

Learning Guide



Folk Art

We hope you enjoyed learning all about folk art and the skilled artisans who create it. Extend your learning with this print-ready Learning Guide!



What's in this Learning Guide?

Get Set to Listen

Vocabulary

Discussion Questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3-8.1, SL.3-8.3

Writing Prompts

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3-8.1, W.3-8.2, W.3-8.3, W.3-8.4, W.3-8.7, W.3-8.8

Folk Art Map Listen-Along Activity

National Core Arts Standards (Visual Arts): VA:Cn11 (Art and Culture); NCSS: Theme I: Culture & Theme III: People, Places, and Environments; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2

Folk Art vs. Manufacturing Activity

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-8.1, SL.3-8.2, LITERACY.W.3-8.9, LITERACY.RI.3-8.1, RI.3-8.9

Folk Art & Natural Materials Lesson

National Core Arts Standards (Visual Arts): VA:Cn11.1.3a-8a; NGSS: 3-5-ETS1-1 / 3-5-ETS1-2; NCSS: Theme VIII: Science, Technology, and Society; CCSS RI.9 & SL.1

Create Like a Folk Artist Project

National Core Arts Standards (Visual Arts): VA:Cr1 & VA:Cn11; Social Studies: NCSS Theme I & III; NGSS: 3-5-ETS1 & 4-ESS3; CCSS: SL.1 & W.2

Story Basket Design

VA:Cn11, VA:Re8, & VA:Cr1; CCSS W.2 & SL.4; NCSS Theme I: Culture

Math, Science, & Folk Art: Passage & Comprehension Questions

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1-RI.8.1, RI.3.2-RI.8.2

Create a Scale Model

Visual Arts: VA:Cr1, VA:Cr2, VA:Cn11; CCSS:Math: Measurement & Geometry; NCSS Theme I: Culture

Sharing Folk Art

VA:Cr3; CCSS SL.1 & SL.4; CCSS W.2; NCSS Theme I

Additional Resources & Book List



The Children's Hour
kids public radio

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<https://www.childrenshour.org/folk-art/>



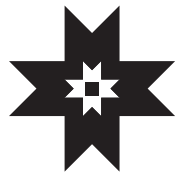
Get Set to Listen

While listening!



While listening to the episode, listen for:

- an artist's country _____
- what is made _____
- a material used _____
- how the art was learned _____
- a symbol with meaning _____
- something that surprised you _____



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- what is made _____
- a material used _____
- how the art was learned _____
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Vocabulary

Listening for Words

1. Make a four-column chart and label the columns “I don’t know,” “I’ve seen or heard, but don’t know the meaning,” “I think I know the meaning,” and “I know the meaning.”
2. Write the vocabulary word in the column that describes how well you know the meaning of the word.
3. Listen to [the episode](#). Note how the speaker uses the words.

Matching Words with Definitions

1. Print and cut apart the word and definition cards.
2. Spread out the word cards so you can see them all. One by one, attach a definition card to each word card.

Writing with New Words

After working with the words and definitions, write a one-page essay or story that uses at least three of the words.

artisan

A skilled person who makes things by hand. Often, the skills are passed on through family generations.

textile

A fiber-based fabric material that can come from plants, animals, and insects, and is created by processes such as weaving, knitting, and dyeing.



Vocabulary

folk art

Art that reflects the traditions, culture, and everyday life of a community, often passed down through generations.

craftsmanship

Having skill in a craft, the time, ability, quality, and design of work that goes into the creation of an object, including art.

retablo

A frame, box, or shelf that can be opened to reveal figures, scenes, and imagery that represent religious and/or cultural themes and events. They are very detailed, colorful, and often used to decorate altars.

heritage

The traditions, history, and culture passed down from ancestors.



