

## **Common Threads: Time and Textile**

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### **Overview**

This curriculum unit will use weaving as a vehicle to examine different cultures and their concept and use of time. The curriculum unit will specifically explore the Navajo, their traditional textile forms, and the context in which the textiles were and are currently produced. Students will be introduced to the labor intensive, time demanding activity of weaving. This unit will be taught to middle school students in seventh and eighth grades. Class sizes vary from approximately 26 to 32 students per classroom. The hands on weaving and spinning aspect of this curriculum plan will be presented as a classroom project for those art classes seen more than once a week.

During our exploration of the Navajo and their way of life, we will examine the art, symbolism and traditional techniques of Navajo textile construction; the context in which the woven form has developed over time; the relationship between geographic region and the way of life in the Navajo culture; and the impact of customs, beliefs, traditions, cultural identity, and sense of place on Navajo textile art.

The hands on aspect of this curriculum plan will focus the attention of the students on authentic (real-time) experiences of designing, weaving and constructing a flat-loom weaving. The goal of this curriculum unit is to extend and expand student awareness, understanding and appreciation of traditional techniques and contemporary methods. and create relevant connections between cultures, generations and traditions.

### **Rationale**

Lao-tse once wrote:  
the wise man looks into space,

and does not regard the small as too little, nor the great as too big;  
for he knows that there is no limit to dimensions...

Our perception of the time continuum and our experiences of the past enhance our abilities to make informed choices in the present and the future. Our concept of time has a profound effect on the way we live with the potential for both positive and negative impact. The concept of time is flexible and can be altered or affected by outside forces or influences. In fact, other cultures have different ways of viewing and experiencing time. An example of other experiences and expressions of time can be found in textile - making cultures.

Time and place for the First People of North America is reflected in their concept of what is sacred. Native American cultures recognize seven directions. To the First People the four cardinal directions East, West, North and South correspond to life cycles: birth, youth, adulthood and the time of being an elder. The Earth and Sky represent the fifth and sixth directions and are also more easily represented in tangible form. To the Native American, the seventh direction is the direction within us, the human being. That place and time that helps us see right and wrong and maintain balance.

Could the views and ideas of time as experienced by the First People of North America be used to counteract some of the negative impacts that students face such as pressure for immediate gratification and materialistic voracity? This curriculum unit addresses that question, both through research and hands-on work with Native American textiles.

I am the art specialist at an urban middle school, in which approximately 98% of the student population is African American. The administration supports the integration of the arts into the core curriculum, linking reading and mathematics to artistic endeavor and creative expression. The challenge in our school is to find pathways into our students hearts and minds; to convince them that school is relevant, a time and place to discover who they are, what they are interested in and what they are good at. For too many, school represents a place to act out aggression. The harsh realities of many of the students' lives compel them to distrust classmates, challenge authority, and withdraw from class work in an effort to be accepted as one of a group. I am frequently asked, "what does art have to do with me, when am I going to use this stuff?" If middle school students are afforded an opportunity to make something real, their learning experience becomes relevant, appealing and stimulating to them.

Pennsylvania State Arts and Humanities standards require that by Grade 8 students explain the historical, cultural and social context of a work of art; relate works in the arts to varying styles and to the periods in which they were created; analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective; and, analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts. By Grade 8 students

are also expected to recognize, know, use and demonstrate the elements and principles of art to produce a work of art. In addition, students are required to know and use traditional and contemporary methods/technologies for producing art. Weaving is an art/craft form that almost every culture known to man has used. The art and craft of weaving is a time intensive, laborious enterprise which can be experienced, appreciated and valued across borders. Weaving, time and place are entities that students can explore, find words to describe, discuss and use to discover common ground upon which to build awareness, correlation and relevance between their urban youth culture and the time/place traditions of another culture. Students will be challenged to interpret unfamiliar symbols and images that convey the experience of others, and then ask to respond to and articulate those visions with words and images of their own making. Through this process, students will discover expressive outlets for exploring the limitless possibilities in their own lives.

The School District of Philadelphia's recently published Core Curriculum for the Visual Arts is aligned with the State of Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities standards and recommends that curricula, and visual arts instruction in particular, make multicultural connections. One goal of this series of lessons is to present historical information about the introduction of weaving to the Navajo, to examine how traditions are symbolized in weavings, how weaving or the process of weaving is used in ceremonies and how weaving expresses Navajo identity. Another purpose of the lessons is to study and compare traditional and contemporary Navajo designs and to discover how the designs reflect changes in their way of life. In this series of lessons on Navajo textile development, the art and craft of Navajo weaving will be explored through a hands-on activity leading to the identification of tools and materials specific to spinning and weaving, with an introduction to spinning and weaving vocabulary. Artifacts and skills used in the textile work of the Navajo will be demonstrated and exhibited. The students will be taught how to spin wool on a Navajo style drop spindle and weave on a Navajo style upright loom.

