

**WISDOM OF THE ELDERS RADIO: SERIES 3, PROGRAM 7  
HONORING GRAND RONDE  
GRADES 5-8 \* TRADITIONAL ARTS**

*Lesson plan written by Wren Christopher, Eastern-Band Cherokee Heritage.*

**SUBJECT AREAS**

Arts and culture  
Plant fibers and basketry

**SKILLS**

**National Standards for Arts Education – Visual Arts Standards**

Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas  
Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and culture

**Oregon Common Curriculum Goals – Benchmark 2 for the Arts**

Aesthetics and art criticism  
Historical and cultural perspectives  
Student will create, present and/or perform

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to:

- Identify the different names and locations of the original homeland of the Kalapuya and Umpqua Nation and what reservation they live on today
- List and research the three different plant materials that Connie Graves gathers and uses in her baskets and design a poster
- Identify what a designer does and how materials, knowledge and inspiration are important to this person
- Design a traditional cone-shaped burden basket and name the importance of the shape and how it is worn using a tumpline
- Design a set of playing cards with drawings and descriptions of the three different plant materials used in basket making
- List how Connie Graves is keeping a tribal tradition alive

**INTRODUCTION**

*“In any culture, art may be described as the intersection of materials, knowledge and inspiration. The materials of the traditional basket maker are often easy to find. Inspiration comes to a select few and knowledge – obtained over generations of experimentation – must be learned.”*

Arlie Neskahi (Dine)

This lesson provides information about the Kalapuya and Umpqua Nations of the Willamette Valley and Southwest Oregon. Both groups were relocated to what is known as the Grand Ronde Reservation located in Northwestern Oregon.  
(<http://www.grandronde.org>)

Students will be introduced through listening to Kalapuya and Umpqua traditional basket weaver, Connie Graves.

Students with computer internet access will research the history of the geographic areas of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and the importance of different plant materials used in their basketry.

### Overview

This lesson will explore the traditional cone-shaped burden basket and why it was made and the three types of plant fibers that were used for traditional basket making in the past as well as in the present-day.  
<http://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/baskets/subpage.cfm?subpage=burden>

The lesson will provide students in grades 5 to 8 with art activities, such as constructing a traditional cone-shaped burden basket and decorating it with the student's personal designs and embellishments. Also, students will create a deck of plant identification playing cards of the three types of Oregon basket-making materials (juncus, cedar, and willow).

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Grand Ronde Nations Traditional Burden Basket

Lesson 2: Design and Create a Burden Basket with a Strap

Lesson 3: Research and Make a Poster of the Three Types of Basket Materials

Lesson 4: Make a Set of Plant Identification Playing Cards

Lesson 5: Explore Key Questions

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

Before presenting the lessons the teacher will create a **KWL learning poster** (**K** is for what we know, **W** is for what we want to learn and **L** is for what we have learned) for the classroom:

- **K**—What does homeland mean? Where were the Kalapuya and Umpqua Nations' original homeland?
- **K**—What is a reservation? Where do these tribes live today?
- **K**—What do we know about baskets used in the past by the Grand Ronde people?

**KWL** questions and answers are generated daily by students and are recorded by student and/or teacher scribe.

### **More questions after listening to the radio segment:**

Connie Graves mentions another country besides the United States (the Northwest and the Appalachian Mountain area) that also makes baskets. What country is it? (China).

For an extension for older students: from home, bring in baskets made in China. Compare the shapes, materials, designs and construction with Native baskets. Use photographs and/or visit a local museum with Northwest and Appalachian baskets. The optimum experience is to invite a local basket weaver into the classroom by contacting the educational department of an historical museum, a local tribe, and/or search the internet for basket weaving associations in your state.

- **W**—is for what the students want to learn about the Grand Ronde Tribes and basket making of the past and present. What is a designer? How are inspiration, knowledge and materials important to a basket maker?
- **L**—is for what the students have learned about the people of the Grand Ronde Tribes, their basketry, history and the answers to the questions listed above. Make a list of how Connie Graves is keeping a tradition of tribal basketry alive.

