources).
Discuss and compare styles and cultures, region and time periods. Compare the use of color and design in the two examples. Discuss the materials and sources used for ribbons, cloth, thread and needles in the past and today and the purposes for the ribbonwork. Explain that ribbonwork is traditionally done in cloth and ribbons, and is sewn to the background cloth, but that they are going to use paper strips to layer our own designs. Have students compare these two types of ribbonwork style. Students will have an opportunity to try both styles. While discussing these two styles, have students note how these contemporary artists chose colors for their pieces.

2. Explain to students that first they will be making ribbonwork designs shingle-style, like the style Scott Shoemaker used to create his moccasins. Have students choose seven strips of colored construction paper (if you’ve pre-cut it). Otherwise, have students measure and cut strips 3 or 4 inches wide. When choosing colors, students may wish to choose “traditional” colors from their background (school colors, favorite colors) or colors that symbolize something to them.

3. Have students put the black background paper down first, then arrange the strips in a combination of colors that seems pleasing to them.

4. Demonstrate how to cut a few notches in the edges of the strips of paper, and how to layer them up from the bottom, overlapping slightly, allowing each edge to show.

5. Emphasize that students should not glue their strips down yet! Most students will be eager to glue-as-they-go, but encourage them to try different arrangements of the strips to find the most pleasing pattern of cuts and colors.
6. Once a student has decided upon the final arrangement of paper strips, they can be glued down to make the arrangement stable.

7. Next, have them create a positive-style design like artist Penny Bishop uses. Again, encourage students to play with the designs before gluing them down.

8. With the positive-style design, encourage students to look at both the positive and negative space this design creates.

9. Remind students that this is only to give them an idea of how ribbonwork is done—that working with cloth and ribbons and sewing it all down is much more difficult and time-consuming.

10. Display the different designs on a bulletin board or in the hallway and point out the variety of ideas and arrangements that makes each piece unique.

**Teaching to Other Grade Levels**

**Grade 3:** Use the same basic preparation and background information, but pre-cut the strips of paper for the students. Decorative scissors might be useful, giving students with limited cutting skills the chance to achieve a more decorative pattern. Limit the number of strips in the design to 4 or 5, and allow more of the strips to show so that each piece is “shingled.” Teachers can also create enlarged strips out of felt and demonstrate the idea on a felt board.

**Grade 5:** Designs can be more complex. The number of strips can be increased.

**Grade 8:** Students can be expected to create more intricate designs, and the teacher can expect them to cut their own strips of paper. If time, materials and a small class size allow, ribbon, cloth, needles and thread might give a far more realistic view of the real craft of needlework. Those students familiar with silkscreen methods may wish to adapt the ribbonwork designs to a printed design.

**Assessment**

Since the assessment of the visual arts is done differently in various school corporations, and even within a given corporation, the individual teacher will need to establish the criteria for evaluation. Suggestions might include:

- an informal class review of the Indiana Woodlands area and some of the tribe names from that area.
- checking for understanding of the basic process and materials used in ribbonwork: layering, overlapping, symmetry, positive, negative, etc.
- effort-based evaluation of individual work on the project.
- a simple test that might incorporate vocabulary and a general map of North America.

**Resources**

- Clifton. *The Potawatomi.*
- Dubin. *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment.*
- Penney. *Art of the American Indian Frontier.*
- Sita. *Indians of the Northeast, Traditions, History, Legends and Life.*
Ribbons were available to Native Americans during the fur trade (mid-1700s). At first, they were mainly used as edging and borders. We don’t know exactly when ribbon appliqué was developed, but it appears to have combined fur trade materials (from Europe) and Native historic traditions.

The Shingle Technique

Ribbonwork is made by cutting a pattern into the ribbons and overlaying them one on top of the other, much like the shingles on a roof.

I based the design of my moccasin flaps on Frances Slocum’s moccasins.

The colors incorporate the traditional “Miami” colors of yellow, blue, red, black and white and also include some brighter oranges, blues and green.

The pattern is somewhat based on traditional patterns, but I like to sketch them out and play with them a little to come up with my own design.

— Scott Shoemaker
(Miami Nation of Indiana)
Artist Penny Bishop lives in Colorado, but her family originates from the Indiana/Michigan area.

White represents the purifying snow of Colorado and Michigan.

Purple signifies the beautiful Colorado Rockies.

Pink is the thin color at the horizon where the waters of Lake Michigan meet the sky in the dawn or dusk hours.

