

**WISDOM OF THE ELDERS RADIO: SERIES 3, PROGRAM 6  
HONORING WARM SPRINGS  
GRADES 5-8 \* TRADITIONAL ARTS**

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

**SUBJECT AREAS**

The Arts and Culture

**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 name and location of the original homeland of the Wasco Nation and the reservation they live on today.
- Name the five different design elements of the 1805 Wasco basket that Lewis and Clark brought back with them and that Pat Gold held at the Peabody Museum (consult Radio Series Three, Program Six for Gold account).
- Describe, analyze one's own art and the art of others in a talking circle
- Explain how a work of art reflects the artist's personal experience in a society or culture
- Express ideas and feelings using artistic elements
- Design a traditional cylinder-style pattern for a Wasco basket that Lewis and Clark might have seen along the Columbia River

**INTRODUCTION**

This lesson provides information about the Wasco Nation of the Columbia River Area during the contact time of Lewis and Clark (1805). It will discuss why baskets were made and their many uses. It will also provide students 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades with an art activity to design a Wasco basket using traditional motifs extant at the time.

Students will be introduced to the Wasco Nation of Oregon through listening to traditional basket weaver, Pat Gold, speak.

Pat Courtney Gold grew up on the Warm Springs Reservation in Eastern Oregon. The Wasco Nation's original homeland was along the Columbia River near present-day The Dalles, Oregon.

The tribe was forced to move in the late 1800's to the Warm Springs Reservation. Members of the Northern Paiute and a number of other local tribes were also relocated to Warm Springs. [www.warmsprings.com](http://www.warmsprings.com)

The Wasco Nation was a fishing people. Each family had their own fishing platform along the Columbia River near Celilo Falls, Oregon. Salmon were caught and dried during the fishing season. Baskets were made of local grasses, hemp and other fibers to store the dried and pounded salmon, which was a popular item of trade. Many Native nations traveled to The Dalles, Oregon just to trade. These baskets filled with dried, pounded salmon could weigh up to 100 pounds and could be traded for many things, even a horse! They were like money to the Wasco. The Wasco cylinder basket that Lewis and Clark acquired in 1805 and brought back to St. Louis was probably filled with dried salmon or other food. This famous Wasco basket is now in the Peabody Museum. The museum has it labeled as a "Round Twined Root-gathering Bag" Wasco-Wishram: late 18<sup>th</sup>- to early 19<sup>th</sup> century ([www.peabody.harvard.edu](http://www.peabody.harvard.edu)). It was woven of indigenous plant fibers using the full-turn twining technique, which allows for maximum flexibility in creating intricate designs. The 1994 book by Mary Dodds Schlick, Columbia River Basketry, Gift of the Ancestors, Gift of the Earth (University of Washington Press), is an excellent reference book for both teachers and students.

## Overview

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Wasco Nation—Traditional Baskets

Lesson 2: Research and Create a Wasco Basket Pattern Sheet

Lesson 3: Create a Design for a Wasco Cylinder Basket

Lesson 4: Create a Contemporary Basket Design

## 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. KWL questions generated by the students are written on a large poster by a student scribe.

- **K**—What does homeland mean? What was the Wasco people's homeland?
- **K**—What is a reservation? Where do the Wasco live today?
- **K**—What do we **know** about baskets used in the past by Wasco Native people and used for today?

**W** is what do we **want** to learn about Wasco baskets of the past and of today.

- **W**—What symbols and motifs are on a Wasco basket? What do they represent?

**L** is for what the student **learned** about Wasco people and where they lived historically and live today.

- **L**—Why are their baskets important to them today?
- **L**—Are the designs the same or different from those of the past?

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 asked in

class and what they have learned on the Wasco Basket chart. If time permits, conclude each lesson with a “Talking Circle.”

