

**Grade:** 4<sup>th</sup>

**Topic/Lesson Title:** Paper Bag Parfleche

**New York State Visual Art Standards:**

- Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts:  
Students will actively engage in the process that constitute creation and performance in the arts and participate in various roles in the arts.
- Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources:  
Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.
- Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts:  
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present societies.

**Objectives:**

Art Production: Students will create a paper bag parfleche by measuring and folding a paper bag. The bag will be decorated with crayons.

Art History: Students will discuss the history behind the Plains Indian Parfleche bag and think about what these bags might have been used for.

**Visual References:**

Pictures of Parfleche Bags  
Teacher sample

**Other Motivational Strategies, References and Materials:**

Teacher Sample

References:

<http://www.windhistory.org/exhibits/ShoshoneArt/parfleche/index.html>

A Gallery of Shoshone Parfleche.

**Materials and Supplies:**

Paper bags  
Construction paper crayons  
Yarn  
Glue  
Cardboard  
Hole puncher  
Ruler  
Pencils  
Erasers

**Techniques to Demonstrate DAY ONE and TWO:**

- Show the students' how to separate seams from the bag so that it will lay flat.
- Show the student's how to crinkle the bag to show texture.
- Show the students how to fold and cut the paper bag.
- Instruct the students' to fold the bag in half and pour a small amount of glue on one side of the fold (making sure they put the glue on the side with the label.)
- Show the students' how to use a piece of cardboard or something flat they spread the glue across and fold the bag again.
- Instructions and measurements will be shown and handed out for further help.
- The students will be instructed on where to punch holes and where to put the string to tie the bag shut.
- The students will be given specific instructions on what designs to use for their Parfleche. Usually patterns are used and the students will be shown examples.

**Ideas to Emphasize and Topics to Discuss *while Working*:**

Parfleche (rawhide) containers served Plains Indians with the means to package and transport goods, clothing, and food. Parfleche is a French Canadian word originated by voyagers at the time of their earliest contact with Prairie and Eastern Plains tribes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It is derived from *parer* (to parry or turn aside) and *fleche* (arrow), apparently referring to war shields that were made from heavy raw hide. Eventually it became the common name for large, folded, envelope like containers of rawhide (originally buffalo, made by folding, tying, and then painting the lye-soaked, dried hide). It should be recognized that individual tribes never adopted the French Canadian word since Native American language includes specific words for rawhide and the objects produced from it. Furthermore examples of parfleche are not identified according to artists' names because they are unknown.

Traditionally, there was a clear division of labor and responsibility between men and women based on the skills necessary for the survival of the family group. These roles included the fabrication of essentials required to sustain daily life and manifest religious beliefs, and they extended to artists traditions as well. Among many of the tribes, it was women's work to make and decorate parfleche (often with designs passed down for generations through families). Plains women created abstract geometric images on the surfaces of parfleche and robes. Painted parfleches are often identified by tribal characteristics. Crow, Lakota, Blackfeet, Ute, Nez Perce and other peoples all used mineral paints and designs that tended to reflect their particular artistic sensibilities. For further information, the best single reference on Indian parfleche designs and styles is Gaylord Torrance's *The American Indian Parfleche: A Tradition of Abstract Painting* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994). Since gourds are a product of nature, all sizes given are approximations and therefore the size & shape of the individual fruit may vary. The ones in tan tones can be washed with soap and water.

**Follow-up Lesson Idea:**

- Students will research what the Plains Indians might carry in these packages.

- Have the students' compare a Parfleche to packages made by other Indian Tribes

**Assessment:**

I will assess how the students were able to pay attention to directions and demonstrations. I will also assess how well the students were able to use the samples and books I provided for inspiration. Last, I will assess how well the students were able to construct their project and how they paid attention to detail to the main part of the lesson.

## Parfleche Rubric

Goals	Projects Outcomes Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Basic Skills</b>	<i>Follows Directions, Requirements</i>  <i>Craftsmanship</i>	Complete understanding of class dynamics Exceptional skill with media	Very good idea of the class  Above average art skills	Barely average grasp of directions Shows some skill	Does not meet expectations
<b>Higher Level Thinking Skills</b>	<i>Originality Creativity</i>	Unique, very original, individual	Usually original, expressive	Seldom original Work possibly copied	No original ideas
<b>Apply Knowledge-</b>	<i>Design Principles / Elements</i>	Complete understanding, use of elements and principles	Has very good idea of art intent	Unclear thinking Little use of principles and elements	No concept of art principles or elements