Discussion Questions

1. What are some characteristics that make something folk art?
2. Which artist in the episode inspired you the most? Explain why.
3. What did you learn about a culture through one of the artists interviewed?
4. How can learning about another culture's art help people understand one another?
5. What traditions or crafts are important in your own family or community?
6. Why is it important that artists are able to earn a living from their work?
7. How can buying handmade art support communities around the world?
8. Which type of folk art would you most like to learn how to make? Why?
9. What story from your own life or family would you like to tell through art?
10. Do you think everyone is an artist? Why or why not?

Group Discussion Strategies

Think Pair Share:

1. Individually, student writes down their answer to a question.
2. Students pair up and tell each other their answers.
3. Teacher calls for volunteers to share with the whole class their answer (and/or their partner's answer). Teacher notes key words/phrases on board.

Round Robin:

1. Teacher poses one question (written on top of a large page) to students, who are assembled into small groups of 3 or 4.
2. Students take turns brainstorming the answers. The recorder of the group writes down all answers.
3. The leader reads the group's ideas to the entire class. Teacher moderates.



Writing Prompts

Narrative Prompts

1. Describe a tradition that has been passed down in your family. Why is it important to you?
2. Write about an object in your home that tells a story about your family or culture.
3. Think about something you know how to make or do. Who taught you? How did you learn it?
4. Interview a family member about a tradition, recipe, craft, or celebration. Write about what you learned and why it should be remembered.

Informative/Explanatory Prompts

1. Explain what folk art is and how it is different from other kinds of art.
2. Choose one artist from the episode and describe their art, the materials they use, and what their work represents.
3. Explain how folk art helps preserve history and culture.
4. Compare a piece of folk art from the episode with a piece of art you've seen in a museum or online. How are they alike? How are they different?

Opinion/Persuasive Prompts

1. Compare something handmade with something made in a factory. Which do you value more, and why?
2. Should communities work to preserve traditional arts and crafts? Why or why not?
3. Which is more important: keeping a tradition exactly the same or allowing it to change over time? Support your answer with reasons.

Quick Writes

- Art is a way of telling a story because...
- A tradition is worth preserving when...
- Handmade objects are special because...



Folk Art Map

Folk art is made all over the world. Use this worksheet to help you learn more about the countries featured in [The Children's Hour, "Folk Art" episode](#).

- Locate each country on a world map. You can color and label the countries using the map on the next page.
- Draw a picture of the featured artwork. What's something interesting you learned about the artwork? Go to the [Folk Art episode page](#) to see examples.

Nigeria

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____

India

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____

Nepal

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____

South Africa

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____



Folk Art Map

cont'd

Peru

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____

Poland

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____

Ghana

Drawing of folk art:

Interesting fact: _____

United States (New Mexico)

Drawing of folk art:

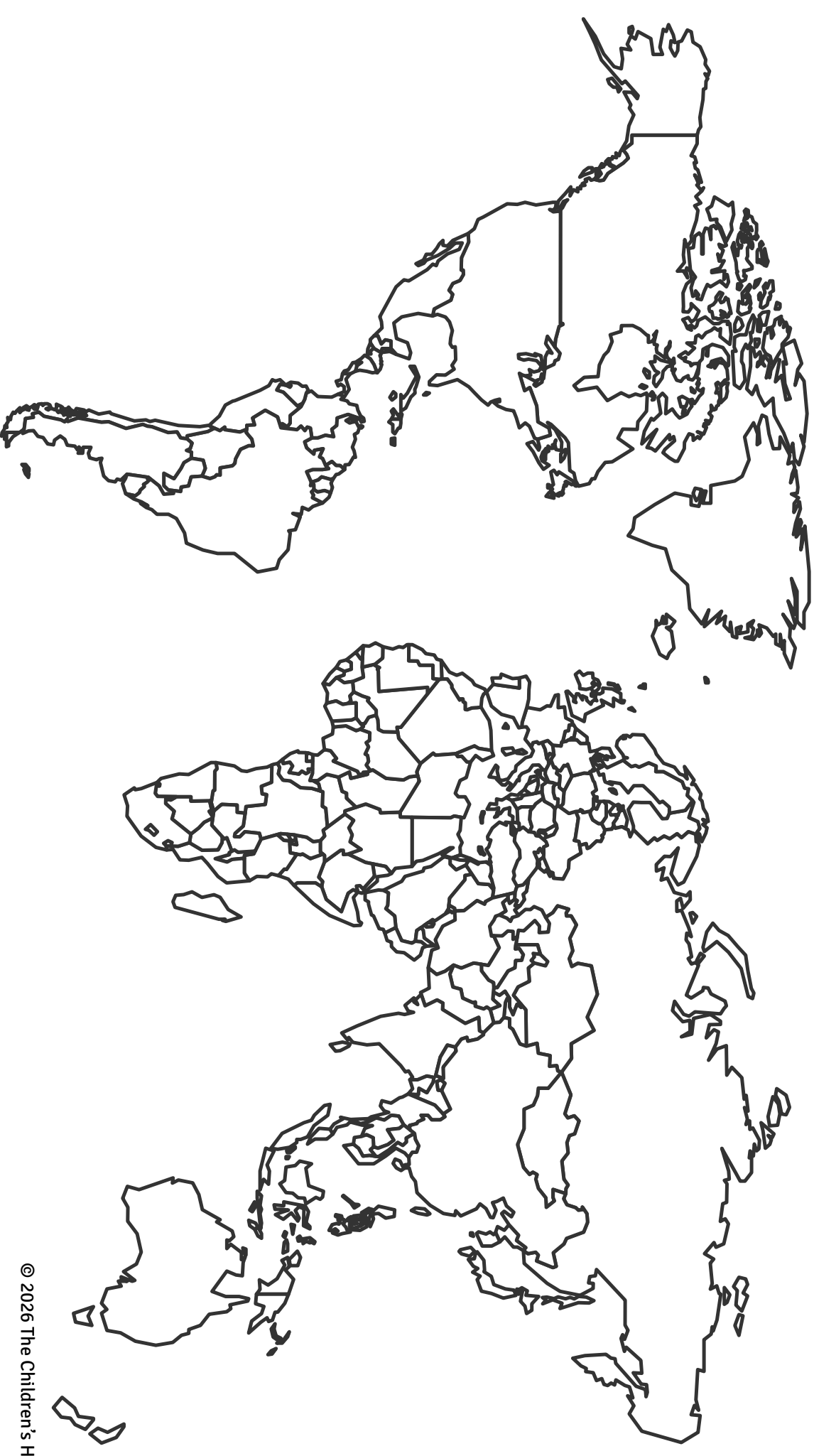
Interesting fact: _____



Folk Art Map

Locate, color, and label the following countries with folk artists featured on [The Children's Hour, "Folk Art" episode](#):

- Nigeria
- India
- Nepal
- South Africa
- Peru
- Poland
- Ghana
- United States (New Mexico)





Folk Art vs. Manufacturing

Listen

- Part 1: What is folk art? (segments 2:53-7:36 & 11:12-15:53)
- Part 2: Technique & Empowerment: Zulu coil pots & Nepalese story baskets (22:02-27:26)
- Part 3: Tradition and Re-innovation: Polish *Szopka*, Peruvian *retablos*, & Ghanaian shoes (28:13-34:36)
- Part 4: The legacy and technique of weaving in Chimayo, New Mexico (44:06-50:49)

Compare

How is a handmade pair of shoes different from one made in a factory? Compare examples of folk art and industrialized products to explore the value of tradition, craftsmanship, and creativity.



Manufactured Item

Image [source](#)

Folk Art Item

[Handmade shoes](#) featuring *kente* cloth, a traditional Ghanaian cloth.



Discuss

- Which would you rather own?
- Why?

Extension

Choose five objects that are important to you. For each object, explain:

- Why is it important?
- What does it tell future generations?
- Would it count as folk art? Why or why not?



Folk Art & Natural Materials

Since ancient history, people have made art using materials they found in nature, like wood, clay, plants, animal fibers, rocks, and water. In part because different places have different natural resources, folk art looks different around the world.