Green is for the beautiful wooded areas in Colorado, Michigan and Oklahoma (where her family was relocated to).
**Ribbonwork – Woodland Indians**

**SHINGLED STYLE:**
- 7 layers of ribbon
- Diagram showing layers of ribbon
- Instructions: slit, fold, stitch (or glue if paper)

**POSITIVE STYLE:**
- Pairs of ribbons, joined by a center seam
- Can be geometric or curvilinear

**NEGATIVE STYLE:**
- Worked from the outside, in
- Pairs of ribbons will be symmetrical but separated

Information from *Native American Ribbonwork: A Rainbow Tradition*. Edited by George P. Horse Capture, Buffalo Bill Historical Center
Woodlands Metalwork

Grade 5

~Sue Davidson

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will do a piece of metalwork in the style of the Woodlands Indians.

Teacher Background

Prior to contact with Europeans, some Native peoples mined copper, gold and silver to create axe heads, knives, spear points, and objects for ceremonial use. In the Great Lakes area, some Woodlands people used malleable raw nuggets of copper, which they hammered flat and cut and molded into their desired shape. While jewelry today is thought of as only decorative, historically Woodlands tribes have often used jewelry to indicate their tribe and clan membership, personal symbols and certain rites of passage.

The Fur Trade introduced ready-made sheets of metal—including processed metals like steel, iron, brass—as well as new tools to work the metal. Non-native silversmiths made silver items used for trade with Native Americans. Then Woodlands artisans, using a combination of time-proven copper-working technology, European silversmith techniques and new steel tools, made all manner of decoration such as armbands, pendants, earrings, rings, and brooches, often highly decorated with incised clan animals, geometric designs and cutouts. There were also round and crescent-shaped pendants called “gorgets” that could be attached to clothing or worn as necklaces. Some pieces were cast and others cut from sheet metal. Woodlands tribes that were known for metalwork included the Delaware, Miami, Iroquois, Seneca, and Wampanoag.

The new materials and tools simply replaced their pre-historic counterparts, while the end product, the spiritual and visual intent, remained essentially the same. And periodically, new materials are introduced to Native American artisans, who, once again, adapt new material into traditional products. German silver, which is comprised of nickel, copper, zinc, and has no silver content, was introduced in the mid-19th century and has become a favored metal because it holds a polish better than silver.

The excellent silverwork of Don Secondine (Delaware) is a fine example of the creative process that has been ongoing among Native Americans since prehistoric times. Utilizing contemporary materials and power tools, Secondine combines traditional incised elements and cut-out forms in graceful flowing patterns that his ancestors would readily recognize, and accept. He makes pieces for both Native and non-Native customers.

Gallery Connections

In Mihtohsenionki, visitors can see examples of metal used for creating adornment and objects used and/or made by Native Americans from the 17th century to the present day. Contemporary artist Don Secondine (Delaware) is featured in a short video and silverwork he has created is on exhibition. Examples of replica trade pieces and a brooch by Don Secondine are also in the Education Collection for hands-on learning. We also have “metalwork” hands-on station that can be placed out for small groups of students to make paper brooches and gorgets. Visitors can also explore the early stone and bone objects on the historical timeline. As they go through the “Miami, Potawatomi and Delaware and Others” sections, have them look for examples of metalwork (tin cones, silver crosses, brooches, gorgets and other objects). Many were made by non-Natives and obtained through trade with Europeans and others.
Woodlands Metalwork

Indiana Academic Standards: **Grade 5**

Visual Arts:
- **Standard 1** – Responding to Art: History (5.1.1)
- **Standard 2** – Responding to Art: History (5.2.3)
- **Standard 3** – Responding to Art: Criticism (5.3.3)
- **Standard 8** – Creating Art: Production (5.8.1, 5.8.2)
- **Standard 9** – Creating Art: Production (5.9.2, 5.9.3)
- **Standard 10** – Creating Art: Production (5.10.1, 5.10.3)

**Objectives**

Students will:
1. name at least one of the Woodlands tribes who used or created metalwork;
2. show the general location of the Indiana Woodlands as part of the larger Woodlands culture region on a North American map;
3. recognize that metalwork has existed in cultures since prehistoric times, but that many contemporary artists and craftspeople do metalwork today;
4. use vocabulary, media and tools in an appropriate manner;
5. understand the basic process of cutting a shape from metal and tooling a design upon it; and
6. produce their own pieces of metalwork.

