

## Wacky Weaving

Intertwine aesthetic with quirky for unconventional basketry.

Basket weaving is a practical art form that is just about as old as civilization. Baskets would have been made with natural materials that decay over time, making it difficult for archeologists to pinpoint exactly how ancient this handicraft is, though remnants of baskets have been found in Egypt that are believed to be up to 12,000 years old. Imprints made from baskets have even been found at early Neolithic sites. It is sufficient to say, basket weaving is long enduring, and is quite possibly one of the first practical handicrafts.

Generally, a basket is made from an odd number of spokes that serve as the base for the side walls and rim. The spokes provide a structure that can be woven, alternating material placement from the front to the back as the basket progresses upward at each level, creating a structurally sound vessel. Basketry has remained generally unchanged through the ages, with the introduction of new materials as they become available.

In this lesson students will create a basket with a slight twist to the standard spokes. Yarn, soaked in glue and placed randomly onto a balloon will provide a looping and overlapping network of spokes to weave through and about. With this method, it is okay to sometimes lump spokes together, or even skip over them altogether. Opposed to the standard over-under monotony, students will need to study and choose the path they take with their fibers. The end result is a largely traditional-looking basket, but the winding path to get there is anything but conventional!



### GRADES 3-8

Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

#### Preparation

1. Discuss the history of basketry and its cultural significance over time.

#### Process

1. Blow up a balloon. The larger the balloon, the larger the finished basket.
2. In a large cup or plastic tray, mix one part water to four parts glue.
3. Working with lengths of yarn no longer than one yard (as it has a tendency to tangle and knot when too long) immerse the yarn in the glue water mixture.



#### Materials

[Blick White Glue](#), 128 oz (23882-1009); share one bottle among class

[Trait-Tex Jumbo Roving Yarn](#), assorted colors (65214-); share four cones among class

[Roylco Fabric Strips](#), package of 72 (03160-1072); share one package between two students

[Roylco Plastic Lacing Needles](#), package of 32 (81339-1001); one per student

[Balloons](#), one per student

[Plastic cups or bowls](#), share one between two students

#### Optional Materials

[Ribbon Assortment](#), 2 lb (62100-1002)

[Raffia](#), assorted colors, 12 oz (60908-)

[Craft Fluff](#), assorted colors, 2 oz (65354-)

[Classroom Yarn Assortments](#), 5 lb (65208-)

[Red Heart Reflective Yarn](#), assorted colors, 88 yds (62828-)

## Process, continued

4. Remove the yarn from the glue mixture. Gently run fingers down the length of the yarn to “squeeze” off excess glue.
5. Arrange the yarn onto the inflated balloon into a somewhat random, swirling, overlapping pattern.
6. Multiple lengths of yarn may be needed to cover the desired area of the balloon, but be sure not to cover the entire balloon. An opening will be needed in order for it to take a bowl shape.
7. When the yarn is completely dry and hard to the touch, pop the balloon and discard it. The yarn structure will be the support for the basket weaving. It will remain somewhat flexible, but the glue will have sufficiently stiffened the yarn base for weaving.
8. Thread the plastic needle. If it is difficult to push the fabric through the eye of the needle, simply fold over the end, lengthwise, and secure with a small piece of tape. This will taper the end while masking off any loose strings that may catch in the eye.
9. Starting on the bottom, in the center of the bowl, choose a path to weave. There is no wrong path to follow. As this is not like a traditional basket weaving, there are no regularly spaced radial spokes. Students may choose to skip over some threads and not others. As long as there is a general altering of fabric in the front and back moving up the structure, then most of the supporting yarn will not show when complete.



## Options

- Add beads to the weaving.
- Use a variety of easily malleable materials to weave the basket such as raffia, ribbon, and craft fluff.

## National Core Arts Standards -Visual Arts

### Creating

**Anchor Standard 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

### Responding

**Anchor Standard 8:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.

### Connecting

**Anchor Standard 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



*Step 1: Dip length of yarn into the glue and water mixture.*



*Step 2: Arrange onto balloon, making sure there will be a clear opening.*



*Step 3: When dry, pop balloon and begin weaving.*