Listen

- Part 1: What is folk art? (segments 2:53-7:36 & 11:12-15:53)
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- Part 3: Tradition and Re-innovation: Polish Szopka, Peruvian retablos, & Ghanaian shoes (28:13-34:36)
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Make Natural Dyes

Explore how artists use natural materials.

Use [this lesson](#) by folk artist Monica Raphael (Anishinaabe/Sičánǵu Lakota).

Experiment with dyes made from:

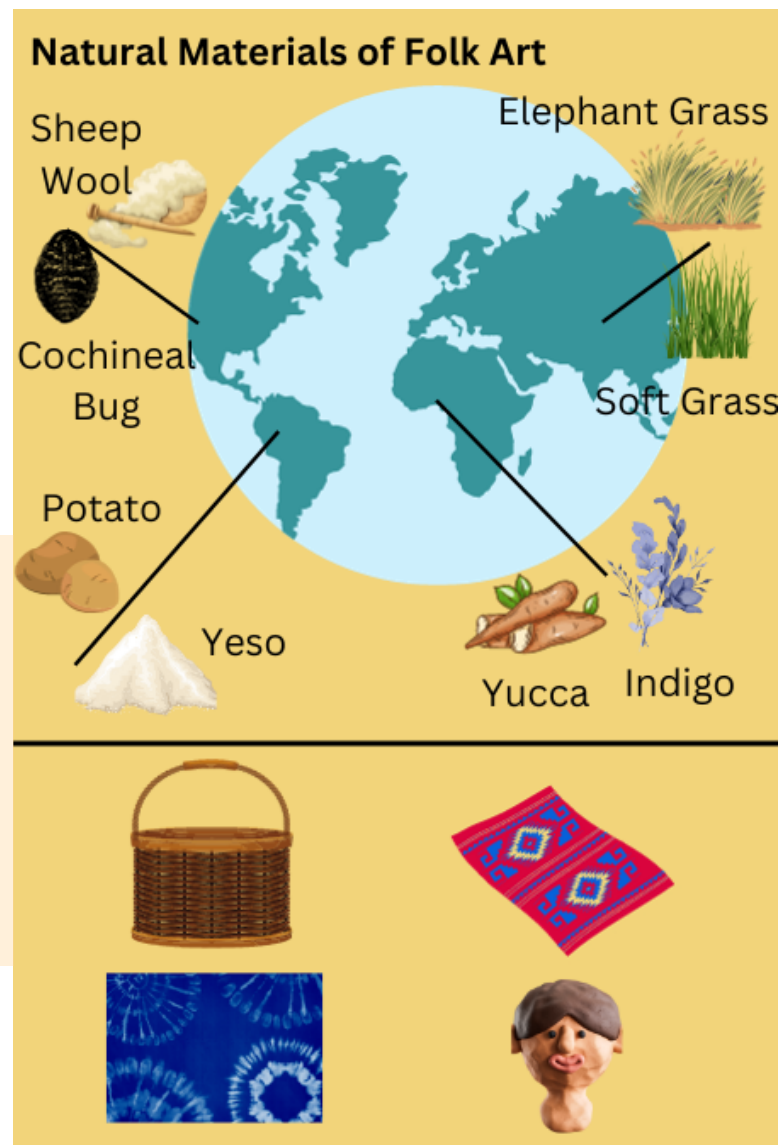
- turmeric
- blueberries
- spinach
- beets
- onion skins
- coffee

Compare natural dyes with commercial dyes, markers, or paint.

Image Challenge

Match each natural material to the piece of folk art made from it. Complete the “**Folk Art Map**” to identify the country where each artwork was created.

Why do you think artists from that area used those natural materials?





Create Like a Folk Artist

Folk artists do not usually have formal training in art techniques at universities, and they use whatever materials are available to them in their communities. Use what you have around you, the knowledge passed down to you, and your own creativity to create your own folk art!