## **PREPARING TO TEACH THIS LESSON**

- Have available a map of Oregon from <http://www.warmsprings.com>.
- Post student-generated Wasco Basket Pattern Sheet on drawing paper.
- Get writing and drawing paper, pencils, erasers, stapler, tape, scissors, rulers, craft glue.
- Have on hand graph paper in different sizes from <http://www.incompetech.com> printed on stiff, light tan colored paper and different colors of paper.
- Print out enough copies of the 1805 Lewis and Clark Basket to share with students from <http://www.peabody.harvard.edu>.
- Have available research books and a computer with web access.
- Put out a CD player and WOTE Series 3, Program 6.
- Play traditional flute music (e.g. a CD by Charles Littleleaf, Warms Springs tribal member).
- Poster board and colored pens

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

### **Lesson 1: Introduction to the Wasco Nation—Traditional Baskets**

#### **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**

#### **Background**

#### **Suggested Strategies**

#### **Activities**

##### **1. Listen**

To introduce the Wasco Nation and traditional baskets play Wisdom of the Elders Radio Series 3, Program 6 featuring contemporary Wasco artist, Pat Courtney Gold.

##### **2. Research**

Obtain and display pictures of Wasco traditional baskets from the Peabody Museum website. Print out a map of Oregon for students to identify the Wasco homeland at The Dalles and the Warm Springs Reservation. Have a variety of books on Columbia River Traditional Basket Weavers for students to read and use for reference (Suggested authors: Schlick, Lobb and Jensen; see Reference Page).

### 3. Discuss

After listening to the Pat Gold segment, discuss the following questions and add answers to the KWL poster board.

- Who is Pat Courtney Gold?
- From what two Nations does she descend and where did she grow up?
- What is a reservation?
- How did she become a basket maker?
- How did she feel when she held a Wasco Basket that was 200 years old?
- What was the importance of weaving baskets?
- Why were they needed?
- (For younger students) Have you ever gone grocery shopping with your parents?
- What does the checker use to bag their groceries?
- What local types of indigenous plant fibers did the Wasco Weavers use to make their baskets? Use the reference books listed below and search on-line (if computers are available in the classroom).

Brainstorm how many different containers (plastic and paper bags, Tupperware, cardboard, etc.) are used to hold food.

### 4. Research

Pass out the Oregon map and pencils. The student will mark the locations of The Dalles and Warm Springs Reservation.

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 create a time-line of plant fibers used from the early 1800's to present day. Example question: About what year were cornhusks used in Wasco Baskets?

## **Lesson 2: Research and Create a Wasco Basket Pattern Sheet**

### **Standards**

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- EL.08.RE.08—Understand, learn, and use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly through informational text, literary text, and instruction across the subject areas.
- EL.08.RE.18—Clarify understanding of informational texts by creating detailed outlines, graphic organizers, diagrams, logical notes, or summaries.

### **CD Segments to Play**

### **Background**

### **Suggested Strategies**

- Pass out drawing paper to create a Wasco Basket Pattern Sheet and spend time with the research books, Wasco basket print-out pictures and websites (depending on age of students) for researching and illustrating the worksheet. At the end of the lesson, come together in a talking circle and share designs and thoughts on what the student has learned.

## Activities

### 1. Research

Use the reference books and website for pictures of the 1805 basket and other Wasco style baskets around the same date. What design elements do they have in common? Most cylinder baskets have one or more framing lines at the top and the bottom of the basket.

### 2. Vocabulary

Write the following words on the board for students to discuss and research:

- Petroglyph
- Pictograph
- Ancestors
- Animals of the Columbia River
- “X-ray” style of drawing
- Patterns
- Geometric Shapes
- Fishnets
- Framing Lines

For older students who can write, students will write the vocabulary words on a sheet of paper and illustrate what the words represent.

### 3. Reflect

Next, write the following five design elements on the board:

- geometric pattern of
- ancestor-face in a
- fishnet with
- animals (dogs) and
- framing line(s)

Pass out a piece of paper and ask the students to sketch the 1805 Wasco Basket using the five design elements and label them. Remind the students that this is a sketch to exercise their memories of the five important design elements.

