



History Along NEBRASKA'S BYWAYS

Buffalo Hide Paintings

Activity Summary

To add on to what your students have learned about all the ways the Native Americans used the buffalo, they will decorate their own "buffalo hides" to tell a story.

Discussion Topics

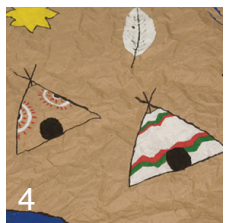
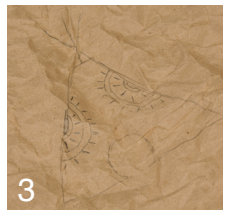
- How Native Americans used buffalo hides
- What petroglyphs are
- How Native Americans told stories on buffalo hides using petroglyphs
- What was used for paint

List of Supplies

- Brown craft paper pieces (approximately 24" x 24")
- Pencils
- Markers
- Tempera paint in a variety of colors
- Paint brushes
- Paint palette trays
- Cups of water for washing out brushes
- Paper towels

Activity Directions

1. Prepare the "hide" by crumpling the craft paper. Spread it out and then crumple it again. Repeat until the paper is very wrinkled.
2. Since buffalo hides would not be square, tear away some of the edges of the paper to give it an irregular shape.
3. Draw symbols on the hide with a pencil. You can use symbols that may have been petroglyphs for the Native Americans or symbols that tell your own story. You can also draw a border around the edges. (Note to teacher: Consider drawing a number of examples on the board.)
4. Paint the symbols using a variety of colors. Some symbols can be outlined in marker instead of paint if you prefer. Let the paint dry completely.
5. Outline the symbols with a marker.





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Prairie Schooners

Activity Summary



Your students will build replicas of prairie schooners to better understand how the pioneers traveled across Nebraska.

Discussion Topics

- What the pioneers packed in their prairie schooners
- What your students would pack in their prairie schooners
- What the pioneers saw as they traveled through Nebraska
- Why the pioneers traveled along the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails

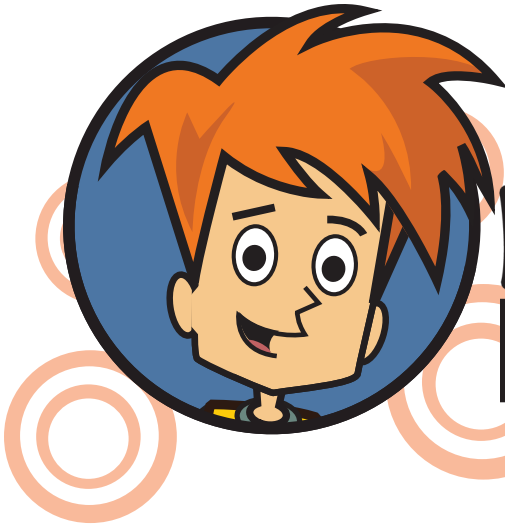
List of Supplies

- Shoe boxes (1 per student)
- Brown craft paper (optional)
- Pipe cleaners (5–10 per student)
- Sheets of white paper (1–2 per student)
- Paper towel tubes (1 per student)
- Glue
- Tape (optional)
- Scissors
- Marker

Activity Directions

1. Remove shoe box lid and set aside.
2. Cover shoe box with brown craft paper (optional).
3. Bend 5 pipe cleaners into a U shape to form the framework for the cover. If your shoe box is large, you may need to twist 2 pipe cleaners together to make each U shape.
4. Attach the 5 U shapes to the inside of your shoe box with glue or tape, spacing them evenly along the length of the box. Be sure not to attach them too close to the top of the box.
5. Cut 4 circles out of the box lid to use as wheels. Circle size will depend on the size of your lid. You may want to find a round object to trace.
6. Draw spokes on the wheels.
7. Cut the paper towel tube into 4 pieces.
8. Glue a piece of paper towel tube to the back side of each wheel, making sure the tube touches an edge of the wheel. Allow the glue to dry completely.
9. Make a prairie schooner cover by placing white paper over the pipe cleaners. (You may have to cut the paper and/or use multiple pieces of paper to cover the pipe cleaners completely.)
10. Tuck the edges of the white paper inside the top edge of the box.
11. Glue the wheel tubes to the wagon and allow to dry completely.





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Pioneer Kid Stories

Activity Summary

Using what they've learned about the homesteading days, your students will write stories about children living in that era.