Navajo weaving expresses a variety of design, technique, and stylistic change that reflects the social, cultural, economic and political history of the Navajo people. Weaving connects the Navajo to their homeland and to their people. One Navajo weaver, Ruth Roessel, said, "This is who we are. The loom connects me with the sacred mountains, and the song connects me with my mother." (Roessel, 1995)

The ancestral homeland of the Navajo is considered sacred and essential to what it is to be Navajo. The Navajo territory encompasses much of northeastern Arizona and western New Mexico, and includes portions of Utah and Colorado, known as the "Four Corners" region of the United States. The land is part of the Colorado Plateau, which ranges from about 3,500 feet above sea level to more than 10,000 feet above sea level. The land offers canyons and cliffs, flat valleys, broad upland plains, rugged buttes and mesas, pine forest and mountains. Each topography has a different climate and

vegetation: the warm, arid desert, the intermediate steppe climate and the cold, sub humid climate of the mountains. The Navajo homeland is marked in four directions by four sacred mountains. These geographic boundaries are intimately associated with the Dine (Navajo) Creation stories and their way of life. To the Navajo, everything is alive, including the sun, rain, air and earth. The Navajo believe that all people must live in harmony with the earth. If the earth is taken care of, it will always be there to provide for the people.

The Navajo believe that it is very important to walk in the *beauty way* throughout life. Walking in the beauty way means that you are walking in balance and inner harmony with yourself and with all things around you. “Respect for the autonomy of others shows up in many facets of Navajo culture - in language, structure, family relationships, and religious beliefs. No one should speak for another. To do so would be presumptuous and inappropriate, an invasion of privacy and personal privilege. Ideally, no one makes decisions for someone else, nor would anyone venture to predict someone else’s opinions or plans, even those of a close relatives. Each person must take responsibility for his or her own actions.” (Hedlund, 15)

Oral traditions are an essential mechanism for teaching the Navajo way of life to the younger generation. Storytelling is how one generation passes down information, history and legends of the People to the next (younger) generation. A Navajo story is special. It changes a little with each retelling, details change, a different perspective. The stories are told over and over again. To the Navajo, the more they listen, the more they learn. and the stronger they grow. The stories define a vibrant and changing culture that is at once ancient and modern. Navajo legends describe their appearance in the region through a four step process as they traveled through three underground worlds to arrive in the Fourth World, or the Glittering World. Spirits called Yei, or Holy People, instructed the Navajo to settle in an area surrounded by four mountain peaks, and that as long as the Navajo lived in this space they would be safe. The Navajo call their homeland, Dinétah, or “land of the people”.

Navajo traditional dwellings, called hogans, are built according to legend by instructions that were given to the people by the First Man and First Woman in the Navajo creation story. The entrance always faces east to greet the morning sun of Father Sky. The inside of the hogan represents Mother Earth. To the Navajos, a home is more than walls and a ceiling. A home is everything around you. The design of the hogan imitates the land. The walls are like the four mountains, and the ceiling is round, like the sky.

The Navajo have a close relationship to their environment and seek to live in balance and harmony with nature. The Navajo believe that weaving is a gift from the spirit world. According to Navajo legend, Spider Man made the first loom and Spider Woman taught Navajo women how to weave. According to legend, the loom’s cross

poles were made of sky and earth cords, the warp sticks were made of the sun's rays, the heddles of rock crystal and sheet lightning, the batten of sun's halo, and the comb of white shell. Anthropologists speculate Navajos learned to weave from Pueblo people by 1650. There is little doubt Pueblo weaving was already influenced by the Spanish by the time they shared their weaving skills with Navajo people. Spanish influence includes the substitution of wool for cotton, the introduction of indigo (blue) dye, and simple stripe patterning. (Kent, 8 - 9)

For more than a century, the products of Navajo looms were probably identical to those of their Pueblo teachers, but by the end of the 1700s Navajo weaving began its divergence. While Pueblo weavers remained conservative, Navajo weavers learned that wefts did not need to be passed through all the warps each time, but rather, by stopping at whatever point they wished they could create patterning other than horizontal bands. These "pauses" in Navajo weaving are often seen as "lazy-lines" (diagonal lines across the horizontal wefts) in finished pieces. By 1800, weavers were using this technique to create terraced lines and discrete design elements. Navajo weavers also demonstrated more willingness to use color than their Pueblo teachers. (Kent,15)

## **Objectives**

1. Students will be able to understand how the Navajo learned to weave according their legends. Students will listen to and read Navajo legends to learn about how Spider Woman taught the Navajo to weave.
2. Students will be able to understand that archaeologists believe that the Navajo learned to weave from a different source. Students will trace the migration of the Navajo as they moved south and encountered the Pueblo Indians. According to archaeologists and anthropologists, the Navajo learned much about weaving techniques from the Pueblo Indians.
3. Students will learn how Navajo weaving designs and colors have changed over time. Students will discover how and why the Navajo adapted the structure of the loom, patterns and designs, and the color and texture of the materials that they used as they developed their own unique style and textile product.
4. Students will be able to identify tools, techniques and materials traditionally used to spin wool, dye yarn and weave. Students will learn, understand and use weaving, spinning and dyeing terminology by learning to look, investigate and explain how tools and materials were traditionally used by the Navajo weaver.
5. Students will be able to describe the function of a weaving (blanket, rug, saddle bags, clothing). Students will have an opportunity to discover and discuss with classmates the importance of weaving and the woven object to the Navajo culture.

6. Students will be able to recognize and identify Navajo weaving designs by technique, pattern, style, and period. The students will be able to identify and describe how the Navajo expressed their environment and sense of beauty in their weavings.
7. Students will learn to spin carded wool on a drop spindle.
8. Students will learn how to design and weave a series of patterns inspired by Navajo textile art.

### **Strategies**

Students will keep a Project Journal/Sketchbook in which they will write down their thoughts and ideas about the Navajo way of life, note any questions or responses they may have to what they see, hear or do during the lesson(s), and sketch their impressions or responses to the Navajo way of life.

A series of lessons will introduce the study of the Navajo, tracing its path through history to the present. Information and hands-on activities will be utilized to introduce vocabulary reflective of the Navajo by reading three informational texts, *The Navajo* written by Andrew Santella, *The Navajos* written by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve and *Fry Breads, Feast Days, and Sheep: Stories of Contemporary Indian Life* written and illustrated by Kris Hotvedt. These texts depict the origins of the Navajo Nation, the migration of the Navajo to their homeland, adaptations that the Navajo made in order to survive in their new environment, the legends that guide their lives, family life, their traditional homes, foods that they eat and the art they make.

Photographs of the landscape, objects and foods referred to in the texts will be displayed to exchange the students interest and attention. Students will be asked to identify images or objects in the pictures and what they might be used for. In addition, the students will discuss whether they have ever used similar objects in their own daily lives, and how those objects are important to their daily lives, and/or family or community traditions. In addition the students will explore the relationship between geographical location, environment and the Navajo way of life. The significance of landmarks and places of special importance to the Navajo will be investigated and comparisons drawn to the students' concept of their own neighborhoods and urban environment.

Navajo weavers design and weave patterns that hold meaning for them. A particular land formation, the landscape in general, or a story might inspire the use of certain colors and patterns in a design. The unique sense of time and place in Navajo culture will be explored as students seek to understand the relationship between the land, traditions and beliefs as expressed in Navajo textile design. Pictures of Navaho rugs and blankets and the Navajo environment will be compared to identify lines, shapes, colors

and textures used in Navajo weaving. Students will then be asked to study their own urban landscape and design a weaving using lines, shapes, colors and textures to reflect the urban environment

**Assessments:**

Individual portfolio of art work in the form of weavings and design.

Individual sketchbook and journal.

Artifact identification, research and presentation.

Students will be evaluated based on information that they gather and present, their participation in a group project, and in classroom discussion.

**Rubrics:**

- 5- Outstanding!
- 4 - Very Good
- 3 - Good
- 2 - Making progress
- 1 - Needs Improvement

**Following Directions:**

- 5 - I followed the directions, stayed on task and helped other students
- 4 - I followed the directions but I had to be reminded to stay on task.
- 3 - I was frequently off task.
- 2 - I did not follow the directions.
- 1 - I did not listen to the directions, so I did not know what to do.

**Use of resources:**

- 5 - I was able to complete my work independently.
- 4 - I was able to complete the project with help from others.
- 3 - I was able to find most of the material I needed to work on the project.
- 2 - I was able to find some of the material I needed to work on the project.
- 1 - I was unable to find the information I was looking for.

**Completion of rug design:**

- 5 - My rug design is expressive in use of line, shape and color variety, and my drawings were carefully detailed with more than 5 - 6 elements.
- 4 - My rug design uses line, shape and color variety, and my drawings were carefully rendered using 4 - 5 elements.
- 3 - My rug design uses lines and color. My drawing uses 3 different elements, but is a little messy
- 2 - My rug design uses lines and color variation. My drawing has 1-2 design elements, but is messy.
- 1 - My work is incomplete. I am beginning to understand the design and weaving techniques.

## **Classroom Activities**

Lesson - Object Identification

Grade Level(s): Middle School - grades 7 and 8

Time Required: Two one hour class periods

Materials:

Photographs of traditional Navajo weaving and spinning tools, ie.: drop spindle, sheep, wool fleece, skein of yarn, weaving fork, batten, shed stick, heddle, shuttle, flat loom.

Authentic examples of spinning and weaving tools.

Drawing and writing materials

1. Pencils, colored pencils, water-based markers
2. Project Journal (lined and unlined paper for writing and drawing response to prompts)

Teaching Procedures:

Begin the lesson with a personal object from the present, such as a thimble or a knitting needle. Ask the students to identify the object and what use it may have. Tell students that objects like the thimble are pieces of history that can help us find out how people lived in the past, then tell the story behind your object, modeling the process that students will use in their investigations:

What is it? Identify the object.

How was it used? Explain the objects function

When did people use it? Place the object in its historical context, telling something about the period when it was new.

Why is it important? Explain how the object reveals what life may have been like in the past.

How might the object be used today?

After modeling the identification process, tell the students that they will be given objects or photographs to examine. Students will be divided into groups of three to five. Each group will be given an object or a photograph to examine, identify, and classify using the above listed prompts. Each group of students will write or illustrate and label their ideas on a “show and tell” poster and present their findings to the entire class. The objects will be displayed in the classroom Cultural Museum and used in future lessons.

Lesson - Spinners and Weavers



Grade Level(s): Middle School - grades 7 and 8

Time Required: Two one hour class periods

Materials:

Photographs of traditional Navajo weaving and spinning tools, ie.: drop spindle, sheep, wool fleece, skein of yarn, weaving fork, batten, shed stick, heddle, shuttle, flat loom.

Authentic examples of spinning and weaving tools.

Photographs of the Navajo landscape with special attention given to land forms referenced in Navajo legends and stories.

Photographs, books, slides and video examples of Navajo weavings.

Computer with internet access and capacity to run CD/DVD disks.

Projection system to be used with computer.

Drawing and writing materials

1. Pencils, colored pencils, water-based markers
2. Project Journal (lined and unlined paper for writing and drawing response to prompts)

Procedures:

Students will view the 30 minute video, *Woven by the Grandmothers: 19th Century Navajo Textiles*.