**Time Needed**

3 to 5 class periods in an art class of approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

**Materials Needed**

- Overhead transparency of image page
- 36-gauge rolls of copper, brass or aluminum tooling metal (copper is the most expensive). One roll of 12 inch x 3 feet will provide enough for a class of 25 to 30, depending on the size of the proposed projects.
- Work gloves for those who cut the metal (can be cut ahead of time by the teacher, but it’s a good experience for this age students to try to cut their own)
- A fine metal file to blunt the sharp edges of the pieces after they are cut (or you can edge the piece with masking tape to protect hands).
- Tin-snips or other utility cutters that will handle the metal
- Pads of old newspapers to cushion the metal and protect the art tables
- Pencils
- Paper
- Masking tape
- Worn-out ball-point pens or blunt pointed sticks or pencils with which to do the tooling of designs into the metal.
- Hammers or mallets and nails if pieces are to be pierced for pendants, gorgets or breastplates
- Yarn or strips of rawhide lacing to attach for jewelry

**Procedure**

1. Place the transparency on the overhead projector and talk about the history of metalwork, as well as early use of stone and bone for decorative elements. Also explore the photo of artist Don Secondine (Delaware) at work. Even modern jewelry can be a basis for a start to discussion, but if additional pictures are needed, good examples of Woodlands Indian decorative metalwork can be found in *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment* (see Resources).

2. Locate the Indiana Woodlands region on a map of North American. Discuss how the art, history and cultures of the Woodlands Native peoples changed over the centuries as new materials and uses became available through trade. Ask the students why they think this tradition of metal jewelry is still present and why Native artists might continue to create metal jewelry based on traditional patterns. As you go through the following steps, talk about how the tools your class is using might be the same or different than those used by a contemporary metalworker.

3. Have students take paper and pencil and decide upon a basic shape for their pendants or gorgets. Encourage them to keep the shapes simple (ovals, modified crescent, etc.) and probably about 2 x 4 or 5 inches, depending upon your investment in materials and time.
4. Once a shape has been refined, have students cut out the paper shape with scissors, and hold this pattern down (or secure it with a piece of tape) onto the sheet metal.

5. Trace the outside shape with a blunt pencil or used-up ballpoint pen, remove the paper pattern and carefully cut the shape out of the metal with the tin-snips. **Insist that the students cutting the metal wear protective gloves!** I find that having 2 or 3 "cutting stations" set up is the easiest way to accomplish the task with limited cutters and gloves.

6. While they are still wearing the gloves, have students lightly file the edges of the raw metal to dull the sharp edges, or wrap masking tape all around the shape to protect hands.

7. If the piece will be sewn to fabric or hung from cording, pierce holes in the appropriate spots using the hammer and nail, with a thick pad of old newspaper underneath to protect the tables. Caution students that this area may be sharp as well, so they may need to file it down or hammer the hole on the back to force the sharp edge down.

8. If students like the look of hammered metal, they can texturize their pieces with the hammers or mallets, going over the entire surface.

9. Back at their seats, students can now decide how to decorate their pieces. Encourage students to try out ideas on paper before they mark into the metal, as mistakes are sometimes difficult to "erase." If a section of old newspaper is under the metal, designs can be tooled quite easily. Students can work from both sides to give the piece even more dimension.

10. When completed, have the students hang the pendant or gorget from natural colored yarn or strips of rawhide.

11. Display the finished works in a supervised or locked case or bulletin board, and discuss the unique variations of shape and design. Artist Don Secondine (Delaware) admits than even after thoughtful preparation for design, any piece might come out the way "it wants to" rather than as he originally intended. Ask your students to share if their original design changed because "it wanted to go a different way." Are they happy with the result?

**Teaching to Other Grade Levels**

**Grade 3:** Simplify the project by cutting the metal foil yourself and rimming it with masking tape or by cutting the foil sheets sold in grocery stores that are used to line the bottom of ovens—they are heavier than regular foil. Students can then texturize the metal with hammers, and draw a simple design or animal onto the metal with a dull pencil or worn-out ballpoint pen. Another option to simplify the process is to use metallic paper, decorative hole punches and even metallic pens.

**Grade 4:** Students also will need help with the cutting process, but by this age, the students should be able to do more intricate decoration, especially after seeing some examples of Woodlands Indian designs.

**Grade 8:** Students should be able to cut and file their own pieces, and decoration should be well thought out and executed with good craftsmanship.

**Assessment**

Since the assessment of the visual arts is done differently in various school corporations, and even within a corporation, the individual teacher will need to establish the criteria for evaluation. Suggestions might include:

- an informal class review of the area of the Indiana Woodlands region and some of the peoples from that area.
- checking for understanding of the basic processes of metalworking, and uses for the metalwork.
- an effort-based evaluation of the individual projects.
- a written test that might incorporate principles, geography and vocabulary.