Discussion Topics

- The activities pioneer children participated in
- What types of toys were played with
- Typical chores for pioneer children
- What the one-room schools were like

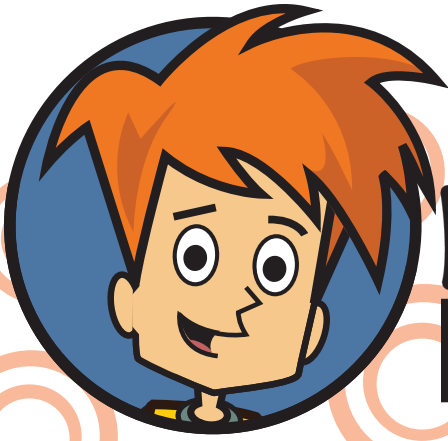
List of Supplies

- Ruled paper
- Pencils

Activity Directions

1. Develop details about the character you will be writing about: age, gender, where his/her family has settled, number of siblings, etc.
2. Decide what your character will be doing in your story.
3. Write your story.

Note: Consider giving your students a length requirement for this activity.



History Along NEBRASKA'S BYWAYS

Fossil Beds

Activity Summary

Your students will experience firsthand how a fossil is made.

Discussion Topics

- What fossils are
- The kinds of things that can make fossils
- Where fossils are found
- The state fossil

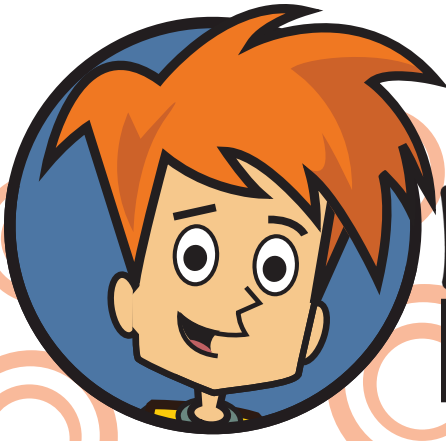
List of Supplies

- Shoe boxes or facial tissue boxes (1 per student)
- Pottery plaster (approximately 2 cups per student)
- Damp sand (approximately 3–4 cups per student)
- Shells, wood bark, twigs, pine cones, arrowheads, rocks, real or artificial leaves, artificial bones, small toys, etc., to be cast
- 1-cup measuring cups
- Bowls or plastic containers (1 per pair of students)
- Large plastic spoons (1 per pair of students)
- Water
- 1" paint brushes

Activity Directions

1. Remove the lid of the shoe box or cut off the top of the facial tissue box.
2. Fill the box with about 2" of damp sand and pack it down.
3. Select items to be cast and push them into the sand with enough force to make a good imprint.
4. Remove the items, being careful not to disturb the imprints.
5. Working with a partner, mix the plaster. Use 2 cups of water and 4 cups of dry pottery plaster. The plaster mix should be the consistency of pancake batter. It is important that this step is done quickly, as the plaster will begin to thicken almost immediately.
6. Pour a layer of plaster mix into each box, working from one end of the box to the other.
7. Let the plaster dry completely. It will be ready to remove in approximately 24 hours.
8. Tear the sides from the box and remove the plaster from the sand.
9. Remove sand from the plaster using a paint brush.





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Cattle Brands

Activity Summary

Your students will be exposed to the history of the ranching industry. They will learn to read basic branding symbols and have an opportunity to design their own brands.

Discussion Topics














- How ranching impacted Nebraska
- The importance of branding in the industry
- The fact that a brand typically comes from the ranch name
- How cattle are branded
- What the branding symbols mean

List of Supplies

- Paper
- Markers

Activity Directions

1. Name your ranch. Consider things like your initials, the symbols you like, and whether you want words like LAZY, FLYING, or ROCKING in the name.
2. Draw a brand that represents your ranch name on a piece of paper.
3. Ask others to guess what the name of your ranch is.

 LAZY the symbol is turned on its side	 SWINGING the symbol is under a quarter-circle	 BAR a short horizontal line
 CRAZY the symbol is backwards	 CIRCLE a large O	 CONNECTED two symbols are touching
 TUMBLING the symbol is slanted	 BOX a square or rectangle	 COMBINED two symbols are connected by a common line
 FLYING the symbol has "wings"	 RAIL a long horizontal line	 HANGING two symbols are touching, but arranged vertically
 ROCKING the symbol is on a quarter-circle		