Listen

- Part 1: What is folk art? (segments 2:53-7:36 & 11:12-15:53)
- Part 2: Technique & Empowerment: Zulu coil pots & Nepalese story baskets (22:02-27:26)
- Part 3: Tradition and Re-innovation: Polish Szopka, Peruvian retablos, & Ghanaian shoes (28:13-34:36)
- Part 4: The legacy and technique of weaving in Chimayo, New Mexico (44:06-50:49)

Reflect

How does your town's geography determine what materials are available? What kinds of different materials could you find in your local forests, lakes, deserts, oceans, rivers, or parks? Are there unwanted materials that could be recycled into something new and useful?

Brainstorm

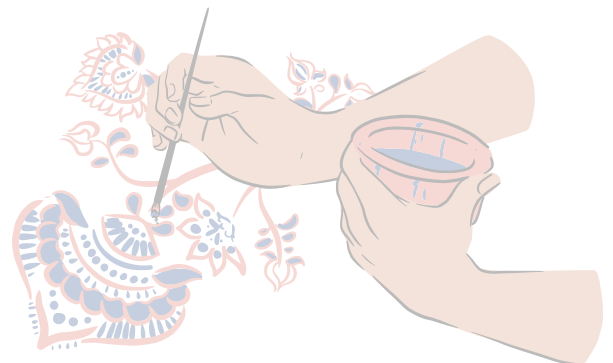
Sometimes you may have an idea of what you want to make before you begin. Think about what you would like to create. Will it be two-dimensional like a collage on paper, or three-dimensional, like a sculpture?

Gather

Other times, the materials you find may inspire you to create something. Go outside your home or school and look around to find natural or recycled materials. Visit a natural area near you and collect more materials.

Create

Often, the creative process is a mix of having an idea of what you want to make mixed with inspiration you get along the way. Begin to assemble your materials. You can use regular art materials, such as glue, string, or wire, to help you create an original piece of art that uses the natural and recycled materials you've collected.





Story Basket Design

Inspired by the Nepalese basket artists, design a basket using paper and decorate it with symbols that tell a story!

Listen

- Part 2: Technique & Empowerment: Zulu coil pots & Nepalese story baskets (22:02-27:26)

Research

Read about [Nepalese Story Baskets](#).

Look carefully at [photos of folk art](#).

- [5 Inspirations from Folk Art for Picture-Book Illustrators](#)
- [Folklore Art Style Guide: Patterns, Media, Examples](#)

Ask

1. What patterns do you notice? _____
2. Which shapes repeat? _____
3. What symbols are used? _____

Plan

My basket will tell the story of _____

- my family
- a celebration
- a favorite memory
- an important value

My story: _____

Draw or describe the symbols you will include.

Symbol

What does it represent?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What colors will you use? Why _____

