



THE BOOTH MUSEUM

American Indians:

Cherokee Culture

Booth Western Art Museum Education Department
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Smithsonian
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This guide was created by the Education Department at the Booth Western Art Museum. Written by Erin Zaballa and Lynnette Torres Ivey. Edited by Mersia Martin and Patty Dees.

What is the Correct Terminology: American Indian or Native American?

Both of these terms are acceptable, but whenever possible it is best to use the specific tribal name when discussing or describing Native people. In the United States, Native American has been widely used but is falling out of favor with some groups, and the terms American Indian or indigenous American are preferred by many Native people. According to a 1995 Department of Labor poll, 50% of Native respondents preferred the term American Indian while 37% preferred the term Native American. Other acceptable terms used to describe Native people in North America include First Nations (primarily used in Canada), Indigenous American, and Alaska/Alaskan Native.

As a Smithsonian affiliate, