

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:
BUILDING A RAWHIDE HAND DRUM

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING MONTANA INDIANS

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Additionally, each tribe has its own history beginning with their origins that are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

From the Montana Arts Council

“The drum is an important instrument for Indian people, giving both rhythm and meaning to life. It provides the beat for dancers to proudly offer their thanks and praise to the Creator and the Mother Earth during ceremonies. It was and still is used to help heal the sick and as a way of carrying songs and prayers to the Great Above All Person. The tradition of the drum is still very important today and is a way of bringing the People together.”

From the www.nativeamericantrade.com website:

“The drum is the heartbeat of our Native American people. Through it comes the songs, that are our prayers. Our prayers are expressed through our singing and dancing. It could not be, without the drum.”

OBJECTIVES:

- Design and create a rawhide hand drum.
- Understand the histories and traditions of Native American percussion instruments.
- Be able to set-up and create mitered and dovetail joints.
- Create correct theme for the finish if used.
- Use the Internet to find relevant sources and information.

TOOLS USED:

- Measuring tape
- Miter saw
- Try square
- Table saw
- Router, router table, dovetail bit

- Wood chisel
- Various clamps

RAW MATERIAL:

- Pine
- Rawhide

CONTEXT AND WOODWORKING ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT:

My objective was to create a hand drum, similar to the ones used by Native Americans, using common woodworking hand and power tools found in most school shops.

The research I conducted showed that most of the small hand drums were either round or multisided, usually consisting of eight sides, such as the one I created.

To create a round drum one has to either steam bend the wood or kerf bend the wood. I made the decision that it would be better in my shop to make an eight sided drum. This would be less difficult for students to duplicate.

THE 12 INCH DRUM

Eight pieces need to be cut. The ends need to be cut at a 22.5 degree angle. For eight pieces this will add up to 360 degrees. Each of my pieces was approximately 4.75 inches long.

The ends of all eight pieces were then dovetailed, using the router. A jig may have to be created to give some consistency. Test frequently for fit. If the fit is satisfactory then glue and clamp the pieces together.

Sand the pieces to knock down any rough spots. Apply a boiled linseed finish.

The rawhide needs to be good and damp prior to applying. Carefully tie and adjust the tension. Remember the rawhide will tighten as it dries.

Apply a finish or paint theme.

LENGTH

This project could take up to 5 class periods for an individual. For a mass production project the drum could be finished in 2 to 3 class periods.

SUPPORT-CONNECTIONS-RESOURCES

- [Make Your Own Drums](http://www.mudcat.org/kids/drums.cfm) from the Mudcat Café web site for drum making instructions. www.mudcat.org/kids/drums.cfm

- Indian Rawhide Drum Making__ folklife in the classroom activity ideas.
www.art.state.mt/us/folklife/folklife_drum.asp
- Some info can also be found at <http://highenergydrums.com>
- Native American drum making kits can be found at several sites.
www.nativeamericantrade.com and www.snowowl.com

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Students will design and build our version of a Native American hand drum.

SCORING GUIDE

- 5 Student successfully designs and builds a hand drum. Joinery is seamless, rawhide is installed without flaws. Correct theme and finish are used. Project report includes research into cultural significance of hand drum.
- 4 Student successfully designs and builds a hand drum. Joinery is good, rawhide installation is good. A finish is used.
- 3 Student designs and builds a hand drum. Rawhide is installed. Some finish is used.
- 2 Student is not successful at designing and building a hand drum.
- 1 No attempt is made

POTENTIAL CONTENT STANDARDS

Montana Standards for Technology

Technology Content Standard 5—Students develop the skills, knowledge and abilities to apply a variety of technologies to conduct research, manage information, and solve problems.

Golden Triangle Cooperative Industrial Arts Technology
Woods Technology

Wood.04, 05, 07, 09, 10

STANDARD	ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVE USING BLOOM'S	ASSESSMENT	RESULT	REASSESSMENT IF NEEDED
Hand Drum Lab Wood.04, 05, 07, 09, 10	The student will design, build, finish, use a variety of power and hand tools, joinery skills and report results of this lab to the class.	Application of skills, compare, contrast, demonstrate results using class report and scoring rubric		

