

Woven Paper Art

Objective: Students will explore weaving with paper and learn about the traditions of weaving in Latin American Cultures.

Topics & Key Words for Discussion:

Weaving- The process of forming cloth or fabric on a loom by interlacing yarn or thread (or, as in this case, paper).

loom- a frame or machine for interlacing at right angles two or more sets of threads or yarns to form a cloth

interlace- to unite by lacing together, to cross one another as if woven together.

Materials: scissors, glue, construction paper.

Opening Activity: Have students WEAVE their fingers together with their neighbor by interlacing fingers. Instruct them: traditional weaving can be found in many cultures but is usually associated with the cultures of Latin America, particularly the indigenous people of South America. These skills are passed down generationally between families where master weavers teach younger members of the community this complex art form. It is no easy feat – some foot looms can take up to two days to assemble. Learn more about traditional weaving and folk art HERE: <https://youtu.be/apLI5H1usIM>

Core Activity: We are weaving paper animals! This works for birds, turtles, fish... even tigers! Students begin by making the loom/animal body from a sheet of black (or other color) construction paper. Cut a BIG oval shape out of the paper, then fold oval shape in half. With a graphite pencil, lightly draw a line about a half inch from the border at the open end of the folded paper. This defines the boundary where the cutting will need to stop.

From the fold, make irregular cuts up to the line. Cuts can be curvy, wavy, jagged or even created with decorative edge scissors. Unfold the sheet and lay it flat. This will serve as the "loom."

Take few other sheets of colored paper and cut strips of paper about an inch wide. NOTE: it may work better to pre-cut these prior to class.

Begin by weaving one "thread" or paper strip over one of the strips on the loom then under the next, then over the next, etc. Continue this process alternating over and under with each row. When the weaving is finished, adjust strips to make sure they are straight, then apply a tiny amount of glue to the outside edges to hold the weave in place.

Then have students create the extra elements to build their animal out of additional pieces of paper, as needed: head, legs, eyes, tail.

Reflection: All of our clothing is constructed by weaving threads together into a web of cloth. As students help clean up the space, ask them to consider what their lives would be like if they had to make all their own clothes, rather than buying them from a store.