Revisit these questions after the lessons and use a different colored pen to answer the original questions. Allow students to write down second go-around answers to the questions posed in class.

### **PREPARING TO TEACH THIS LESSON**

- Have available a CD player and Wisdom of the Elders Series 3, Program 7.
- Collect writing and drawing paper, drawing and colored pencils, erasers, stapler, tape, scissors, rulers, craft glue, hole punch, small paper cutter, brown postal wrapping paper and/or any other stiff paper that can be folded into a cone shape cut into approximately 2'x 3' size (can vary if student wants to make a smaller or larger basket), and poster board and colored markers for **KWL** board.
- Ask students to bring items to decorate a basket: Pony beads, old jewelry, small bells, and strips of leather, old belts, raffia, and yarn to tie objects and make a basket carrying strap called a tumpline.
- Bring in traditional flute music (i.e. a CD by Jan Reibach, Grand Ronde tribal member).

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

## **Lesson 1: Introduction to the Grand Ronde Nations Traditional Burden Basket**

### **Standards**

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.08.RE.02—Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of informational and narrative text.
- EL.08.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

### **CD Segments to Play**

For this topic, go to *Wisdom of the Elders Radio Series 3, Program 7* (with traditional artist Connie Graves).

### **Background**

The teacher should make copies for each student of a tribal map (1750-1850) of Oregon downloaded from website <http://www.usgennet.org> (go to Indian Map). This site also has other related websites to support student research and for teacher reference. Older students can continue to research the history of the geographic areas of the Confederated Tribes and the importance of different plant basketry materials in each area. Access tribal member Elaine LaBonte's story at <http://www.turtleislandstorytellers.net>. Students can also hear Elaine's story online, which is a wonderful way for ESL and younger students to access the story and/or download the story to read aloud.

Another excellent website on burden baskets for the student resource library is from "The Language of Native American Baskets from the Weavers' Point of View" at <http://americanindian.si.ed.edu/exhibitions/baskets/subpage.cfm?subpage=burden>

Read the quote from Native basket maker Pat Gold on the reason for the huckleberry pail's shape (so that the berries on the bottom wouldn't get crushed).

### **Suggested Strategies**

- Obtain and display pictures of traditional burden baskets from the websites listed in the references at the end of this lesson.
- Have a variety of books on West Coast traditional baskets and weavers for students to look at and use.

- Create a comfortable working library for the students to quietly sit and draw ideas and use as a reference station for KWL questions.
- Have a CD player with headphones and Connie Graves segment available as well a computer with internet and the websites listed as well.

## Activities

### 1. Listen

Listen to the Connie Graves segment.

### 2. Discuss

- Who is Connie Graves? From what two tribes does she descend? Where in Oregon were their original homelands? To what reservation were these two tribes relocated?
- What was important in the weaving of a burden basket? Describe what they looked like and why they had a strap (tumpline) rather a handle. Why was the cone-shape important in the design of the burden basket?
- Why were burden baskets needed? For younger students, ask them if they have ever picked food, such as corn or berries out of a garden. What did they use to hold the food they picked? Baskets? Ask the students about grocery shopping with their parents. Where does the checker place their groceries? Bags! Brainstorm how many different types of containers (plastic and paper bag, Tupperware, cardboard, etc.) are used to hold food.
- What local types of indigenous plant fibers did the Grande Ronde weaver Connie like to use to make her baskets? Use the reference books listed below and the web-sites if computers are available in the classroom.
- Students can also work in teams with one book and/or website and report back, as a group, to the class. For older students, ask them to play **botanist** and write down as many species of the three types of weaving fibers (juncus, cedar, and willow) as they can research using the internet or books from your local school library. Compare team findings and post in the art room to be used as “in-house” references.

