

# TRADITIONS

## *in Transition*

### Beadwork



#### Overview

Many tribes used beadwork in their material culture. Beads were made of many things including shell, bone, seeds, and glass. At one time, designs were specific and identifiable by tribe. During the reservation period there was a cultural interchange of patterns and designs due to the geographic location of tribes.

#### Objectives

Through research, students will recognize Oklahoma's specific styles and the incorporation of different styles into one piece of beadwork. They will use what they learn in their research to design their own beadwork sample. In doing so, students will actively participate in what happened historically: looking at various styles and choosing what they like to include in their own design.

#### Time Needed

One to three fifty-minute class periods for research, design, and analysis.

#### Materials Needed

Photos of beadwork  
Internet access  
Graph paper  
Colored pencils or markers

#### Instructions

1. Begin with a discussion of beadwork and its importance to American Indian tribes. Talk about the variety of tribes in Oklahoma. Discuss styles that were specific to certain tribes and how, over time, styles and designs changed through cross-cultural exchange.
2. Show photos of beadwork or have students locate images on the web.
3. Have students research a tribe in Oklahoma. Have them note designs common for their tribe.
4. Next have students design their own beadwork on a piece of graph paper. Students will pull together patterns from tribes to form a final, cohesive piece. They may use any color in their design.
5. Have students exchange their designs with other students and try to decide what tribe the design originated from. The important part of this activity is that students do not look at the design and generalize the style as stereotypical of one tribe. The point is for them to look at aspects of the piece as a whole and differentiate qualities. Many tribes shared an exchange of ideas.

#### Additional Activity

Students may also go into more detail in their research by not only looking at design but how the beading was done. Was it loom work, gourd-stitched, edge-beaded, lazy-stitched, or two needle appliqué?

You may have the students write an essay or research paper about what they learned through their research.



NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION  
THE OKLAHOMAN

Newspapers for this educational program provided by:

