



Aleut Basket Paintings

GRADE: 4

TIME: 1 session

Developed by Eloise Larson, FNSBSD Art Specialist

KIT INCLUDES:

- lesson plan
- lesson example boards
- process boards
- vocabulary board
- basket photo boards
- Alaska and basket region map boards
- rye grass boards
- Vasha Golidorff boards

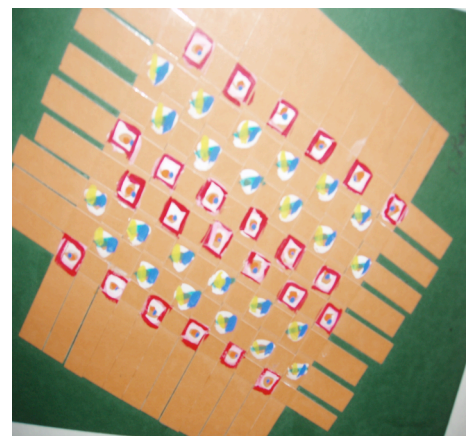
MATERIALS:

Construction paper:

- 9"x12" Black
- neutral colors
- cut into 1/2x 9" strips, 22 strips per student approx.
- tan •lt. green
- gray •lt. peach

Tempera paint (cakes)

- primary colors
- secondary colors
- white and black
- masking tape 1" wide
- water cups
- small pointed brushes
- glue



LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students learn about Aleut basket weaving techniques. They learn to weave a basic pattern and use tempera paint to create a repeated motif on their weaving.

VOCABULARY:

Aleut
weaving
warp
weft
medallion
motif

ART ELEMENTS:

___Line
___Shape/Form
x Color
___Value
x Texture
___Space/Perspective

ART PRINCIPLES:

x Pattern
___Rhythm/movement
___Proportion/Scale
___Balance
___Unity
___Emphasis

CONTENT CONNECTIONS:

Alaska Studies

THEMES:
culture

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

1. Students will learn about the history of Aleut people of Alaska.
2. Students will learn a basic weave technique and vocabulary.
3. Students will practice painting a multilayered motif.
4. Students will reflect on their artwork and complete an individual assessment.

PREPARE:

- Cut 1/2 x 9 inch strips from neutral colors. Have available in central location.
- Cut a few 2 x 18 inch strips (14) from 2 or 3 neutral colors to use as a large example weaving.
- Sort tempera paints into primary color sets, secondary color sets, black and white. Students may share.

Prepare: -- water cups and paint brushes ready to pass out to students.

-- an area prepared to display teaching visuals of baskets and teaching boards.

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE:

Begin the lesson by displaying the Alaska map and telling students they will be studying the Aleut and Alutiiq people of Kodiak Island, South and Southwest and Aleutian Islands. Point to the area on the map.

Discuss with students the geographical landscape of the region. The Aleutian Islands are very rocky, isolated and devoid of trees. Kodiak Island has trees and rocky beaches. The Aleuts and Alutiiq people who lived in these regions were very good at using the few resources available to them on land, and most of their resources came from the sea.

If you were a typical Alutiiq or Aleut family living on one of the Aleutian Islands 300 years ago, you may find yourself surrounded by fine weavings. Grass mats would lie on sleeping benches; they would cover the walls and hang in doorways. Woven containers for collecting, storage, and cooking food would surround a central fireplace. They would be wearing socks that had been woven, mittens and caps too! Mothers would carry their babies in woven carriers. Up in the rafters of the underground houses would be woven tools. Nets for fishing and birding, lines for harpoons and boats. Today this region still has a rich weaving tradition.

(Display the basket visuals only during this time)

Who thinks they can guess what they made all these wonderful things from? (wild beach rye grass or lyme grass) What are some other natural materials you have seen baskets made from? (baleen, spruce root, birch bark, other grasses and wood)

(Display the visual showing the wild beach grass)

Sea grass grows in abundance in these coastal regions. The practice of weaving is thousands of years old. We have very few baskets that are more than 500 years old because they are made from a natural material that is biodegradable. Many of the old and new baskets are decorated with color areas called medallions or motifs. Originally, these were made from dyed maidenhair fern using cranberries, blueberries, or blackberries. To achieve other colors, they used wild iris petals, alder bark and a mixture of charcoal and seal oil. (Have students guess what color each will make)

