

Make-a-Mock-Moc!

Create a traditional Chippewa or Pucker-top moccasin

(art + history)

A moccasin is a soft, flexible Native American shoe made of deerskin or other soft leather. The vamp, or upper part of the moccasin, is often adorned with embroidery or beading. Traditionally, the way in which the vamps were decorated varied depending on which region or tribe a person was from, and served as one way the person could be identified. Each tribe used the materials that were available to them to decorate the vamps. Coastal tribes often used shells, while woodland and plains people sometimes used porcupine quills cut into beads, or bone beads made from a variety of animal bones.

The ornate decoration of the vamp often took a lot of time, and when the soles of a moccasin wore out, the vamps and decorative portions of the shoe were removed and sewn onto a new pair of moccasins.

A moccasin was usually made of three pieces, each of a different kind of leather — the heaviest moosehide for the sole, thin and soft buckskin for the the ankle flaps, and elaborately decorated finest caribou leather for the vamp or tongue. In this lesson plan, canvas is used for the sole and ankle flaps, while the vamp can be made of suede or leather scraps, or canvas embellished with leather remnants.

GRADES 5-12 Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Research Native American moccasin designs and choose a design to reproduce, or create a new moccasin design.
2. Print the basic moccasin pattern on page 3 and distribute a copy to each student.

Process

1. To make a small model of a moccasin, transfer the pattern of the moccasin to the canvas by cutting it out and tracing around it onto the canvas.

Materials (required)

[Blick® Unprimed Canvas](#), 62" wide x 1-yd (07309-1062); need 1/3 yard per student

[Premium Leather Remnants](#), 1-lb bag (61706-1001); share one bag across class or [Suede Trim Pieces](#), Beige, 8-1/2" x 11" (63013-8140); share one piece between 2-4 students

[Sharpie® Fine Point Marker](#), Black (21316-2001); share 12 across class

[Glass Indian Seed Beads](#), assorted colors, 3-oz bag (60725-); share at least three colors across class

[Darice® Hemp Cord Card](#), Earthy Pastels, 20-lb, 120-ft (62986-2010); share one across class

[Delta® Sobo Glue](#), 8-oz (23820-1008); share three bottles across class

[Blick® Scholastic Golden Taklon Flat Wash Brushes](#), set of 4 (05859-0049); share six sets across class

[Blick® Studio Acrylics](#), 8-oz, Raw Sienna (01637-8062) and Ivory Black (01637-2252); share two tubes of each color across class

[Acco® Binder Clips](#), small 3/4", box of 12 (57330-4034); share six boxes across class

Optional Materials

Clothespins

[Deerskin Lace](#), assorted colors, 1/8" x 50-ft spool (63015-)





Step 1: Transfer moccasin pattern to canvas and cut out. Cut vamp out of leather or suede remnant.



Step 2: Using washes of brown and black acrylic paint, create a leather look on canvas moccasin pieces.

Process, continued

Optionally, for a wearable moccasin, stand on the canvas and trace around your foot. Draw a line 2" from the first tracing, except at the middle, or widest part of the foot, where it will be about 1" away. Adapt the ankle flap and vamp to this size. Keep the same ratio in all parts. (This canvas moccasin is intended for light indoor use as an example of Native American regalia.)

2. Cut out the canvas patterns. If suede or leather remnants will be used for the vamp, cut those out also.
3. Using thinned acrylic paint, paint the canvas brown to look like leather. Add a darker brown or black to the sole portion of the moccasin. NOTE: Make sure the paint is thin so the canvas doesn't become too stiff with paint.
4. Decorate the vamp and ankle piece of the shoe. Use a fine-line marker to lightly draw the beaded design. Using Delta Sobo glue, apply seed beads and hemp cord to create a design. If using a canvas vamp, apply leather or suede remnant pieces to the vamp in addition to the beads and cord. Let the vamp and ankle piece dry completely.
5. Using clothespins or binder clips to hold pieces in place, glue the back seam of the sole together. Next, glue the vamp to the sole of the moccasin, gathering the sole as you go, to create darts or puckers. Turn the top of the vamp down about 1", glue, and then cut fringe, if desired.
6. Glue the ankle piece to the inside of the moccasin, and turn it down over the top edge. Cut the flap in half at the back, if needed, and allow it to overlap for a better fit. Trim as needed before applying decorative elements. Run deerskin lacing under the outside of the ankle flap and tie a bow at the center of the moccasin.



Step 3: Embellish the vamp and ankle piece using glue, seed beads, and hemp cord.



Step 4: Create a finished moccasin by gluing the pieces in place.



National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

9-12 Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

5-8 Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts

9-12 Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places

