

Farming & Agriculture



Choctaw

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Reference the section on Choctaw, Farming and Agriculture in the *Native American, Farming & Agriculture* workbook (for a digital version of the workbook, visit: <https://nie.newsok.com/native-american-agriculture-farming/>). Ask students to read this section and then, as a class, discuss the following:

- What practice made the Choctaw an agricultural society?
- What land management practice was a forerunner to agriculture?
- What crops did the Choctaw get from Mexico? From Spain?
- What are heritage crops and how are the Choctaw trying to preserve them today?

1. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.

2. Ask students to list the different cultures that contributed to Choctaw agriculture, based on the reading.

- Students will locate the origins of the listed foods on a world map and use yarn and pins to connect them to the Choctaw in Oklahoma.
- Discuss the influence of Choctaw dishes on common foods we eat today.

3. Bring dried beans in a variety of shapes and colors to class for students to examine and handle.



- Discuss hybridization and the meaning of the word “selection” as it relates to hybridization. How might the different varieties of beans have been developed, based on their appearance. Can students find examples of bean combinations that might have resulted in another variety?
- Students will design imaginary hybrids as follows:
 - Place a clean sheet of paper on a flat surface in the landscape (horizontal) position.
 - Fold the left edge into the center and crease.
 - Fold the right edge into the center and crease. This will create two flaps.
- Students will each draw the outline of a bean on one of the flaps and then decorate it in any color and/or pattern desired.
- Students will then exchange their designs with a partner to create a different design on the opposite flap.
- When both flaps have been designed students will work with their partners to design a “hybrid” of their two designs by opening the flaps to the center and drawing what they think the “hybrid” of the two beans would look like.
- To illustrate the way Choctaw varieties changed over hundreds of years, students may work with other pairs to combine their designs into further hybrids.
 - Discuss the activity as a group. What other qualities besides appearance would ancient farmers have tried to develop? (taste, resistance to insects and disease, resistance to cold or heat, shelf life, etc.)