Students will meet in small groups to discuss new information and review the video using their journals to document their comments.

Students will view *Woven by the Grandmothers* and *Contemporary Navajo Weaving* over the internet as a slide presentation at

<http://www.conexus.sdt.edu/wbg/index.htm>

Students will draw an interpretation of one or more Navajo weaving patterns referring to Navajo weaving books, the video, *Woven by the Grandmothers*, photographs of Navajoland and the internet slide shows, *Woven by the Grandmothers and Contemporary Navajo Weaving*.

Lesson - Response to Time and Place

Grade Level(s): Middle School - grades 7 and 8

Time Required: Two one hour class periods

Materials:

Photographs of the Navajo landscape with special attention given to land forms referenced in Navajo legends and stories.

Photographs, books, slides and video examples of Navajo weavings.

Computer with internet access and capacity to run CD/DVD disks.

Projection system to be used with computer.

Photographs of the Navajo landscape with special attention given to land forms referenced in Navajo legends and stories.

Photographs, books, slides and video examples of Navajo weavings.

Computer with internet access and capacity to run CD/DVD disks.

Projection system to be used with computer.

Drawing and writing materials

1. Pencils, colored pencils, water-based markers
2. Project Journal (lined and unlined paper for writing and drawing response to prompts)

The Navajo used lines and shapes, sometimes called symbols, to represent land forms, vegetation, animals, and sometimes feelings about their environment.

Students will use internet sources, a teacher made slide show, a film and books to study photographic images of land forms found on the Navajo Reservation.

In Journal entries students will respond to the following prompts:

1. What land forms can be found in the photographs of the Navajo reservation?
2. Describe what you see by drawing thumbnail sketches of several different land forms and/or plants or animals that live on the Navajo Reservation.

Students will use internet sources, a teacher made slide show, a film and books to look at photographs of Navajo textiles (Rugs and Blankets).

Students will recognize and identify lines, shapes, colors, and textures used by Navajo weavers in their rugs and blankets.

Students will record observations in a project journal/sketchbook by drawing rug and blanket patterns and labeling each element.

In Journal entries students will respond to the following prompts:

1. What colors does the Navajo weaver use?
2. What do the colors represent?
3. Why do Navajo weavers use certain colors in their weavings?
4. How does the Navajo weaver use line (hint: think width of line) and geometric shapes in their weavings?
5. What do the patterns represent?
6. Are the patterns or shapes in the rugs and blankets similar to any land forms found on the Navajo Reservation? ( Look at the lines and shapes in the thumbnail sketches)

Students will choose land forms, buildings, animals or plants in their own neighborhood environment to use in their rug design.

Students will use line and geometric shape and color to describe their design.

1. Sketch several designs combining shapes and lines and color in different ways.
2. Select one sketch to become a rug design.
3. Tape the sketch to a desk top.
4. Cover the sketch with a piece of white copy paper or tracing paper.
5. Using a dark marker, trace the outline of the sketch. Look for geometric shapes and lines.
6. Experiment with filling the outlined area with different precut geometric shapes to see how many different designs can be made.
7. When a design is selected students can glue the geometric shapes in place.
8. An alternative approach, is to use geometric shape stencils to fill in the design. Add color with crayon or colored pencil or oil pastel.

Lesson - Spinning and Weaving

Grade Level(s): Middle School - Grade 7 and 8

Time Required: Eight to Ten - 1 hour class periods.

Materials:

- Drawing and writing materials
- Computer(s) with internet access
- Navajo Style Drop Spindle
- Clay whorl
- Contemporary spinning wheel
- Cards for carding wool
- Fleece from a churro sheep and a Cheviot (a medium wool breed)
- Free standing Navajo upright loom
- Ruler
- Heavy cardboard 3-4 ply weight, approximately 11"x 14"
- Wooden flat frames, approximately 16"x 22" made from painting stretchers or 1" x 3" lumber
- 3 - 1/2" diameter wooden dowels per loom cut to fit inside the wooden frame loom, (lumber yards will cut the dowels to size if there is no access to tools)
- White glue or carpenter's wood glue
- Scissors
- Skein of cotton warp in white or cream
- Twelve to sixteen skeins of 4 ply wool yarn in black, white, gray, a variety of browns, reds, yellows, and gold. Acrylic yarn can be substituted, however, the colors and textures tend to be bright and hard compared to wool.
- Yarn needle or shuttle

Fork (metal or wood)

Photographs, books, slides and video of examples of Navajo weaving

**Procedure:**

Students will pick and card raw fleece, and use a drop spindle and a spinning wheel to spin yarn following step by step instruction. (see bibliography)

Students will experiment with basic weaving and tapestry techniques ( See bibliography for recommended reading material)

Each student will weave a small (Navajo) inspired wall hanging using one of the patterns that the student sketched from books, the video, photographs or the slide show.

Students will design and build a Classroom Cultural Museum, which will exhibit a collection of artifacts and original work representing ideas, events, characters, and/or themes based on the Native American informational texts and fiction that the students have read.

**Annotated Bibliography / Resources**

**Student Resources / Books:**

Abbink, Emily, Janice Lee Porter (illustrator) *Colors of the Navajo (Colors of the World)*, Carolrhoda Books, 1998.

