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Level: Grades 3-5

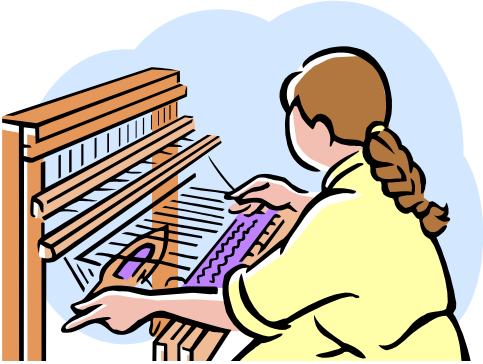
Subjects: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts

Skills: Comprehending, comparing, contrasting, describing, listening, creating, writing, thinking creatively

Lesson 4: Weaving a Life in a New Land

Activity: Weaving Cloth

Mary Dickinson Bird, PhD, author - Created through the MAITC Ag Literacy Grant made possible by the Ag License Plate



You can make your own cloth, just like the colonists did.

Weaving is simply a process of crossing strands of yarn over and under each other. It is possible to weave just by using your fingers, but it is much easier to use a frame to hold the yarns. This frame is called a *loom*. Threads are lined up side by side on the loom to make the *warp*.

Then, yarn is wound onto a shuttle. The shuttle is moved across the warp yarns, over and under them, leaving behind rows of *weft*. Each weft strand is tapped into a smooth straight line by a tool called a *beater*, and so the cloth takes shape.

For this activity you will need:

- a frame loom
- one or two small balls of yarn
- a shuttle
- a comb or “beater”
- plastic tapestry needle (blunt end)

What to do:

1. Look at the loom and place it on a table or your lap so that one row of pegs lines up just in front of your stomach, and the other row of pegs is on the far side of the loom.
2. Tie one end of the yarn to the first peg on the left end of the far side. Bring the loose yarn toward your stomach, and loop it around the first peg on the left end of the near side.
3. Draw the yarn back to loop around the second peg on the far side, then toward you to loop around the second peg on the near side. Continue this way, back and forth, until yarn is looped around all the pegs, and many strands are lined up side by side. Tie the yarn securely to the last peg and cut off the extra, leaving about a six-inch tail.



4. Now wind a few yards of yarn onto your shuttle. It can be the same kind of yarn you used for the warp, or a different color.
5. Unwind enough yarn to lay across the width of the loom, plus about six inches.
6. Now, starting from the right-hand side of the loom, gently move your shuttle over the first warp yarn, under the second yarn, over the third, under the fourth, and so on until you have gone all the way across the loom. Keep pulling the shuttle gently until only about a 6-inch tail hangs off the right-hand side.
7. Use the beater to gently press the weft yarn toward you, making it a nice, straight line across the near edge of the loom.
8. Now the shuttle will need to go back across the warp from left to right. Before starting, notice where the weft came out from the last row. If it came out from under the last warp yarn, it will now need to go OVER that yarn, and under the next yarn, and so on. When the weft has gone over and under all the warp yarns back across the loom to the right-hand side, beat the new weft thread into place. Congratulations! You are weaving!
9. Keep weaving until the weft is as long as you can make it and there's no more room to fit the shuttle through. If your shuttle runs out of yarn before you are finished, just wind on some more yarn and continue weaving. (Make sure you pick up where you left off with your unders-and-overs!)
10. When you can weave no further, take a few minutes to look at your work. If there are loose ends hanging where you changed yarns, use your tapestry needle to weave them into the cloth.
11. Carefully cut the warp yarns at one end, and knot them together in pairs to hold the weft in place. These little pairs of knotted warp ends make the fringe. Cut the warp yarns at the other end, and tie them together in pairs to make fringe at this end, also.

You can use your woven cloth as a mat, or you can fold it in half and sew up the sides to make a little bag. If you want a handle on your bag, use the finger crochet instructions in Section 3 to make a French trapper's "belt" and sew its ends to the sides of the bag.

