

# Art Activity

## Weaving



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### Weave some creativity

Textiles are works of art made from cloth fibers like blankets and rugs. The McNay has a wide array of hand-woven textiles from the American Southwest. The patterns and colors are all traditional and specific to the region where they were made. Weaving was an essential skill to make necessary items such as blankets to keep warm and baskets for food storage. These items are now heavily traded as art objects but still hold a special meaning to indigenous tribes across the United States. We can be inspired by the weaving lesson below. The product you create can hold a variety of different uses such as bookmarks, mini rugs for a table, blankets for stuffed animals or dolls, and funky wall hangings.

#### Collection Connection



< Rio Grand Blanket, before 1860

Navajo Blanket, date unknown>



1

#### SEARCH

Search your home for the suggested materials.

2

#### CREATE

Get creative with each step and think outside the box.

3

#### ENJOY

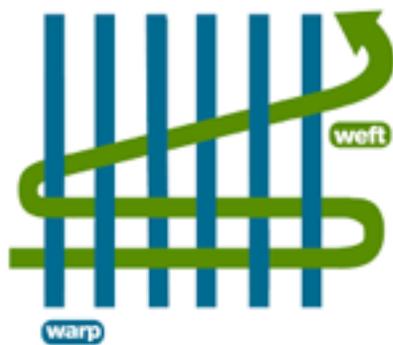
Enjoy your creation and share with others.

## Suggested materials:

- piece of sturdy cardboard cut to long rectangular shape
- string, twine, thin rope, or thick thread to use as the "warp" or the inner netting that patterns are woven into.
- various yarn, string, shoe laces, or even blades of grass and flowers. This will be the "weft" or the colorful part of the weaving that you design and create.
- Scissors
- Ruler or measure tape
- Darning needle (a piece of thin cardboard or plastic can be used as well)
- marker or pen

## Instructions:

1. Begin by cutting a piece of sturdy cardboard for your loom base. The size will determine how large or small your finished weaving is. Mine was cut to 3.5 x 7.5 inches.
2. Using a ruler and a pen, make a mark every 1/4 inch along the short edges of the cardboard.
3. Using scissors, make a cut at each mark you made about 1/4 inch long. These will be your warp notches.



### Warp:

4. To create the warp, take your string and make a knot at the end. Place that knot in the first notch of one end of the cardboard as shown. Pull that

string across the long edge of the cardboard frame and place inside the first notch at the opposite end of the frame. Now carry the string over to the next notch on the same side, and drag through to the opposite end and into the next notch. Repeat this until you have many vertical lines with the string across the long edge, like the strings of a guitar.

5. Once you've come to the last notch, cut your string and leave a 3 inch tail. Tie a knot on that tail or simply wrap it around the last two notches to secure it in place. Now you have your first official weaving warp!

### Weft:

6. Now for the weft, start off with a long length of yarn or other material and thread through your darning needle. Tip: If you don't have a needle, you can simply take a thin piece of cardboard or plastic and wrap the yarn a few times around it long ways. This will help carry the yarn through the warp strings.
7. For a basic plain weave, start at one end of the warp strings and carry the yarn under the first string, and over the next, under the next string, and over the next and so on until you come out the other side. Pull the yarn you just wove down about two inches from the short edge of the frame to reveal two inches of the warp strings. This will ensure you have enough string to tie off when your weaving is finished.
8. Now, pull your yarn through leaving a 1 inch tail on one end. Weave the yarn the opposite direction and alternate the under/ over pattern from the previous one. If you went under the last warp string, then you would go over this one. Repeat until you come out the other end. Tip about edges: no need to pull your weft tightly. You just need the yarn to loosely hug the end warp string, not to pull on it. This ensures an even, straight edge to your finished piece.
9. After each woven line, using your thumbs, push each weft line close to the previous one. Continue weaving and bunching the weft strings through the whole weaving process and stop about two inches from the other edge. You can switch colors of yarn or materials along the way by cutting off a yarn string and starting over with a new color or material.

10. To finish, after you make your last woven line, cut your needle off the yarn. Now carefully cut the warp strings off the cardboard frame. Take two warp strings at a time and tie them together in a tight double knot to secure your weft from

unraveling. Tie knots all the way across and you will have a little fringe on either side. Find a cool place to display your mini weaving proudly!

