



CRAFT IN AMERICA

JIM BASSLER: WOVEN IN TRADITION EDUCATION GUIDE

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students watch Jim Bassler's segment from ORIGINS episode, which explores the work of weaver Jim Bassler. Students will learn about basic weaving techniques and resist design as well as understand the basic properties of dyes and dyeing materials and techniques.

Students will create a weaving using resist designs on their weavings and dye them using natural indigo dye. Students will select materials, build a loom and use natural indigo dye to create a resist pattern on their weavings. Weavings may be stitched together onto a larger piece of cloth or displayed on a wall together for viewing in class and/or school.

Key Concepts:

- Artists can create sophisticated work from the most basic techniques.
- In addition to clothing, weaving can be used to make other objects.
- There are benefits and drawbacks to creating art without the assistance of high technology.

Critical Questions:

- What is weaving? How is it important to our lives as humans?
- Other than clothing, what are some items made from woven materials?
- How does technology make it easier or more difficult for a craft artist to create work?
- What is the value of making an object by hand, rather than with technological assistance?

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the basic techniques of creating a weaving and define key terminology like loom, warp and weft.
- Learn about the ORIGINS of weaving and the time and effort that goes into creating a weaving from the yarn to the final product.
- Consider the role that technology plays (or does not play) in an artist's work, and explain how technology can both assist and hinder the artistic process.
- Understand the basic properties and ORIGINS of dyes, both synthetic and natural.
- Create a weaving and dye it using natural indigo dye and resist methods.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

This lesson addresses the following standards. The performance standards listed here are directly related to the lesson's goals.

Content Standard:



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1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
2. Using knowledge of *structures and functions
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Student Worksheets

- Tying Up Loose Ends: Weaving Self-Assessment

Interdisciplinary Connection

- Social studies
- History
- Science

Materials

Weaving Materials

- Wooden picture frame or 4 pieces of wood to form the loom
- 2" Nails
- Hammers
- Cotton warping yarn or cotton kitchen twine
- Natural yarns or fibers, such as cotton, wool, or linen, preferably undyed
- Blunt yarn needles or shuttles for weaving (Alternatively, cardboard could be used for warp by cutting slits in the top and bottom of it and using that to run the warp threads up and down the weaving)

Dyeing Materials

- Dyes
- Upholstery thread and/or rubber bands
- Vinyl gloves, 5 gallon bucket with lid, other dyeing supplies
- [Jacquard Indigo Dye Kit](#) from the source listed here or another

About the Artist

Weaver Jim Bassler uses the most basic weaving techniques to express his ideas and interests. He uses natural fibers and creates weavings that he dyes using resist methods and often cuts the weavings apart and sews them into something new. Drawing inspiration from the weaving processes of Central and South American cultures as well as from his father, who created hand-dyed, hooked rugs when on break from his career as a major league baseball player, Bassler enjoys every minute of his work, even if the process can be tedious and repetitive.

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“Decisions I make are never based on how long it’s going to take me.” - Jim Bassler

“Anybody might not consider themselves an artist but yet they can, by some need to survive, make things, which is something I think we’ve sort of lost with high technology.” - Jim Bassler