**Resources**

- Dubin. *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment.*
- Sita. *Indians of the Northeast, Traditions, History, Legends and Life.*
- Prindle. [http://www.nativetech.org/native American beadwork](http://www.nativetech.org/native American beadwork)
Metalwork – Woodland Indians

GORGET

CAN BE HUNG IN MULTIPLES

BROOCHÉ

PENDANT
Don Secondine (Delaware) at work on the brooch.

Brooch, by Don Secondine (Delaware), 2001

Don Secondine (Delaware) at work on the brooch.

Don’s tool table.
Woodlands Basketry

Grade 3

—Sue Davidson

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will make their own woven reed baskets that simulate the splint baskets of the Woodlands Indians.

Teacher Background

Baskets have been used by nearly every culture in every part of the world, long before pottery. Today, “basketry” is very loosely defined by contemporary artists, but most agree that baskets are containers created from natural or synthetic materials that are woven (wickerwork and/or twined methods) or stitched (coiling methods) together. Native Americans of the Woodlands area made baskets thousands of years ago, and some continue traditional and innovative basketry today. In the Indiana Woodlands region, the Miami, Potawatomi, the Delaware and their neighbors, such as the Ojibwa, made baskets for their own use and for trade. Wood from trees, and pieces of bushes, vines, and grasses common to the area were coiled, twined, woven or plaited into containers suitable for the intended use—flat baskets were used as trays, baskets with deep sides and handles were used for gathering food, baskets that were waterproofed with beeswax or resin were used to carry water. Baskets were also used as shipping containers and traded with other tribes.

After their land base diminished and many tribes were removed from their original lands, Woodlands Indians relied on trading and selling baskets to support their families. One example of that of the Potawatomi bands still living in the northern Indiana and Michigan area. In a long-established relationship with the University of Notre Dame, where the Potawatomi helped build the first chapel and attended the school that eventually became the university, the Indians would bring baskets to the university in exchange for food and other gifts.

Working with wood splints is another traditional Woodlands method of making baskets. Logs of cedar, oak, hickory, ash and other trees were pounded with mallets or hammers to separate the wood along the growth rings. Then the splints were shaved down with a knife, and the splints were then woven into strong and beautiful baskets.

Contemporary artist John Pigeon (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi) uses this traditional method that he learned from his elders and, in turn, is teaching to his children. He selects black ash trees, pounds the fallen trunks to separate the rings, then thins the splints to make the materials from which he weaves his baskets. While he knows how to use natural dyes and often uses them on baskets made for elders, John prefers to use commercial dyes because of their vibrancy. For fancy embellishment, John also adds “fancy twists,” dyed or undyed weavers (the material that is woven through the warp or ribs of the basket) on top of the basket rows that are tucked or curled between warps.

Gallery Connections

In Mihtohseesionki, visitors can see examples of baskets in the “Potawatomi” and “Delaware and Others” section, including baskets from the Pigeon family. They can also explore the “Meet John Pigeon” hands-on basketry station that covers the basic steps of this type of basket weaving, from tree to finished basket. In the Potawatomi bay, there is a short video on John Pigeon as he creates the basket displayed in the exhibit. In the “Delaware and Other Peoples” section, there is a short video on artist Lois Beardslee creating a sweetgrass basket using a coiling method. Examples of John Pigeon’s work are also in the Education Collection for hands-on learning.
Woodlands Basketry

Indiana Academic Standards: Grade 8

Visual Arts:
- Standard 3 – Responding to Art: Criticism (8.3.2, 8.3.3)
- Standard 7 – Creating Art: Production (8.7.3)
- Standard 8 – Creating Art: Production (8.8.1, 8.8.2)
- Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production (8.9.2, 8.9.3)
- Standard 10 – Creating Art: Production (8.10.1, 8.10.3)

Objectives

Students will:
1. name at least one of the Woodlands tribes who used basketry;
2. show the general location of the Indiana Woodlands tribes on a United States map;
3. recognize that baskets were produced to serve particular purposes, and that each shape was chosen specifically for its intended use;
4. understand the basic construction of a woven basket;
5. realize that Native American artists are at work today, and are producing work that keeps alive the traditions and cultures of their heritage;
6. use vocabulary, tools and materials in an appropriate manner; and
7. produce a small woven basket.