(Display the visuals showing the women making the baskets and the photos of baskets)

Points to make:

- Weaving is so fine (small) it is almost like cloth. Some baskets have 2500 stitches per sq. in.
- Baskets were usually small and cylindrical (2 x3 inches)
- Many have dyed threads and grasses to create motifs and medallions (motif is a repeated design, a medallion is a larger central design)
- Women did most of the weaving during July and August, while they were drying salmon.
- Only certain parts of the grass were used.
- Grass had to be cured and dried before using. It was then sorted by length, color and texture and hung to dry. The sun and saltwater helped bleach the grass to a warm, pale brown color, or it was stored in a cool dark place,
- When the grass was dry, the grass was split into desired thicknesses.
- The Aleut weaving technique involved twining, a more complex form of weaving.

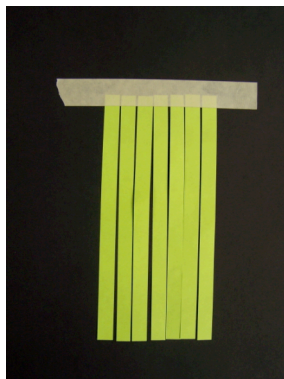
CREATE:

1. Display the vocabulary words on the board or where all students can view them.
2. Begin by having students choose a small handful of neutral color strips. **Students will have all one color of strips, but the example will show two colors to illustrate the warp and weft.**

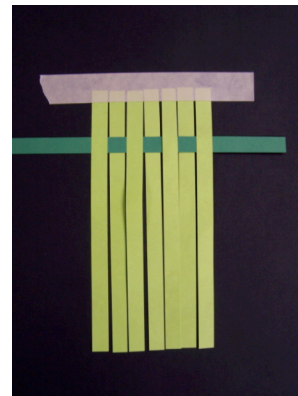
While students are choosing their colors, give students a strip of masking tape about 12 inches long. This strip will be their “loom”. Have them place this strip **sticky side up** on their desk near the top so they have room to work.

3. Next, they will place 10 to 12 strips along the sticky tape. Place the strips very close together, but not overlapping. The Aleut baskets were very tightly woven. This is the “**warp**” of the weaving. These are the vertical strips.

4. **Flip the tape and strips over together** so they are stuck to the students desk surface. Keep strips on the tape!



3 & 4. Place strips on sticky side of tape. Then flip everything over together so stuck to desk

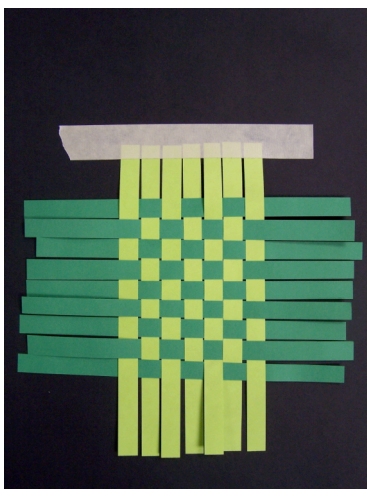


5. The weft is woven into the warp. These are the horizontal strips. Begin by going under the first warp.

5. Introduce the vocabulary term “**weft**”. These will be the horizontal strips that will weave in and out of the of the “**warp**”. Begin the weft weaving about 1 1/2 inches from the bottom of tape.

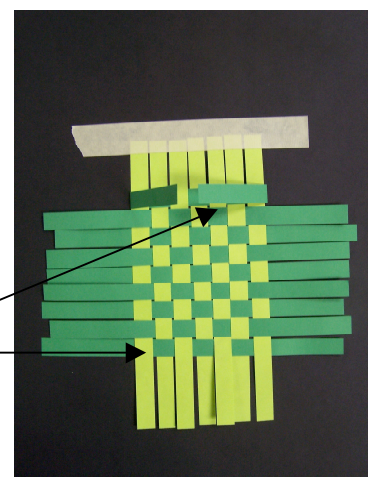
6. Students complete the weaving by alternating the weft over and under the warp.