## Lesson 2: Design and Create a Burden Basket with a Strap

### Standards

#### THE ARTS

- AR.08.CP.01—Select and combine essential elements and organizational principles to achieve a desired effect when creating, presenting, and/or performing works of art for a variety of purposes.

- AR.08.CP.03—Create, present, and/or perform a work of art by controlling essential elements and organizational principles and describe how well the work expresses an intended idea, mood, or feeling.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.08.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

### CD Segments to Play

#### Background

Allow students enough time to study photos from the website on burden baskets and in books.

#### Suggested Strategies

- The teacher could play some traditional flute music for the students during their studio time. This is a nice way to open the student workshop time and a quiet way to close before clean-up and talking circle.
- A great homework extension to this lesson would be to ask the students to design a game and write the instructions that involved using their burden baskets. Put all of the students' homework in a basket and pull one out to play as a class.

#### Activities

##### 1. Draw

Have the students draw a picture of what their burden basket will look like. Students should work in small groups to help one another problem-solve and to share art supplies.

##### 2. Art project

- Pass out stiff, brown rectangular paper and have scissors, rulers, staplers, and other needed supplies.
- Younger and older students should see a teacher sample of a paper cone-shaped basket. For younger students it might be helpful to have a few parent helpers in the classroom.
- A step-by-step demonstration on how to roll a piece of paper into a cone without a hole in the bottom will benefit all students.
- Some folding/cutting paper at the top may be necessary before using a stapler and/or glue.

- Older students may enjoy the creative challenge of making different sizes of baskets out of different weights of colored paper.
- After the basket is stapled and/or glued into the cone-shape, the top of the basket will need to be trimmed and/or folded down to make a round top.
- The older students may want to reinforce the top with some of the different supplies such as strips of leather, hole punch and lace yarn across the top. Student creativity is the key here!
- The words “inspiration” and “experimentation” should be written on the poster board by the teacher at this time, to be revisited at the end of the lesson.
- Working with a partner, the two students will have to use a measuring tape to decide how long their strap will have to be before they make it out of folded paper, yarn, and/or leather. Remind the students that the basket is worn on their back and the strap comes around and fits over the forehead. Note that for some designs, the tumpline or strap fits around the shoulders and front of chest. Have the students study photographs of tumplines and baskets being worn. See references.
- Tumplines were fashioned out of a woven band of local fibers, usually with long braids on either end. The wider portion was centered on the forehead and/or around the chest.
- Older students can work in teams to problem solve the best way to make them. Younger students need direct instruction and helpers. Old thin belts or scraps of material or leather can be cut and hole-punched for students to braid yarn at both ends to construct a simple tumpline. The belt or cloth should be about 12”-16” long and at least 2” wide. Remember, children come in different chest sizes. It needs to fit across the chest and/or forehead, comfortably.
- Staple and/or hole punch the two sides of the basket to secure the strap.

### 3. Talking Circle

Have students sit with their baskets. Ask if any student would like to stand and share how they would wear his/her burden basket.

- Could they pick up something small from the classroom and put it in their basket?
- Ask them what inspiration and experimentation meant to them.
- What does the word “designer” mean?
- Write the answers on the KWL board.

## **Lesson 3: Research and Make a Poster of the Three Types of Basket Materials**

### **Standards**

THE ARTS

- AR.08.CP.03—Create, present, and/or perform a work of art by controlling essential elements and organizational principles and describe how well the work expresses an intended idea, mood, or feeling.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.08.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

### CD Segments to Play

#### Background

The teacher will write the following criteria for researching the three basket materials on the board or print and handout to students:

**Scientific name of plant**

**Common name of plant**

**Native name of plant** (if listed)

**Illustration of plant**

#### Suggested Strategies

- For extra credit and/or a homework assignment, student will design another poster after viewing and listening to their peers in the talking circle. The student will write a paragraph about why they used the design elements in their second poster.

#### Activities

##### 1. Discuss

Before passing out poster paper and drawing supplies, revisit the **KWL** wall. Dialogue about what a designer is from lesson #2.