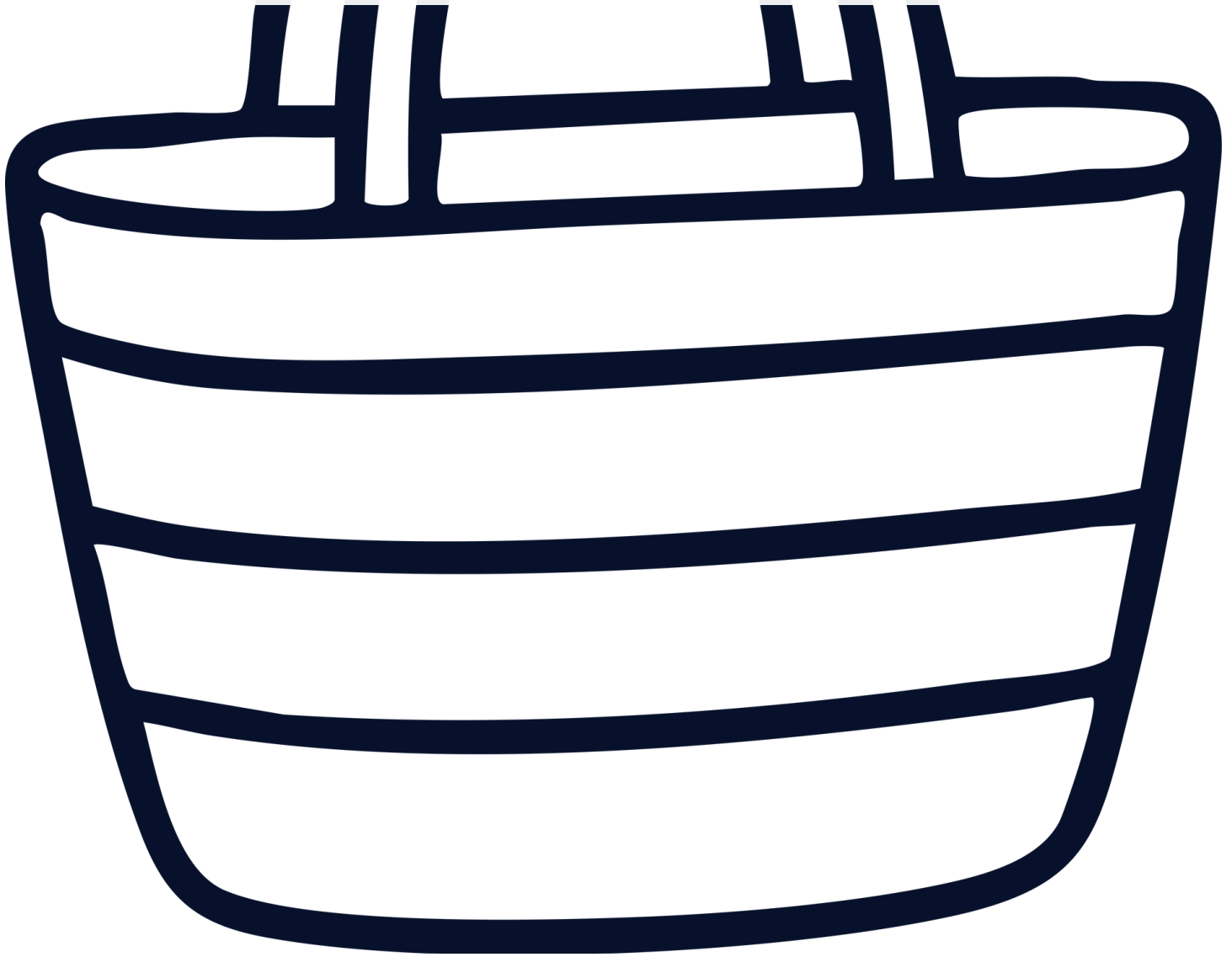
What patterns will you include? _____



Story Basket Design

Create

Use this basket template to tell your story in symbols, patterns, and colors!



Artist Statement

Write 3–5 sentences explaining your artwork.

- What story does your basket tell?
- What do your symbols represent?
- How did the Nepalese story baskets inspire you?



Math, Science, & Folk Art

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

Many kinds of folk art take skill, planning, and problem-solving. Artists often use math and science to measure, build, and choose the right materials. Their work also shows that people long ago had advanced knowledge and passed these skills from one generation to the next.

In the episode, we met Marzena Dłużniewska from Poland. She creates *Szopki*, detailed miniature models of real buildings inspired by the architecture of her hometown. Marzena learned this tradition from her family. To make her models, she carefully measures each part so it looks like the real building, just at a much smaller scale.

We also met Jabulile Nala, a potter from the Zulu tribe in South Africa. She follows a traditional process that has been passed down through generations. She digs clay, prepares it, shapes it into pots, carves designs, and fires it to make it strong. Some of her designs have special meanings, while others help people hold the pots more easily. Her pottery shows how art can combine creativity, science, and math.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why do folk artists need to use math and science in their work? _____

2. What is a scale model, and what did Marzena create? _____

3. How did Marzena learn to make *Szopki*? _____

4. What are some steps Jabulile follows to make her pottery? _____

5. How do some of the designs on Jabulile's pots make them more useful? _____



Create a Scale Model

Listen

- Part 3: Tradition and Re-innovation: Polish *Szopka*, Peruvian *retablos*, & Ghanaian shoes (segment 28:13-34:36)

