

Discovery sheet 3

Weaving cups

Weaving as an essential life skill as well as a satisfying expression of ideas and is central to the traditional Native American way of life. Cultures in the South-West of America, the Navajo and Hopi people for example, have traditional stories that the skill of weaving was given to humans by the spider woman.

People have been inspired by the strength, perseverance and ingenuity of the spider woman to weave the world into existence.

Having examined basket work by Native American people and realised that most of their clothing is made from a weaving process, the children were eager to give things a go. These colourful weaving cups were made by a school group in about 30-60 minutes.



This activity takes some concentration, a paper cup, scissors and scrap wool or thin strips of material cut into thin lengths.

- Cut into the cup ten times from lip to near the base. This will give you nine strips to weave around, you must have an odd number of strips.
- Cut a length of wool to about an arm length.
- Knot the end of the wool onto a strip near the base. Push the wool down to the base. The secret to a great looking weaving cup is to keep combing down the wool to make it as snug as possible.
- Keep winding the wool over and under each strip until you run out of wool.
- With each rotation around the cup, push the wool down to the bottom of the cup.
- Be careful to keep the wool tension easy, not tight, or the strips will bend inwards.
- Knot another length of wool on to the end, tucking the knots on the inside of the cup.
- Add on wool lengths and combing the wool together until you have reached the top and make a final knot.
- Use the cup for holding pens (or gift onto someone else).