##### 2. Discuss

What questions do you think a designer of a Native fiber basketry poster would need to ask before starting their work? List the questions that the students pose and have the students answer them.

##### 3. Art project

Pass out poster board and drawing supplies to all students for their studio time. Again, with each studio workshop, traditional Native music helps create a calming classroom atmosphere.

#### 4. Talking Circle

At the end of the studio workshop, have the students come to the talking circle to share their work. Ask the students to share what worked and what did not work for them. Display their poster in the classroom.

### **Lesson 4: Make a Set of Plant Identification Playing Cards**

#### **Standards**

##### THE ARTS

- AR.08.CP.01—Select and combine essential elements and organizational principles to achieve a desired effect when creating, presenting, and/or performing works of art for a variety of purposes.
- AR.08.CP.03—Create, present, and/or perform a work of art by controlling essential elements and organizational principles and describe how well the work expresses an intended idea, mood, or feeling.

##### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.08.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

#### **CD Segments to Play**

#### **Background**

#### **Suggested Strategies**

- Bring in samples of playing cards. The U.S. Games Systems, Inc. at <http://www.usgamesinc.com> printed “The Lewis and Clark Exploration Card Game” for The History Channel. The 56-card deck has 13 categories that include indigenous plants, Native tribes and handiwork. This would be a nice addition to the student research library.
- **Younger students** need direct step-by-step instruction on how to research the three types of basket materials. Please modify the following instructions for your students.
- **Older students** can either work independently or in teams. Students will need to access the teacher-created resource library/ audio center to the

Connie Graves segment and/or Elaine LaBonte's segment. The teacher could assign each group with one of the three basket materials to research.

- **Homework assignment:** Write a set of instructions of a card game that you could play with a friend. Another option is to create and write your own card game. Younger students could play "memory" with a friend using their two decks (both students turn their deck of cards over and try to match pairs of cards).
- **Extension for older students:** Research the history of Native playing cards. An example would be cards of the Apache Tribe. Both Apache men and women enjoyed using cards cut from rawhide and painted with designs and symbols. The student could then create, design and make a personalized deck of playing cards out of something other than paper.
- If time permits, have students bring their written card games into the classroom for a free time of card playing. This should be a time of fun and sharing new ideas and games, not about winning and losing.

## Activities

### 1. Discuss

- Review the words Inspiration, Knowledge, and Materials.
- What is an Artist, Illustrator, and Designer?

### 2. Draw

Review the criteria of lesson 3 by writing and drawing a sample of a basket fiber playing card on the board using the following format:

**Scientific Name of Plant**  
**Common Name of Plant**  
**Native Name of Plant**  
**Illustration of Plant**  
**Artist/Designer's Name**

### 3. Art project

- The student will design four playing cards on a piece of drawing paper that has been folded into four equal parts. Three cards will have the above information and drawings of juncus, cedar, and willow. The fourth card will be a drawing of a burden basket with a written description. Teacher note: the fourth card is a great assessment tool of the student's knowledge of burden baskets.
- Pass out a sheet of drawing paper that has been folded into 4 equal parts, pencils, and erasers.
- Older students can use pen and ink to outline over their original four cards before going to the printer.

- After the students have all four original playing cards completed, the teacher will copy them four times on card stock and/or colored paper. The teacher can either cut them apart on the paper cutter or have students use scissors.
- Students can go back over their playing cards with colored pencils and ink.
- Note: Most playing cards are approximately 2 ¼” by 3 ½”. The teacher, if time permits, could reduce the size of the original student cards before duplicating them into a set of cards.

## **Lesson 5: Explore Key Questions**

### **Standards**

#### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

- EL.08.RE.04—Demonstrate listening comprehension of more complex text through class and/or small group interpretive discussions across the subject areas.

