

Personal Paintbrushes

(Inspired by Pueblo Yucca Paintbrushes)

Author: Elise Bothel

Grade Level: 9-12

Time Span: Two 45-minute periods.

First class:

Introduction and discussion:

20 minutes

Exploration, experimentation, and paintbrush construction:

20 minutes

Clean up: 5 minutes

Second class:

Reconnect: 5 minutes

Adjust paintbrushes: 10 minutes

Choosing music: 10 minutes

Art-making to music: 15 minutes

Clean up: 5 minutes

Take home assessment questions.

Essential Question: What is the importance of handmade materials in art making?



Guiding Questions: How are Pueblo yucca paintbrushes made? What is the benefit of making paintbrushes from local, natural, or familiar materials? How do paintbrushes made from alternative materials change line and stroke quality when painting with ink? How does listening to music from different cultures change form, movement, and line quality in an ink painting?

Objectives: Students learn about Pueblo yucca paintbrush construction, and additional uses for the yucca plant by the Pueblo people. Students synthesize information gained from yucca paintbrush making and class discussion to experiment and create a personal paintbrush made from natural, found, or recycled materials. Students explore mark making and line quality in the application of their handmade paintbrushes. Students analyze how music from different cultures informs and inspires different types of marks, line, and movement in their abstract compositions.

Vocabulary: Yucca plant, Pueblo

Materials:

- Chopsticks and twigs for makeshift handles
- Cotton String
- Rubberbands
- A basket of natural materials (Sticks, leaves, grass, etc.)
- A box of recycled materials (Twist ties, plastic, wires, etc.)
- India ink
- Paper suitable for ink (At least 5 sheets per student)
- Computer with speakers and access to the internet

Resources: Powerpoint presentation on Pueblo yucca paintbrushes. Pandora radio station to access music from different cultures.

http://www.primitiveways.com/yucca_processing.html

http://www.ancientcraft.co.uk/Projects/yuccabrush/yucca_brush.html

Performance Tasks: Students are introduced to the lesson with a Powerpoint presentation on traditional Pueblo yucca paintbrush making.

Students are then prompted to think about other materials that could be used for paintbrush making. A brief class discussion is had about the different handmade paintbrush possibilities and their imagined line quality, and the significance of handmade paintbrushes.

Students are then open to explore possible paintbrushes with the provided natural and recycled materials. Students can secure leaves or string to wooden chopsticks or twigs to create makeshift handles, other materials may be stiff and not necessarily need a handle.

Students then use India ink (straight or as a wash), to experiment with mark-making and line quality using different materials.

Students are expected to choose one handmade paintbrush to use for the art-making exercise.



Paintbrush made with a basil leaf, electrical tape, and a chopstick

Students brainstorm, and vote on music to listen to from four different cultures. Pandora radio is used to access the many possible songs suitable for the lesson. Students are expected to complete one painting for each of the four songs. Students are encouraged to paint abstractly, but if imagery comes to mind students may paint that too. It is often more difficult to control line with non-traditional paintbrushes, so trying to paint from life may be frustrating, though it can sometimes yield beautiful unexpected results. Students are not expected to paint for the whole song if they feel their painting is complete.



Different music, same paintbrush, from left to right: African, Cuban, and Bollywood

Students are then asked to complete the following tasks on the provided paper (for the journal in the book-binding lesson):

1. Draw a sketch of your invented paintbrush and label the materials used on one sheet of paper.
2. Create a small abstract painting using your handmade paintbrush, or cut out a favorite piece from a practice sheet to include in your journal.
3. Answer the question: "How did your paintings differ with the music from different cultures?" Use as many pieces of paper as needed.

Clean up: The last 5 minutes of class are reserved for clean up. Unused India ink can be poured back into their original containers. Handmade paintbrushes can be rinsed or

Modifications: Advanced students can choose to make more paintbrushes. The lesson can be modified and the look and craft of the handmade paintbrush can be

adjusted. Larger, more detailed paintings can be made using handmade paintbrushes. Students can attempt to paint from life using handmade paintbrushes to see how control is affected. Different colored inks and paints can be introduced, and a discussion about color in relation to the music of different cultures can be had.

Assessments: The questions prompted at the end of the lesson will be used in a final unit portfolio assessment. Formative assessments are gleaned from class discussion and observation of the experimentation and art making.

Main Learning Results:

A. Disciplinary Literacy - Visual Arts: Students show literacy in the art discipline by understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.

A3. Media, Tools, Techniques, and Processes:

Students compare the effects of *media* and their associated *tools, techniques, and processes*, using *elements, principles, and expressive qualities in art forms and genres*.

B. Creation, Performance, and Expression - Visual Arts: Students create, express, and communicate through the art discipline.

B1 Media Skills:

Students choose multiple suitable *media, tools, techniques, and processes* to create a variety of original art works.

B3 Making Meaning:

Students create a body of original art work.

- c. Communicate a variety of ideas, feelings, and meanings.

C. Creative Problem-Solving: Students approach artistic problem solving using multiple solutions and the creative process.

C1 Application of Creative Process:

Students apply and analyze *creative problem-solving* and creative-thinking skills to improve or vary their own work and/or the work of others.

E. Visual and Performing Arts Connections: Students understand the relationship among the arts, history and world culture; and they make connections among the arts and to other disciplines, to goal-setting, and to interpersonal interaction.

E1 The Arts and History and World Cultures:

Students analyze the characteristics and purposes of products of the visual/performing arts to understand history and/or world cultures.