Time Needed

This is a labor-intensive project that will need 5 or more class periods, in an art class of 30 to 45 minutes, or a day-long workshop if this is a voluntary, enrichment opportunity for students. This is also a project best suited to small groups (10 to 15) of highly motivated students.

Materials Needed

- Overhead transparency from Curator’s Notebook page on John Pigeon
- Flat basket reed – 1 inch wide for the basket, 3/16 inch for lashing the rim. (This material is available through basketry suppliers. “Reed” is the supply house term for flat, oval, half-round and all materials made from rattan. When ordering, tell the supply house the size of the finished basket (7x 7 x 3 inches) and multiply by the number of students.)
- Sweet grass braid for finishing the top rim (optional)
- Spring-style clothespins (about 2 dozen per student)
- Pruning shears or utility shears
- Needle-nosed pliers
- Large container to soak the reed (large garbage container)
- Trash bag in which to store softened reed
- Rulers and pencils
- Old washcloth (for keeping materials moist if needed while assembling)
- Optional: awl, tape measure, a rectangular cardboard template the size of a napkin

Procedure

Napkin basket – finished size: approximately 7 x 7 x 3 inches

1. Pre-Preparation: depending upon the time available for this project and the level and number of students, the teacher may want to do a substantial amount of preparation ahead of time, including:
   a) measuring and cutting the reed; each basket will use 10 pieces of the 1inch reed that are cut into 17 inch lengths for the ribs, 5 pieces cut 30 inches long for the weavers and the rim;
   b) marking the right side (some reeds don’t show a lot of difference between the right and the wrong sides, but when the reed is soaked and bent over your finger, the wrong side will splinter and look “hairy,” while the right side will remain smooth);
   c) soaking the reed (15 to 20 minutes in cool water), then placing it in the trash bags to keep it moist;
   d) choosing a place to work—outside is wonderful, as the water gets all over, but any room with formica or other water-impervious tables will work.
2. Give each student 10 of the 17 inch reeds, and have each person lay them out with the right side down. This will be extremely
important when upstaking the weft of the basket (the ribs).

3. Lay 5 of the ribs out vertically, leaving a space of about 1/2 inch between each.

4. Weave one of the other 17 inch pieces in and out of the center of the 5 reeds (no need to measure—just “eyeball” it).

5. Weave the rest of the ribs in the base, alternating over and under, 2 ribs above the first piece and 2 below it.

6. Adjust the weave so that the spaces seem about the same and the ends of the ribs line up with each other. If you can make sure that the ribs are at right angles to one another, the basket will be of better quality.

7. Clamp the outside junctions of the woven reeds with clothespins to keep the base from shifting.

8. One by one, upstake the ribs by folding each one back across itself to make a permanent crease. This will form the base of the basket and now the ribs will be standing, ready to be woven into sides of the basket. The base should measure about 7 x 7 inches.

9. With the right side of the reed out (teach students how to determine right and wrong sides) begin with one of the weavers near the middle of one of the sides. Beginning on the outside of a rib, weave it in and out of the ribs all the way around the basket. The weaver will overlap the beginning point.

10. Cut the weaver so that it will be hidden behind another rib.

11. Each row should be done separately, and if you begin each on a different side, you will eliminate an unsightly lump that results from starting and stopping at the same point.

12. Use the clothespins as needed to hold the rows in place.

13. When three rows are completed, the ribs can be cut off flush with the top of the sides, and the outside rims can be folded down and tucked into the inside of the woven sides of the basket. Sometimes it’s easier to fold these ribs down if they are trimmed into a slight point.

14. For the rim, place the remaining two reeds around the top of the basket, inside and out, securing with the clothespins. Each piece should overlap, so stagger the beginning and ending so that there is no unsightly lump. If a seagrass insert is desired, place it between the 2 rims, on top of the sides of the basket. This just covers up the top of the basket sides, and adds a decorative element.

15. Begin lashing the rims to the basket with the thin 3/16 inch reed, pushing it between the spaces under the top row of weaving, bringing it around and around the rims. Try to keep the same angle for each stitch, and pull each stitch tight.

16. Finish by tucking the lashing behind an inside rib.

Teaching to Other Grade Levels

This project is a demanding one for both students and teacher. Other grade levels could certainly do the same project, but great care should be taken to choose a small enough group to be able to ensure lots of personal attention from the teacher. Students must have well-developed fine-motor skills and quite a bit of determination to have success with this project.

Or, you may wish to provide students with a background about Woodlands style basketry and schedule time at the basketry hands-on station in the Mihtohseemionkik gallery.

