

WEAVING



Weaving has its roots in basket making, and is a skill that was mastered a very long time ago. Man had learned to weave as early as the New Stone Age. From the fibers of the flax plant, he had learned to weave linen cloth. Archaeologists discovered an image of a loom on a pottery dish that dates from 4400 B.C. It was found in an Egyptian tomb. As long ago as 1766 B.C. the Chinese developed a complicated loom for weaving silk. About the same time, the people of India discovered how to make cloth from the fibers of the cotton plant. As soon as people discovered how to create fabric, they figured out ways to cross the different threads to make beautiful patterns.

Colorful tapestries were woven in Persia, and later in Europe.

Weaving consists of arranging a group of lengthwise threads in rows, very close together. Crosswise threads are then laced over and under the vertical threads. Ancient weavers strung the lengthwise threads on a frame, and passed the crosswise threads over and under them with a shuttle (similar to a large needle). Until the late 1700's, most people produced their own cloth at home.

Weaving is an experience that we can begin to share with children from about four years of age. Parallel to weaving activities, the teacher can talk to the children about where we get our clothes from and show them pictures of looms and how things are woven. Show the children different materials like wool, silk, cotton, as well as different weaving patterns. It is fun to analyze with the children the bold and intricate weaving patterns used in baskets from different cultures.



Bring in primitive weaving with bright colors, and examples from many parts of the world. Throughout our handwork curriculum, one of our main goals is to enlarge children's knowledge and appreciation of how people have met their basic needs over time and in different cultures.

Whenever we begin teaching a new skill, we start very simply. When the fundamental skills are mastered, we lead the children on to greater understanding and refinement.

Weaving

For all the following activities, the orientation is toward involving the child with materials and process, not toward the finished product. The important focus is to help children experience the joy of these arts. Our sample activities will be woven with paper, but many other materials may be used:

raffia	wicker	crepe paper	pipe cleaners	yarn
thin twigs	ribbons	feathers	field grasses	dried flowers
corn husks	metallic wire	fabric	burlap	fish net
twine	rug canvas	mesh dishcloths	vegetable sacks	fruit sacks

Plain Weave

Pattern: Over 1, Under 1
Under 1, Over 1

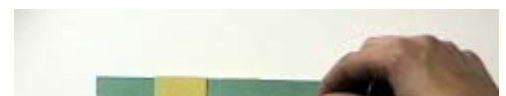
The plain weave pattern is used in percale, muslin, and taffeta fabrics.



In the beginning, the teacher prepares the mat. Fold a rectangle of firm paper in half. Draw a light pencil line across the end opposite the fold, about 1" from the edge. Make a series of cuts one inch apart from the folded edge to this line.



Cut 1" strips of paper the correct length for weaving across the mat. Show the child to weave the first strips over 1 and under 1, continuing to the opposite side of the mat. The next strip is woven first under 1 and then over 1, continuing as before. Continue to weave until no more strips will fit in.



Note: For very young children, one end of the mat may be left open. Use fewer strips and a smaller mat.

Variations

Strips of different widths can be used, perhaps alternating thick and thin.

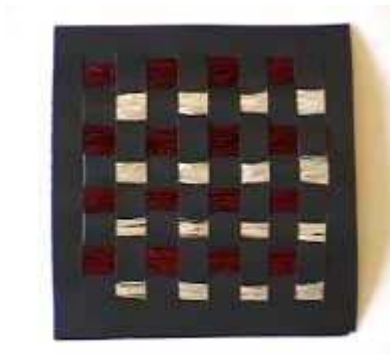
Mats or weaving strips can be made from glossy magazine pictures.



Vary the weaving materials as suggested above.



Once the children are able to weave you can show them striped or checked material and they can weave a pattern of stripes or checks.



Traditional Weaving Patterns

As children develop more skill, they can weave the traditional weaving patterns. Bring in samples of woven fabric and baskets that illustrate these patterns.



Basket Weave

Weaving Pattern:

Over 2, Under 2
Under 2, Over 2

Example: Monk's cloth



Twill Pattern

Weaving Pattern:

Under 1, Over 2, Under 1, Over 2
 Over 1, Under 1, Over 2, Under 1
 Over 2, Under 1, Over 2, Under 1
 Under 1, Over 2, Under 1, Over 2

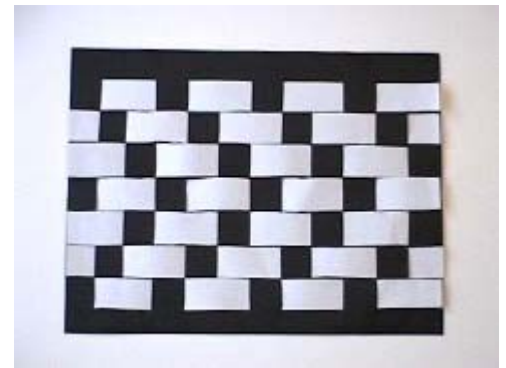


Twill fabrics are characterized by diagonal lines, and include denim, gabardine, and flannel. Twill fabrics drape well, because they have fewer crossings of the yarn than the simple weave. The threads in this weaving pattern are usually very tightly drawn, and give longer wear to the cloth.

Herringbone pattern

Weaving Pattern:

Under 1, Over 2, Under 1, Over 2
 Over 1, Under 1, Over 2, Under 1
 Over 2, Under 1, Over 2, Under 1
 Under 1, Over 2, Under 1, Over 2
 Over 2, Under 1, Over 2, Under 1
 Over 1, Under 1, Over 2, Under 1
 Repeat entire pattern from beginning.



The herringbone pattern is a variation of the twill pattern, over 2 and under 1, moving over for four threads and then moving back in the same way and starting

over again. This gives the diagonal pattern a back and forth appearance. Some woolen tweed fabrics have the herringbone design.

It is said that this pattern was inspired by the wool from the black and white sheep of England.