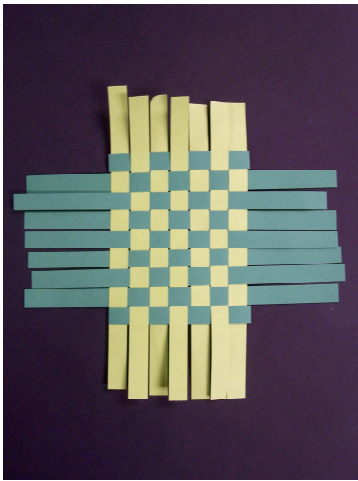
7. To secure the weaving, push the warp and weft together so it is tight. Fold over and glue down the ends of the first and last weft (horizontal) strips.



6. End weaving with weft going under warp on the last piece.

7. Fold over and glue ends of the first strip and the last strip of the weft rows.



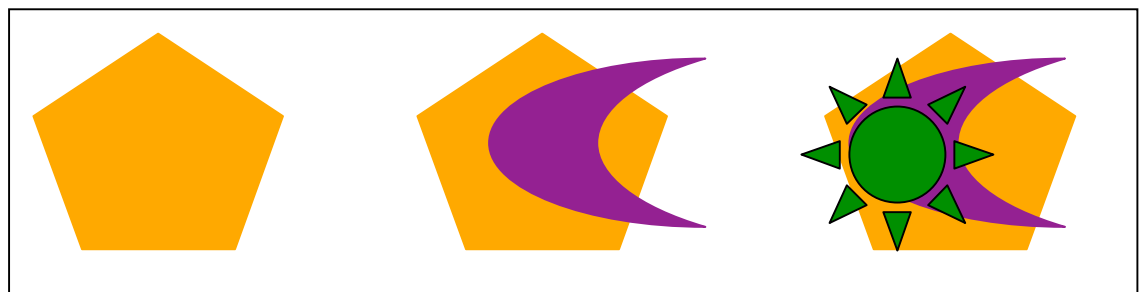


After first and last weft strips glued down, flip the weaving over. It then looks like this.

8. Students will now be decorating their weaving with either a motif or medallion. A **motif** is a small repeated shape, and a **medallion** has a large central design, sometimes with small motifs around it. Point out the different techniques on the basket examples. Most of the decorations were created with a technique called “false embroidery”, using silk threads or dyed grasses.

9. Have students choose a color scheme to paint their weavings. They can also use black and white. Students create a medallion or motif, using a layering technique. Display the painting process boards for the next steps. Leave up the basket example boards for ideas.

10. Have students begin by practicing painting on a scrap strip. Create a motif by painting a layer, and then painting additional layers on top. Each layer should be seen peeking through. Think of each square being a little painting. Motifs are repeated, so don't change your colors or patterns.



11. When students are ready to paint, make sure they only paint on every other square in the weaving, or use every square and alternate two motifs. If they are planning a medallion, they can use the center and create small motifs around it.

12. When finished, students clean paints and carefully cut the tape from the warp. They can also trim the other end so it is even.

13. Students now choose a 9 x 12 inch color construction paper to mount their work. They will sign their name in the lower right hand corner of the 9 x 12 piece of paper with a pencil.

CLOSE:

Mount weavings onto a 9x12 piece of construction paper. Students may bend the weaving and then glue the edges to the paper to give it a 3D presentation if they choose.

ASSESSMENT:Teacher administered assessment tool

DN	OK	UP	Lesson_____ Teacher_____
			Grade_____ Date_____ Number of Students_____
			Using the thumbs up, ok, and down technique, ask your students the following questions and record their answers. (K=knowledge, S=skills, C= creativity, A=attitude, E=engagement)
			1. Can you name 3 facts about the Aleut culture?
			2. Can you locate the Aleutian Islands on an Alaska map?
			3. Can you name the two terms for the horizontal and vertical weaving?
			4. Did you paint layers in your motif or medallion?
			5. Did you add an imaginative touch to your art?
			6. Did you actively listen and follow directions?
			7. Did you do your best during this lesson?

Teacher self-critique

8. My teaching of this lesson:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
needed improvement							was highly successful		

9. What would I do differently next time?

ALIGNMENT:**Alignment of Standards:**

A 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
 B 1, 3, 4, 6, 8
 C 2; a,b, 4, 5
 D 2, 5, 6, 7

Alignment of GLE's:

Reading R2.6, 7, 11 Cultural C, D
 Science SF3
 Math M4.2.1, M5.2.7
 History C
 Geography A, B, E, F

CREDITS:

Project ARTiculate is supported by the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, the Alaska Arts Education Consortium, and a U.S. Department of Education Development and Dissemination Grant