A brief book that gives information on many elements of Navajo life. Ten colors are tied to topics and introduce interesting facts about the land, traditions, arts, and way of life on the Navajo reservation. Historical and modern aspects are clearly differentiated. The artwork and text combine to create an appealing whole. Pronunciations for Navajo words are given as they appear.

Amsden, Charles Avery, *Navaho Weaving Its Techniques and History*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1991.

Blood, Charles L., & Martin Link, *The Goat in the Rug, by Geraldine.*, illustrations by Nancy Windslow Parker, New York, NY, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1976 .

Clark, Ann Nolan; Denetsosie, Hoke (Navajo), illus. *Little Herder in Autumn*. Reprint of Dept. of Interior 1940 ed. Santa Fe, NM: Ancient City Press; 1988. 96 pages. (lower elementary).

A young Navajo girl describes her family life in this bilingual (Navajo/English) text, which also details women's weaving activities, and men making jewelry, planting, and trading. Includes the Navajo alphabet and information about its development.

Desimini, Lisa (illustrator), Jerrie Oughton (author). *How the Stars Fell into the Sky: A Navajo Legend*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

This retelling of a Navajo folktale explains how First Woman tried to write the laws of the land using stars in the sky, only to be thwarted by the trickster Coyote. According to the Navajos, the jumble of stars in the night sky reflects the disorders and confusion of life.

Duncan, Lois. *Magic of Spider Woman*, Scholastic; 2000.

This is the story of Wandering Girl, who came to be known as Weaving woman, and of the terrible thing that happened to her when she disobeyed Spider Woman.

Garaway, Margaret Kahn; Warren, Harry (Navajo), illus. *Ashkii and His Grandfather*. Tucson, AZ: Treasure Chest Publications, Inc. 1989. Elementary.

Six-year-old Ashkii spends the summer with his grandfather at their sheep camp. Ashkii is reluctant to return home when he must start school, but later learns the importance of education when his family and teacher encourage his artistic abilities. "I will learn in school so someday I will be a good Navajo artist," says Ashkii at the end of the story. Includes large, appealing watercolor drawings

Hotvedt, Kris; Hotvedt, Kris, illus. *Fry Breads, Feast Days, and Sheep: Stories of Contemporary Indian Life*. Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press; 1987. 47 pages. (elementary). Each page of sensitive woodcuts depicting Navajo and Pueblo contemporary festivities and communal activities is accompanied by informative text on the opposite page. Some of the events portrayed include Kings' Day (Epiphany, January 6), spring ditch cleaning, a Navajo fair, wedding feast, and All Soul's Day eve. Includes a preface by Frank Waters.

Roessel, Monty, *Songs From The Loom: A Navajo Girl Learns to Weave, (We Are Still Here: Native Americans Today)* Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 1995.

Informational text about a Navajo girl learning the stories and techniques of weaving from her grandmother.

Santella, Andrew, *The Navajo*, Danbury, Conn.: Children's Press, 2002.

Discusses the Navajo way of life, including their traditions.

Sneve, Virginia Driving Hawk, *The Navajos (A First Americans Book)*, New York, NY, Holiday House: 1993.

Provides an overview of the history, culture, and ways of the Navajo.

Thompson, Peggy & Paul Conklin, *Katie Henio: Navajo Shepherd*, 1995, Cobblehill Books/Dutton, New York.

Van Laan, Nancy and Lisa Desimini (illustrator). *In a Circle Long Ago: A Treasury of native lore From North America*. New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, Inc. 1995

A collection of different tribal traditions

Wood, Leigh Hope. *The Navajo Indians*. New York, NY: Chelsea House Publishers; 1991. 80 pages. (The Junior Library of American Indians). (upper elementary).

This book includes information on Navajo creation stories and mythology, cultural heritage and lifeways, contact with Spanish and Euroamerican settlers, boarding schools and reservation life, legal disputes with the U.S. government, and the development of the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity and the Navajo Nation. One chapter explores the critical help given to the U.S. Army by Navajo Code talkers during World War II. A color photograph section illustrates traditional Navajo arts and crafts. Includes black-and-white maps, drawings, and photographs; a glossary and a chronology

Teacher Resources / Books:

Bennett, Noel, Bighorse, Tianna, Running, John, *Navajo Weaving Way: The Path from Fleece to Rug*, Interweave Press; July 1997.

*Navajo Weaving Way* is a compilation of Noel Bennett's earlier, out-of-print books on Navajo rug-weaving traditions: *Working with the Wool*, *Designing with the Wool*, and *The Weaver's Pathway*. This book augments the information in Bennett's previous works with all-new chapters on spinning, carding, and dyeing techniques. Illustrations include photographs by John Running of Navajo women carding, spinning, and weaving, along with detailed line drawings depicting specific techniques.

Bleeker, Sonia, *The Navajo: Herders, Weavers, and Silversmiths*. New York, Morrow ; 1958.

Blomberg, Nancy J. *Navajo Textiles: The William Randolph Hearst Collection*, University of Arizona Press, 1988.

Bonar, Eulalie H. editor, *Woven by the Grandmothers: Nineteenth-Century Navajo Textiles from the National Museum of the American Indian*, 1996, Smithsonian Institution Press (in association with the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution), Washington, DC.

DeCesare, Ruth. *Myth, Music and Dance of the American Indian*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.; 1988. 51 pages. (elementary/secondary).