Create a Scale Model Szopka

The [Polish Szopkas](#) are very detailed scale models of nativity scenes and important buildings. Choose one big object from your home or school, or a small outdoor structure like a doghouse, shed, or treehouse. Use [this lesson guide](#) to learn how to measure your object, figure out the correct scale, and build a smaller model of it. As you build, have fun adding colors and creative designs to make your model unique! Use [these images](#) of Polish *Szopka* to inspire you.



image [source](#)

Tell a Story with a Retablo

A *retablo* is a piece of artwork that tells a story about an important person, place, or event. It often includes colorful pictures and details to help people understand the story. Artists use retablos to share memories, celebrate special events, or teach important lessons. For this project, choose a special event from your own life or an important event from history that you want others to learn about.

Use a shoebox or make your own box. Gather art supplies and create people, animals, or objects for your scene. Add a background and lots of details to help tell the story. Be creative with your colors and designs! Use [these images](#) of *retablos* to inspire you. When your *retablo* is finished, share it with others and explain what happened and what lesson they can learn from your story.



image [source](#)



Sharing Folk Art

Artists use their work to tell stories and share traditions. In these activities, you will explore folk art, learn how museums and art markets help people understand different cultures, and share your own artwork with others. You will look closely at art, write about it, and present your creative ideas like a real artist.

Create a Museum Label

Research images of folk art, or create your own folk art in one of the activities in this Learning Guide. Then, write a museum label to teach others about the artwork.

Include:

- *title*
- *artist*
- *materials*
- *country or community*
- *meaning of the artwork*
- *tradition represented*

Folk Art Museum Walk

Display images of folk art around the classroom.

Rotate between stations and record the following in a notebook:

For each artwork:

- *What do you notice?*
- *What materials were used?*
- *What story might it tell?*
- *What questions do you have?*

Folk Art Entrepreneur Challenge

After creating your own folk art in one of the activities included in this Learning Guide, imagine you are selling your work at an international market like the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market.

Create:

- *a handmade product*
- *a booth sign*
- *a price list*
- *a short presentation explaining the cultural inspiration behind their work*

Hold a classroom "Folk Art Market" where participants visit one another's booths, ask questions, and learn about the stories behind each creation.





Additional Resources

[Britannica Kids: Folk Music](#)

Read this kid-friendly history of folk music article to learn how it was brought to different places across the globe.

Follow [this lesson](#) from the Sam Noble Museum to create art from natural materials.

[Folk Song Remix](#)

This activity offers a creative way to interact with favorite folk songs. Follow these directions to tap into familiar folk songs and give them your own, unique spin by remixing them!

Create multicultural art crafts with [these activities](#).

[Britannica Kids: Folk Art](#)

Use this Britannica article to conduct research to learn more about types, styles, and regions of folk art.

Follow the [Folk genre page on NPR](#) to hear new and old music from folk artists.

[Lesson: Using Natural Dyes](#)

Folk artist Monica Raphael (Anishinaabe/Sičánŋu Lakota) created an excellent and comprehensive lesson plan for the Eiteljorg Museum.

[5 Inspirations from Folk Art for Picture-Book Illustrators](#)

[Folklore Art Style Guide: Patterns, Media, Examples](#)

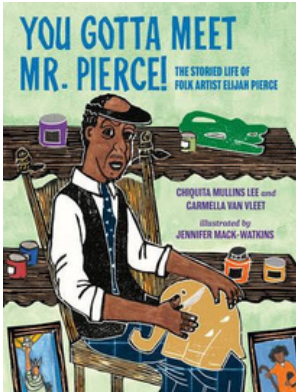
Videos

[Centinela Weavers: Chimayo Weaving Heritage](#)

[Santa Fe International Folk Art Market](#)



