

EDUCATION DAY



Canadian Aboriginal Festival

November 25, 2005 • Rogers Centre (Skydome) • Toronto

OTF/FEO



Curriculum Connections

Crafts

Grade 3

- 3z2 Identify the contributions of Aboriginal people to early settlement
- 3z11 Identify contributions of Aboriginal people to pioneer settlement (e.g. medicine, food, exploration)
- 3z12 Describe Aboriginal communities prior to pioneer settlement

Grade 6

- 6z1 Identify ways the environment molded Canadian Aboriginal cultures
- 6z5 Describe the relationship between Aboriginal people and their environment
- 6z6 Describe how the Algonquin and Iroquois Nations contributed to the development of Canada (e.g., the arts)

Grade 7

- 7h7 Demonstrate an understanding of the interactions between the French and Aboriginal people

KEY CONCEPTS

- Crafts of Aboriginal people originated as useful items, such as basketry, carved tools, or leather clothing
- Artistic crafts, such as jewelry, dream catchers, medicine wheels, carvings and beadwork, are more recent
- Craftsmanship of Aboriginal peoples is a significant contribution to society and reflects the complexity of Aboriginal culture

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Baskets

- Baskets from this area have traditionally been made using sweetgrass, birch bark, and strips of ash.
- Baskets were useful for storing and carrying things.
- Birch bark baskets, which are rot-resistant and waterproof, are sometimes decorated using porcupine quills. Quill decorated baskets are becoming more rare and expensive. The quills are stitched into wet birch bark, which then dries and seals around the quill, holding it in place.
- Ash baskets are most often made from the black ash. Traditionally these baskets were woven by the women and the preparation of the ash strips was done by the men. The ash tree had to be cut down, split, pounded, scraped and sometimes dyed before the weaving could be done.

- Grass and fibre baskets were made using sweetgrass, pine needles, corn husks or other plants that could be bundled. The grasses would be coiled then spiralled around to make the basket.

Carving

- Carving by the Inuit people of the Arctic was done using soapstone, serpentine or argillite.
- In the south, carving of wood, antler, and bone has been the most common as these materials have always been readily available and comparatively inexpensive. Carving as a means of artistic expression has been a way of honouring the animals or depicting traditional stories.

Dream Catchers and Medicine Wheels

- Dream Catchers come in many different styles. The historical origin of dream catchers is not well known and there are many stories about them but they all have the common thread that bad dreams are caught and destroyed by the dream catcher while good dreams are not destroyed. Most First Nations peoples throughout North America have developed their own style using a variety of natural and synthetic materials. Dream catchers were made using willow branches and the internal weaving was traditionally done using sinew with feathers hanging down from them.
- Medicine wheels are similar to dream catchers but instead of having weaving of sinew in the middle, they are sectioned into four quarters using beads and leather.

Beadwork

- Beadwork was traditionally done using beads made out of small pieces of clamshell but with the introduction of glass beads by Europeans, beadwork has become more complex and intricate. Today items of clothing, moccasins, jewelry, wampum belts, regalia often have beautiful beadwork designs.
- Leatherwork includes such items of clothing as moccasins, mittens and coats. Leatherwork is sometimes decorated with beadwork or quillwork.
- Jewelry has become a recent form of craftsmanship with earrings, necklaces, brooches and bracelets made using beadwork or natural materials, such as antler or shell.

RESOURCES

Industry Canada. *Canada's Aboriginal Digital Collection*, www.aboriginalcollection.ic.gc.ca