A teacher's resource book on American Indian music that includes songs representing 21 tribes, information on each tribe represented, an annotated reading list, map of Indian culture areas, instructions for making American Indian musical instruments, and a student workbook with questions based on the information presented. Includes an audio cassette with recordings of the songs.

Hausman, Gerald. *Sitting On The Blue-Eyed Bear*. Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co.; 1975. 130 pages. (secondary).

This collection of Navajo stories and poems is preceded by an introduction that includes a short history of the Navajo and a description of the Navajo today. Part One begins with a retelling of the Navajo origin story, followed by a selection of poems related to themes of origin and journey. Part Two includes an informative description of curing ceremonies, followed by medicine stories, and a series of poems about Navajo ceremonies. Additional explanatory information follows each poem. The book is illustrated with black-and-white pencil drawings, and includes a bibliography.

Hooker, Kathy Eckles; Running, Helen Lau, photography. *Time Among the Navajo: Traditional Lifeways on the Reservation*. Santa Fe, NM: Museum of New Mexico Press; 1991. 104 pages. (elementary/secondary) .

A "personal documentary of the traditional lifeways practiced by the Navajos living on ancestral lands," this book provides a record of the author's visits with Navajo on Big Reservation. Words and pictures illustrate the traditional tasks of the Navajo as they share personal thoughts and beliefs relating to their lives and work. Includes black-and-white duotone photographs.

Iverson, Peter. *The Navajos*. New York, NY: Chelsea House Publishers; 1990. 111 pages. (Frank W. Porter III, Gen. Ed. Indians of North America).

This is a history of the Navajos, who live in northeastern Arizona and portions of New Mexico and Utah. The book describes Navajo's early associations with Pueblo farmers and with the Spanish. Clashes with the U.S. Army led to the Navajo's surrender and the Long Walk to Ft. Sumner. They eventually returned to their homeland, where the Navajo reservation was established. The book documents Navajo prosperity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the influence of Christian missionaries and non-Indian traders upon Navajo culture in that same period. The book also details the massive political, economic, and social transitions faced by the Nation in the modern era. Includes a color photographic essay on silver and wool crafts.

Kaufman, Alice and Christopher Seiser. *Navajo Weaving Tradition: 1650 to the Present*, E P Dutton, 1999

A history of the Navajo people from their beginnings in North America to reservation life of today. Navajo weaving traditions from ceremonial to profit making are interwoven with the history of the Navajo Nation. Beautiful color photographs of textiles.

Keegan, Marcia, photography. *Mother Earth and Father Sky*. New York, NY: Grossman Publishers; 1974. 111 pages. Striking color photographs of the land and people of the Southwest are combined with Navajo and Pueblo chants in this profusely illustrated volume. Sources are cited for the chants.

Kent, Kate Peck, *The Story of Navaho Weaving. Three Centuries of Change*.

Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research; 1999.

Mattera, Joanne, *Navajo Techniques for Today's Weaver*, New York, N.Y., Watson-Guptill Publications, 1975. This text provides step by step directions on how to build a traditional Navajo loom and includes weaving techniques and wool production information. The book also offers descriptive photographs and illustrations.

O'Bryan, Aileen. *Navajo Indian Myths*. Dover Publishers, 1993.  
A compilation of tribal fables and legends recorded by the author as narrated by Sandoval, Hastin Tlo'tsi hee (Old Man Buffalo Grass) in the 1928.

Page, Susanne, *Navajo*, New York, NY, Abrams; 1995. Collection of dramatic pictorial images coupled with original writing in various styles.

Powers, Willow Roberts. *Navajo Trading: The End of an Era*. 2001.  
In the late 19th/early 20th centuries, trading posts were a major part of life on the Navajo Indian Reservation, linking the native culture to the outside world and providing needed goods. As the century advanced, trading posts became obsolete, making way for the selling of wares for money. This book follows the unique history of the Navajo trading post and looks at how its demise has affected the tribe.

Reichard, Gladys Amanda, *Spider Woman; A Story of Navajo Weavers and Chanters*, New York, NY, Macmillan Company, 1934.

Van Laan, Nancy and Lisa Desimini (illustrator). *In a Circle Long Ago: A Treasury of native lore From North America*. New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, Inc. 1995  
A collection of different tribal traditions

Wheat, Joe Ben, *Gift of Spiderwoman: Southwestern Textiles*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum Babylonian, 1984. This text provides a good introduction to the legend of the Spiderwoman and Navajo Weaving.

Wheat, Joe Ben, ed. by Ann Lane Hedlund. *Blanket Weaving of the Southwest*, University of Arizona Press, 2003  
Describes the evolution of southwestern textiles from the early historic period to the late nineteenth century, establishes a revised chronology for its development, and traces significant changes in materials, techniques, and designs.

Whitaker, Kathleen, Hart, Susie, Southwest Museum, *Southwest Textiles: Weavings of the Pueblo and Navajo*, University of Washington Press August 1902 edition, ASIN: 0295982268  
The significance of Pueblo and Navajo textiles transcends simple artistic expression. Through the spiritual activity of weaving, male and female weavers beautify their world



and integrate their art into the "web of life." Both the Pueblo and the Navajo believe that the culture hero Spider Woman has taught them to create with patience, understanding, and sensitivity. Yet over the centuries Pueblo and Navajo textiles have developed along distinct paths which reflect the unique historical and individual experiences within each culture. The textiles collection of the Southwest Museum illustrates the rich interplay between these two peoples and their art. Southwest Textiles tells the fascinating story of the history and evolution of Pueblo and Navajo fabric arts. Over 250 outstanding examples from the Southwest Museum's collection are reproduced in full color, along with 125 illustrations showing details of these works and historical photographs of Native American craftspeople. Also included are absorbing accounts of the early collectors of these superb textiles and some of the colorful individuals who were instrumental in founding the Southwest Museum and shaping its collections.

