

Native

AMERICAN HERITAGE:
THE HISTORY OF
Storytelling

Delaware Beadwork Activity

Delaware Beads (From Turtle Tales)

"It is a little bitty bead and oblong; it was blue or green and turquoise with a round hole in it. Used to they had their own church, which the Delawares called – *Hengwee-cow-on* or Round House. That is what they used those beads to do. The women cooked out there with the deer meat outside. You had to buy it before you ate that meat. That was what the beads were used for – to buy it. They had Indian bread which was cooked with water. You had to buy that with the beads too. I didn't know where they got the purple beads.

That's what my grandmother said. A long time ago they had a turtle. They sat all around that building, and they said you have to get up and tell what you know. When that turtle shook or rattled, you had to tell your story. There were 12 posts with faces cut into them. This was the Delaware church."

Excerpted from Duane K. Hale, ed. *Turtle Tales: Oral Traditions of the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma* (Anadarko, OK: Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma Press, 1984).

Introduction

American Indian beadwork is not just for decoration, it also tells a story. Your students will interpret Delaware beadwork designs and create their own designs.

Suggested Grades

K through 6

Objectives

Students will analyze and interpret pieces of Delaware beadwork and draw their own beadwork design on paper.

Time Needed

Introduction: 15 minutes

Activity: 20 to 40 minutes

Materials Needed

Photos of Delaware beadwork

Paper

Instructions

1. Read the short description of Delaware beadwork from *Turtle Tales: Oral Traditions of the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma*.
2. Study the photos of Delaware beadwork.
3. Create their own beadwork designs, using the photos as examples.
4. Write a short story about the meaning of their beadwork design.

Delaware Beadwork Examples



Create your own beadwork design then write a short story about the meaning of your design.