

WALKING TOGETHER

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum

Symbolism and Traditions **Artwork**

Excerpt from *Aboriginal Perspectives*

Teacher Resource

Government of Alberta ■





ARTWORK

Excerpt from *Aboriginal Perspectives Teacher Resource*

ARTWORK

Before You Start

1) Choose a form or medium to work in.

Before creating a piece of art, first decide what form (or medium) you wish to use. Here are some ideas:

antler sculpture	collage	pottery
beadwork	diorama	shield
birch bark biting	fashion/clothing	structural design
carving	painting/drawing	decoration
clay sculpture		

Each different form of art has challenges and advantages, so choose a form that suits the subject matter you wish to represent. For example, if you wish to depict an entire scene, it may be best to avoid beadwork, as it could be difficult to include the details you want to show. Instead, a diorama or painting might be better.

2) Consider your message.

Think about the message or idea you want to express to your audience. Try to think of a general idea first; for example, it might be about the role of Aboriginal people in the fur trade. Then, think of all the elements associated with this idea that you want to show: Aboriginal people guided trappers and traders, they were interdependent, Aboriginal people fed trappers and showed them how to live off the land.

Also think about the symbolism you may want to use. For example, you may wish to use circles and circular shapes to indicate that something repeats over and over again.

Try using a graphic organizer to organize your ideas.

If you're having trouble drawing figures, use stencils, trace pictures from books and magazines, or use clip art.

3) Plan your piece.

Sketch out a few rough drawings of your ideas and decide what you want your piece to look like. Of course, your ideas may change in the middle of a piece — that's okay too!



CREATING A COLLAGE

A collage is a form of art in which various materials, (magazine scraps, photographs, paper, fabric) are arranged with words and pictures in an overlapping, random way and glued onto a backing.

- 1) Choose a theme for your collage, e.g., Métis culture.
- 2) Collect a variety of materials (magazines, photocopies, photos, newspaper clippings).
- 3) Arrange your materials in an appealing, random way.
- 4) When you are satisfied, transfer the pieces onto a piece of paper, cardboard, or wood, and secure them with glue.

To preserve your collage, laminate it, spray it with clear craft spray, or put it in a picture frame.

CREATING A DIORAMA

A diorama is a three-dimensional model of a landscape usually viewed through a window. Museums use dioramas in display cases of animals. As an art project, dioramas are often created as a miniature scene inside a shoebox.

- 1) Plan your scene on paper.
- 2) Find a shoebox.
- 3) Collect a variety of art supplies and miniatures. Create items using clay, popsicle sticks and paper, or find miniature items like toys, sewing supplies, or scraps of material.
- 4) Begin by creating the background. Use paint, paper, fabric, photographs, or magazine scraps to create the background.
- 5) Build and arrange the items in the scene. Secure the items with glue, tape, pins, or plasticine. It's a good idea to attach a card naming or describing the scene you have created. Don't forget to list your name and the date, too.

CREATING A SHIELD

A shield is a stylized, artistic representation of the values or important aspects of a group, much like a coat of arms. Before creating a shield, research and select symbols, patterns, and colour schemes that reflect the group or concept you are representing.

You will need:

- a circular frame (plastic hula hoops work well)
- sturdy, light-coloured fabric with a flat texture
- paint or other designing medium
- heavy-duty stapler
- pencil
- ruler
- reference material



What to do:

- 1) Lay the fabric on a flat surface.
- 2) Trace the inner outline of the circular frame onto the fabric with a pencil and then set the frame aside.
- 3) Divide the frame into sections according to the number of different symbols or elements you will be depicting (optional).
- 4) Sketch the symbols and other details onto the fabric using a pencil. Large, simple drawings work best.
- 5) Paint the shield and let it dry.
- 6) Stretch the completed shield over the frame and staple it securely at the back.