### **Websites:**

An Introduction to the Navajo Culture

<http://waltonfeed.com/peoples/navajo/culture.html#ceremony>

This site contains written material on the Navajo culture and way of life: The four Sacred Mountains, Canyon de Chelle, the Navajo language, the importance of ceremony and the four directions in a Navajo's life are briefly discussed in the lyric phrasing of the Navajo people.

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Between Four Sacred Mountains: the Dine and the Land in Contemporary America by  
Adriana C. Rissetto

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA97/dinetah/geo.html>

This beautifully constructed site contains photographs and commentary on the Navajo and their way of life. The piece was produced by Adriana C. Rissetto, a graduate student at the University of Virginia.

The Din'e (Navajo) People: Photographs of the Din'e (Navajo)

by Ilka Hartmann

<http://csulb.edu/projects/ais/dine.html>

this site contains expressive photographs taken in the 1970's of Navajo Indians, hogans and other Din'e settings.

First Americans: Dine, Muscogee, Tlingit, Lakota, Iroquois

<http://www.u.arizona.edu/ic/kmartin/School/index.htm>

This site is visually appealing and child friendly. It offers specific information on five different tribes, interesting photographs and activities that are simple but require shockwave to play. Not all of the links are active which was disappointing. The site is produced by Karen Martin, MA in Education and member of the Muscogee Nation.

### Native American Resources

<http://www.nativeculture.com/features>

This site contains links to information sources about tribal government, recommended Native American literature, Arts and Expression and Teaching and Learning sites. One exceptional link is a site produced by Lisa Mitten through which you can find information on individual Native American Nations, Organizations, Languages, Journals and Newspapers, Native Music and Art and Drama, famous Native Americans, Powwows and Festivals, Native American Businesses and more. ([www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/indians.html](http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/indians.html))

### Navajo Landforms

[http://www.lapahie.com/Sacred\\_Mts.cfm](http://www.lapahie.com/Sacred_Mts.cfm)

This site contains excellent photographs of Navajo land forms, hogans, and livestock, with links to other Navajo resources. The site is produced by Harrison Lapahie Jr. , a Navajo Indian.

### Navajo Legends

<http://www.indianlegend.com/navajo-002.htm>

This site is a source for Native American legends and stories. Provides links to stories and information on specific tribes, however not all links offered within the tribal links are active.

<http://inkido.indiana.edu/w310work/romac/slegend.htm>

Examples of children's writing inspired by legends of the Southwest.

<http://www.indians.org>

scroll to **(Navajo) Dine** under the heading **By Nation** to read selections of Navajo legends, some links take a long time to load, other links are no longer active.

### Navajo Resources

<http://azarted.org/pages/Indianresources.htm>

This site is a webquest on cultural diversity for Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grade Students. The site is artfully constructed and provides inspiration and resources for anyone interest in building a webquest lesson. The site also provides a link to Navajo and Mexican resources that proved helpful to my quest. Unfortunately, some of the links are not active. Webquest site created by Heather Lynch and Stephanie Tennill. Graphic design layout by Bettie Lake.

### Navajo Resources

<http://www.nativeweb.org/resources/education/k-12>

This site provides links to k-12 resources concerned with providing accurate and insightful information about indigenous cultures. Links from this site could be accessed and used by students, also.

## **Standards:**

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

### 1.1.3 Learning to Read Independently

- A. Identify the purposes and types of text (fiction, informational)
- B. Preview the text formats (title, headings, chapters and table of contents).
- C. Use knowledge of phonics, word analysis picture and context clues to decode and understand new words during reading.
- F. Understand the meaning of and use of new vocabulary.
- G. Demonstrate after reading an understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text.
  - > Retell or summarize the major ideas, themes of the text.
  - > Connect the new information or ideas in the text to known information.
  - > Clarify ideas and understandings through rereading and discussion.
  - > Make responsible assertions about the text by citing evidence from the text.

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

### 1.4.3 Types of Writing

- A. Write narrative pieces (stories)
  - > Include detailed description of people, places and things.
  - > Use relevant illustrations.
- B. Write informational pieces (descriptions, letters) using illustrations when relevant.

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

### 1.6.3 Speaking and Listening

- A. Listen to others.
  - > Ask questions as an aid to understanding.
  - > Distinguish fact from opinion.
- B. Listen to a selection of literature (fiction and informational).
  - > Predict what will happen next.
  - > Retell a story in chronological order.
  - > Identify and define new words and concepts.
- D. Contribute to discussions.

- > Ask relevant questions.
  - > Respond with appropriate information or opinions to questions ask.
  - > Listen to and acknowledge the contribution of others.
  - > Display appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.

## Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

### 1.1.3 Learning to Read Independently

- A. Identify the purposes and types of text (fiction, informational)
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  - > Connect the new information or ideas in the text to known information.
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  - > Make responsible assertions about the text by citing evidence from the text.

## Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

### 1.4.3 Types of Writing

- A. Write narrative pieces (stories)
  - > Include detailed description of people, places and things.
  - > Use relevant illustrations.
- B. Write informational pieces (descriptions, letters)
  - > Use illustrations when relevant.

## Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

### 1.6.3 Speaking and Listening

- A. Listen to others.
  - > Ask questions as an aid to understanding.
  - > Distinguish fact from opinion.
- B. Listen to a selection of literature (fiction and informational).
  - > Relate readings to similar experiences.
  - > Predict what will happen next.
  - > Retell a story in chronological order.

- > Identify and define new words and concepts.
- D. Contribute to discussions.
  - > Ask relevant questions.
  - > Respond with appropriate information or opinions to questions ask.
  - > Listen to and acknowledge the contribution of others.
  - > Display appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.

## Mathematics

### 2.9 Geometry

#### A. Shapes and their properties

## Geography

### 7.1 Basic Geography Literacy

#### B. Identify and locate place and regions by physical features, and geographic characteristics

### 7.2 The Physical Characteristic of Places and Regions

#### A. Identify the physical characteristics of places and regions by physical properties including land forms, lakes and rivers, weather, climate, vegetation and animals.

### 7.3 The Human Characteristics of Places and Regions

#### B. Identify the human characteristics of places and regions by their cultural characteristics according to components of culture (language, belief systems, customs, and foods)

## History

### 8.1 Historical Analysis and Skills Development

#### A. Understand chronological thinking and distinguish between past, present and future time in terms of continuity and change and time and place of events.

#### C. Understand fundamentals of historical interpretation in terms of causes and results

### 8.3 United States History

#### A. Identify contributions of individuals and groups to United States history.

- B. Identify and describe historic sites important in United States history.
- C. Identify important changes in United States history in terms of settlement patterns and expansion.

## Arts and Humanities

### 9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of the Arts

#### A. Elements and Principles

- >Elements in the Visual Arts: color, form, line, space, texture
- >Principles in the Visual Arts: balance, contrast, focal point, repetition

B. Recognize, know, use and demonstrate art elements and principles to produce a work of art.

C. Vocabulary: recognize and use fundamental terminology within an art form.

E. Demonstrate the ability to define objects, illustrate an action or relate an experience through creation of original art work.

F. Historical & Cultural Production, Performance (Demonstration) and Exhibition.

H. Handle materials, equipment and tools safely.

- >Identify materials used.

J. Know and use traditional and contemporary technologies for producing, performing and exhibiting works in the arts.

### 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts

#### A. Context of Works in the Arts

- >Explain the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.

#### B. Chronology of Works in the Arts

- >Relate works in the arts chronologically to historical events.

#### C. Styles and Genre in the Arts

>Relate works in the arts to varying styles and to the periods in which they were created.

#### D. Historical & Cultural Perspectives

- >Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective.

#### E. Historical & Cultural Impact on Works of Art.

>Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts.

#### F. Vocabulary for Historical & Cultural context

#### G. Geographic Regions in the Arts

#### I. Philosophical Context of Works in the Arts

- >Identify, explain and analyze philosophical beliefs as they relate to works in the arts.

#### K. Traditions Within Works in the Arts.

- >Identify, explain and analyze traditions as they relate to works in the arts.

#### L. Common Themes in Works in the Arts

>Identify, explain and analyze common themes, forms and techniques from works in the arts.

### 9.3 Critical Response

#### F. Comparisons

>Know how to recognize and identify similar and different characteristics among works in the arts.

### Appendix

#### Textile Terms:

batten:	A piece of wood used to hold the yarn in place on a loom.
beater:	Tool used to push the weft down toward the cloth beam or already woven fabric
carding:	A method of preparing fibers for spinning. It is used to even out the density of short fibers, most often wool, by laying them on the teeth of a wire brush (called a card) and scraping them with another matching wire brush.
cards:	A tool used to for combing or carding fibers.
combing:	A method of preparing fibers for spinning. Fibers are aligned by drawing them through the teeth of a single large comb or transferring them between two combs. The process also separates longer fibers from shorter ones. Yarns spun from combed wool are smoother and stronger than yarns from carded wool, and are known as “worsted.”
heddles:	String loops to raise or lower warp threads when they are threaded through them
loom:	A weaving frame; a device on which warp thread can be stretched taut
mordant:	A substance (frequently a metallic oxide) that helps to create a chemical bond between the dye and the fiber in the dyeing process.
natural dye:	Dye in which the coloring agent is extracted from plant, animal, or mineral
plain weave:	weaving over and under one row, under and over the next row. Sometimes call a tabby weave.
shed:	The triangular space formed when alternated was thread are raised or lowered
shuttle:	A stick or other tool on which the weft yarn is wound in order to make it easier to pass it through the shed during weaving.
synthetic dye:	Dye in which the coloring agent is chemically manufactured. The first synthetic dyes were developed in the mid-19th century, and many types have been invented since then. A few of the compounds synthesized are the same as those found in natural sources (for

example, indigo). Synthetic dyes are much easier to use and give the dyer more control over results than natural dyes.

spindle: a round stick used to hold and turn wool as it is spun.

spinning: the process of drawing out and twisting together massed short fibers into a continuous strand. Traditionally most fiber was spun using a hand spindle. Today most fiber is spun by machine.

tapestry weave: A type of weft faced plain weave in which the weft yarns are discontinuous, turning back at the edges of each color area, instead of extending continuously from selvedge to selvedge.

textile: anything made by people from fibrous materials.

warp: the vertical threads of yarn on a loom

weft: the horizontal thread of yarn on a loom