### **CD Segments to Play**

### **Background**

### **Suggested Strategies**

### **Activities**

#### **1. Talking Circle**

The teacher will lead a guided discussion of the questions below with the students sitting in a talking circle. All of the students’ work should be on display as well as the KWL questions and student answers. This final lesson is meant to allow the students’ range of newly acquired knowledge to be shared in a safe, non-judgmental environment. The students will answer each question in a collective exploration. The teacher will support the group by aiding them in staying focused and on track.

- What is a designer?
- What did Connie Graves mean by comparing herself to “a mad scientist?”
- What was meant by the radio announcer’s description of art being “the intersection of materials, knowledge and inspiration?”

## **EXTENDING THE LESSON/REFERENCES**

### **Books, etc.**

Collins, Richard. The Native Americans: The Indigenous People of North America. Smithmark Publishers: New York, reprinted 1992.

Gunther, Erna. Ethnobotany of Western Washington: The Knowledge and Use of Indigenous Plants by Native Americans. Washington Press: 1974.

Indians in Oregon Today, Oregon Middle School-High School Curriculum. Oregon Dept. of Education: Salem, OR, 2004 revision.

To obtain this document, visit

[http://www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/grants/nclb/title\\_vii/indiansinoregontoday.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/grants/nclb/title_vii/indiansinoregontoday.pdf) or contact the Oregon Department of Education:

255 Capitol St. NE,  
Salem, OR 97310-0203

Pendleton, Lorann. Native Americans, the Nature Company Discoveries. Time-Life Books, U.S.A.: reprinted 1996.

Schlick, Mary D. Columbia River Basketry: Gift of the Ancestors, Gift of the Earth. University of Washington Press: 1994.

## **Websites**

The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw  
<http://www.ctclsi.org>

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde  
<http://www.grandronde.org>

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians  
<http://www.cowcreek.com>

The Language of Native American Baskets from the Weavers' Point of View (text and photos of burden baskets)

<http://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/baskets/subpage.cfm?subpage=burden>

Native Americans of the Willamette Valley (tribal information and maps)  
<http://www.usgennet.org/alhnorus/ahorclak/indiobiblio.html>

Turtle Island Storyteller Elaine LaBonte (Grand Ronde Tribal Member)  
[http://www.turtleislandstorytellers.net/tis\\_oregon/transcript\\_e\\_labonte.htm](http://www.turtleislandstorytellers.net/tis_oregon/transcript_e_labonte.htm)

Native Plants of the Northwest  
<http://www.nwplants.com>

**Attachment**

Glossary

## **Glossary**

**Artist** A person who is skilled and does anything well, with imagination and a feeling of form, effect, etc.

**Burden Basket** A conical-shaped basket worn on the back, supported by a strap (a tumpline) around the forehead and/or chest, allowing the person's hands to be free.

**Cedar** A large, cone-bearing tree. Western Red Cedar is one type of tree that is used to make baskets. Cedar has often been called, "The Tree of Life," by the Pacific Northwest tribes for its many uses.

**Grand Ronde Reservation** Home to twenty-six different tribes that were forced out of their original homelands and relocated to land in northwestern Oregon.

**Juncus** A member of the rush family. It has long, grass-like blades and is used in basket-making.

**Kalapuya Tribe** Original homeland was in the Greater Willamette Valley area. Today, the Kalapuya Tribe is part of the Confederation of the Grand Ronde.

**Reservation** Land upon which Indians were restricted, relocated, or otherwise confined apart from or much reduced from their original homelands.

**Talking Circle** Traditionally used as a speaking forum by tribal members seated in a circle. The speaker holds a talking stick or feather when addressing the other members who listen without interrupting until the stick or feather is passed to the next person to their left.

**Tumpline** A woven band in the form of a loop attached to a burden basket that rests upon a person's back. The woven band was worn across one's forehead or across the chest.

**Umpqua Tribe** Original homeland was in the Southwestern part of Oregon. Today, there is The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians and the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw.

**Willow** There are many different types of willow, from scrubs to trees, used in basket-making.