John Pigeon has talked about learning to weave with his aunt. She would start him with a flat mat. Younger children could be given a rectangular piece of paper with several parallel
slits (forming the warp). Allow them to weave with strips of contrasting paper.

Assessment

Since the assessment of the visual arts is done differently in different corporations, and even within a given corporation, the individual teacher will need to establish the criteria for evaluation. Some suggestions might include:

• an informal class review of the area in which the Woodlands Indians belonged, some of the tribes native to the area and the general shapes and uses of the baskets;
• an effort-based evaluation of individual projects, checking for understanding of construction and craftsmanship;
• a written test that might incorporate principles of the project, vocabulary, and a general knowledge of the geography of the Woodlands Indians.

Ties to the Eiteljorg Museum

Many baskets are in the collection of the Eiteljorg Museum, and will be on display. If a field trip is possible, the teacher could spend a considerable amount of time pointing out the differences in the baskets of different regions, in materials, shapes and uses. In the Mihtohseenionki gallery, students may watch videos of John Pigeon and Lois Beardslee making baskets, and at times there will be live demonstrations of basketmaking.

Resources

• Clifton. Indians of North America - The Potawatomi.
• Daugherty. Splintwoven Basketry.
• Mofield. Pine Needle Basketry.
• Newmann. Ready to Use Activities and Materials on the Woodland Indians.
• Siler. The Basket.
• Prindle. www.nativetech.org/weave/nipmucbask/index.html
• Basketry Supply Houses: Look in the Yellow Pages for local basketry guilds and galleries where someone can put you in touch with local suppliers. For example, in preparing this lesson, we consulted with In A Hand Basket in Bloomington, Indiana, www.inahandbasket.com.
Basketry Vocabulary

**awl:** a small tool resembling an ice pick, but not as sharp. Good for opening spaces and making holes in the weaving materials.

**base:** bottom of the basket, woven as a mat, or sometimes a solid wooden piece. Also known as the “start.”

**butt:** to put two ends of a reed together end-to-end, with no overlap.

**cane:** the outer peel of rattan, used in weaving chair seats, etc.

**coil:** reed wound into a circle and tied together.

**coiling:** method of weaving in which a cord is wrapped, piled in circles and tied together row by row.

**hairs:** the splinters from reed that show up when the reed is stressed, usually clipped or singed off when the basket is completed.

**lashing:** the thin reed that wraps around the rim, holding it tightly to the basket and giving it a finished look. Also, the act of wrapping the lashing around the rim.

**plaited:** woven or braided.

**rattan:** a palm tree with long stems that are sold as “reed” by basketry supply-houses.

**reed:** the inner core of the rattan that has been cut into flat or rounded pieces that can be woven.

**ribs:** the pieces that extend out from the base that form the skeleton of the basket. (Also known as “warp.”)

**rim:** the piece that fits around the top, inside and out to finish off and strengthen the basket. *(Note: Some baskets are self-rimmed.)*

**rim filler:** a thin piece of seagrass, twine or other material that goes between the two rim pieces to cover the top of the weaving. Rim filler is optional, but gives a much more finished look.

**splice:** the place where two reeds overlap; the end of one and the start of another.

**stake:** the ribs or warp of the woven mat that come up to form the sides of the basket.

**tucking in:** when the basket is nearly finished, the outside ribs or stakes are bent over and tucked into the weaving on the inside. Also called “down-staking.”

**upset or upstake:** to bend the stakes up and over the base or the mat so that a crease forms at the corner, so that it’s easier to begin weaving the sides of the basket.

**warp:** the fixed part of the basket (the ribs or stakes).

**weaver:** the fiber that is used as the weft, which goes over and under the ribs or stakes.

**weft:** the flexible material that is woven over and under the warps. “Weft” and “weaver” are often used as synonyms.
I chose to make a market basket for the Eiteljorg because it has changed from being utilitarian, like it was a hundred years ago, a thousand years ago, to something that’s more contemporary.

The concept of the market basket really began back in the days of general stores, before department stores. When you went to the store, the storekeeper would check off your list and fill up your basket. ...It was a good thing for the Anishnabe, the Indians, because they would trade baskets to the store owner for goods.

— John Pigeon

Splint basketry is an ancient tradition of the Woodlands. Splint baskets were preferred when the basketmaker wanted strength and durability – and black ash trees provided the best wood for splints.

When confined to reservations, Native Americans found the making and selling of baskets a way to supplement the family income.

For more information on the process, visit the hands-on station in the gallery.