Book List



You Gotta Meet Mr. Pierce! The Storied Life of Folk Artist Elijah Pierce

by Chiquita Mullins Lee & Carmella Van Vleet, illustrated by Jennifer Mack-Watkins

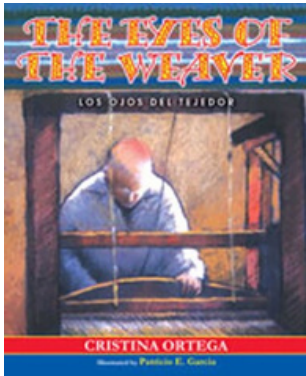
A picture book biography about the barber shop of woodcarver Elijah Pierce, recipient of the highest folk art honor in the United States.
ages 4-8



Rainbow Weaver/Tejedora del Arcoíris

by Linda Elovitz Marshall, illustrated by Elisa Chavarri

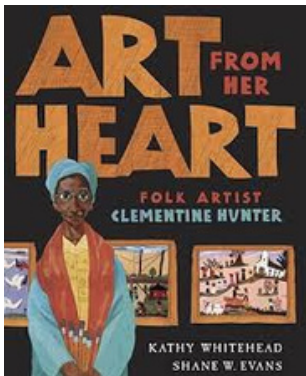
A young Mayan girl dreams of weaving but is not allowed to use her mother's special thread. Using her creativity, she finds a way to turn colorful plastic bags into beautiful woven art. This story is inspired by a real recycling project in Guatemala.
ages 5-9



The Eyes of the Weaver

by Cristina Ortega, illustrated by Patricio E. Garcia

In this bilingual Spanish/English book, the author shares memories of her visits with her grandfather, who taught her to weave when she was ten years old.
ages 6-10



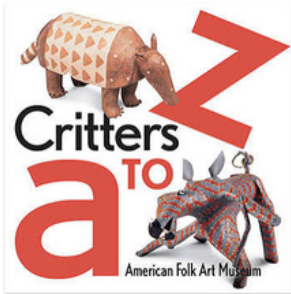
Art from Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter

by Kathy Whitehead, illustrated by Shane W. Evans

A picture book biography of the remarkable folk artist Clementine Hunter. Can you imagine being an artist who isn't allowed into your own show? That's what happened to folk artist Clementine Hunter. Her paintings went from hanging on her clothesline to hanging in museums, yet because of the color of her skin, a friend had to sneak her in when the gallery was closed.
6-10



Book List

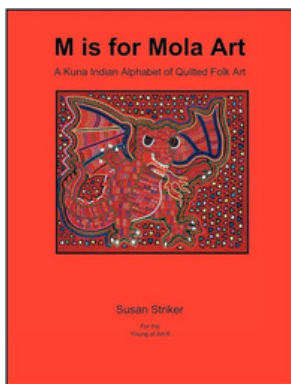


Critters A to Z

from The American Folk Art Museum

Critters A to Z was created with the American Folk Art Museum, using its extensive archive of materials, to heighten children's awareness of the diversity of American culture and our common heritage and to introduce them to the many forms of expression available to artists.

ages 3+

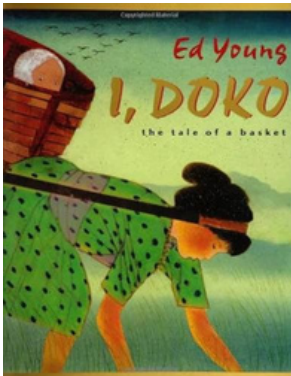


M is for Mola Art

by Susan Striker

A visually stunning alphabet book that introduces children to the world's wildlife through recently discovered masterpieces by the Kuna Indians of Panama. Colorful reverse appliqué and detailed embroidery teach visual discrimination and fascinate both children and adults.

ages 3+



I, Doko: The Tale of a Basket

by Ed Young

An acclaimed children's book, this tale tells the story of an aging Nepalese grandfather who crafts a bamboo *doko* to pass down to the next generation, beautifully illustrating how everyday objects carry the burdens and history of a family.

ages 5-8