*Teachers: Do not give the students more than 15 minutes to sketch and label the baskets. You might want to play some traditional flute music as a start and stop signal. Remember to sit in a talking circle at the end of each lesson and write using a different colored pen on the KWL poster*

## **Lesson 3: Create a Design for a Wasco Cylinder Basket**

## **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.

### **CD Segments to Play**

#### **Background**

#### **Suggested Strategies**

#### **Activities**

##### 1. Art project

Pass out grid paper to students, use a larger grid for younger students, and ask them to use the five design elements to create a traditional design for a Wasco Cylinder Basket using pencil. To finish, tape the paper together and cut 7 – 9 tabs  $\frac{1}{2}$ " at bottom of paper. Fold and glue to center to form basket bottom. Younger students may need help.

##### 2. Demonstrate

Display with photographs of traditional Wasco Baskets.

##### 3. Talking Circle

Talking Circle time!

### **Lesson 4: Create a Contemporary Basket Design**

## **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.
- EL.08.RE.08—Understand, learn, and use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly through informational text, literary text, and instruction across the subject areas.

### **CD Segments to Play**

## Background

## Suggested Strategies

## Activities

### 1. Reflect

- Play traditional flute music and pass out paper and pencils.
- Ask students to take five minutes to draw “pictures from the heart,” thumbnail size images that have deep personal meaning.
- Stop the music and ask them to circle 4 or 5 of their favorite images.
- Using these personal favorite images, the student will use pencil and differently colored grid paper to design a contemporary Wasco style basket design. To complete, follow Lesson 3.

### 2. Homework

If time the teacher and (older) students can research online traditional twining and weaving a pouch. An excellent art and project book with teaching how to twine a pouch (page 100 and 101) is by Ann Sayre Wiseman called, “The Best of Making Things, A Handbook of Creative Discovery.” Remind the students that the Lewis and Clark Wasco basket wasn’t made of yarn or paper but from local grasses, hemp and other natural fibers.

### 3. Talking Circle

Sitting in a circle, holding their cylinder basket designs, students will share their stories, images and feelings with one another. In closing, time permitting, the teacher may want to replay the part of the radio program of Pat Gold talking about first time she held the Wasco Cylinder Basket at the Peabody Museum and how it inspired her on her journey of life.

## EXTENDING THE LESSON/REFERENCES

### Books

Buan, Carolyn M. and Lewis, Richard (editors). The First Oregonians. Portland, Oregon: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 1991.

Gilman, Carolyn. Lewis and Clark Across the Divide. Smithsonian Books, 2003.

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

Mercer, Bill. People of the River: Native Arts of the Oregon Territory. Portland, Oregon: Portland Art Museum, 2005.

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

Wiseman, Sawyer Ann. The Best of Making Things, A Handbook of Creative Discovery. Hand Print Press, Oregon; revised 1997.

**Publications, Websites, etc.**

Hexagram graph paper

<http://www.incompetech.com>

Wasco baskets

<http://www.peabody.harvard.edu>

Wasco culture

<http://www.warmsprings.com>

National Standards for Arts Education

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm>

Pat Courtney Gold video interview

<http://www.researchchannel.org>

“Baskets of the Northwest People, Gifts from the Grandmothers” video  
Mimbres Fever, Los Angeles, CA; 1995.

**Attachment**

Glossary

## **Glossary**

**Ancestor** A family member from your past such as a grandmother or great-grandfather, who is no longer living.

**Ancestor Face** A hexagonal-shaped head (six-sided) design.

**Framing Lines** Horizontal lines on a cylinder basket.

**Fishnet Pattern** Repeated stylized designs representing a fishnet around a group of hexagons.

**Geometric Shapes** Shapes that use lines.

**Pattern** A repeated motif or design

**Petroglyph** Sometimes called rock art, a design or picture that is carved or line drawn onto a rock.

**Reservation** Piece of land in the U.S. where Native people established their Nations through a treaty with the U.S. government.

**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.

**Twining** A basket weaving method of twisting horizontal (wefts) fibers around vertical (warps) fibers.