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**Level: Grades 3-5**

**Subjects:** English Language Arts,  
Social Studies

**Skills:** : cooperating, communicating,  
listening, following directions, creating

## Lesson 1: Maine's Fiber Beginnings

### Activity: Braiding Grasses

*Mary Dickinson Bird, PhD, author - Created through the  
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Sweetgrass grows in marshy areas where freshwater meets saltwater. If you live near such a place, you might be able to find sweetgrass growing. You will recognize it by its long strands and sweet, vanilla scent. If you don't live near sweetgrass habitat, you can still look around your neighborhood for other kinds of tall grasses that might be suitable for braiding or weaving. *Make sure you have the land owner's permission before you go onto the property or pick any plant material!*

#### For this activity you will need:

- 5 or more long strands of grass
- A bowl of water to soak the strands of grass, if they dry out.
- A spring-type clothespin or large paperclip

#### What to do:

1. Select and carefully pick 5 long strands of grass. If they are dry, soak them in water for awhile until they bend easily without breaking or splitting.
2. Line up 3 of the strands of grass side by side and use the clothespin or paperclip to hold them together at one end.
3. Now braid the 3 strands of grass together. Use the extra pieces of grass to tie the ends and secure the braid.

You can form your braid into a bracelet, or make several braids and weave them together into a small mat.

You can also try making thicker braids. Gather three bunches of long grass, with 5 or 10 strands in each bunch. Clip the bunches together at one end. Then, instead of braiding single strands together, braid the bunches. Tie the ends, as you did with your first braid.

