

Rainsticks

The Native Americans have used rain sticks to entice the rain gods to bring rain. Rain sticks are traditionally made from dried cactus stems or even stems of bamboo. The dried cactus stem have the thorns pulled out, reversed, and then pushed back in. Small pebbles or gravel are used inside of the rain stick so that they strike the thorns and produce the sound of falling rain. The rain stick is used to create atmospheric sounds and as a percussion instrument.



Authentic rain stick owned by the teacher

This lesson will make an imitation rain stick using a paper towel or wrapping paper tube.



Teacher-created example

Target Group: Grades 5-8

Goal (Terminal Objective): Students will learn about authentic rain sticks and be able to make an imitation rain stick.

Objective: Students will learn about rain sticks and be able to make an imitation one. They will learn about Native American picture symbols to decorate their rain stick.

National Standards:

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 Content Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 Content Standard 2: Using knowledge of structures and functions

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 Content Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 Content Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 Content Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 Content Standard 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Purpose: Students will learn about authentic rain sticks and be able to hear "rain" from their own rain stick and be able to decorate their rain stick with authentic Native American symbols.

New Vocabulary: rain stick, picture symbols, pattern, imitation, authentic

Materials:



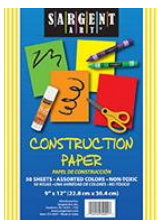
#22-1540 Classic Fine Tip Markers



#22-1506 Metallic Medium Point Peggable Carton Markers



#22-1103 Craft Glue



#23-40xx 50 ct. Construction Paper Pack



#22-7244 144 ct. Graphite Pencils



#22-0914 12 ct. Pointed Tip Student Scissors Best-Pack

Aluminum foil, uncooked rice or beans, pictures of Native American symbols
Optional: hot glue gun, rubber bands, compass

Time: This lesson will take two to three art periods, depending on the complexity of designs.

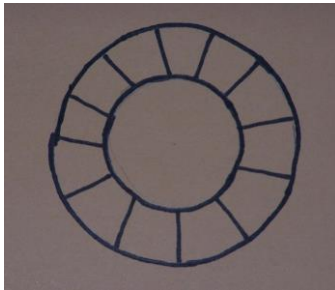
Introduction and Motivation (Set):

Ask the students if they have ever been able to just sit and listen to rain falling. How does it make you feel? Show them an authentic rain stick, if available. Let them listen to the sounds to see if they think that it sounds like falling rain. Explain how the rain stick was made. Tell them that they will get a chance to make an imitation rain stick of their own.

Instruction:

Students will use either an empty paper towel tube or an empty wrapping paper tube. A couple of paper towel tubes can also be glued together using a hot glue gun. (If this step is taken, the *teacher* will need to use the hot glue gun.)

Trace the end of the tube onto a light brown piece of construction paper or use a color of choice. Make a larger circle around the edge of the tracing and add several lines like spokes between the two circles. Students may use a compass to help with this step. Remember to fold the construction paper in half so that both ends will be cut at the same time. Cut on the lines with scissors. Put glue on the spokes and add the cap onto one end of the paper tube. Hold in place with a rubber band, if necessary.



End of tube traced and a second circle added.

Use a piece of aluminum foil twice as long as the paper tube. Cut the piece of foil in half going down the long center of the foil. Crush both halves of foil into two long, thin snakes. Wrap each snake around a marker or large brush handle to make a spiral.



Aluminum foil snakes and spiral.

Stretch out each spiral so that it is the length of the paper tube. Carefully insert both foil spiral into the tube. Add uncooked rice or beans. Seal the other end with the second circle with spokes.

Use a piece of construction paper large enough to cover the outside of the tube. Mine was 7" X 11". Decorate with native American symbols using pencil first, then add color with Sargent Art fine tip markers and Sargent Art Liquid Metal markers.

Use Sargent Art glue to attach the finished paper around the tube.

Activities:

(1) **Guided Practice**

1. Students will select what length paper tube that they would like to use.
2. Trace the end of the tube onto construction paper that has been folded in half and add a larger circle around that. Use a compass, if desired. Draw and cut several spokes onto the outer circle making sure that they reach the inner circle. Glue one onto one end.
3. Use aluminum foil at least twice as long as the tube and cut it in half lengthwise. Crush both pieces into long snakes and spiral them. Insert into the tube. Add the uncooked rice or beans. Seal the other end with the second circle.
4. Decorate a piece of construction paper large enough to cover the outside of the tube. Color in and glue around the tube.

(2) **Independent Practice and Check for Understanding:** Teacher will circulate around the students making sure that the objectives are being demonstrated, asking direct questions when understanding is not visible. Teacher will help with use of the glue gun and the measuring and cutting of the aluminum foil, if necessary, and will reinforce students as they work.

(3) **Closure:** Students will display their work and a critique will be utilized to look for strengths in successful projects.

Evaluation:

Level One -- Finished rain stick has many appropriate Native American symbols drawn and colored in. The ends of the tube have been sealed properly with the paper circles. The sound of the uncooked rice or beans is very close to the sound of the authentic rain stick. Craftsmanship is excellent.

Level Two -- Finished rain stick has appropriate Native American symbols drawn and colored in. The ends of the tube have been sealed properly with the paper circles. The sound of the uncooked rice or beans is close to the sound of the authentic rain stick. Craftsmanship is good.

Level Three -- Finished rain stick has few appropriate Native American symbols drawn and are not all colored in. The ends of the tube have not been sealed properly with the paper circles. The sound of the uncooked rice or beans is not the sound of the authentic rain stick. Craftsmanship is variable.

Level Four -- Rain stick is not finished and has few appropriate Native American symbols drawn and are not all colored in. The ends of the tube have not been sealed properly with the paper circles. The sound of the uncooked rice or beans is not the sound of the authentic rain stick. Craftsmanship is poor.

Extension: Students may be able to use their rain sticks during a music class. Students could use paint instead of markers to design the outside of their paper tube. Two empty potato chip cans could be hot glue together and be used instead of the paper tube.

Resources:

www.inquiry.net/.../native/sign/pictographs.htm

www.teachervision.fen.com/.../7198.html

<http://www.buckagram.com/buck/symbols/>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Home.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rain_stick

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www.sargentart.com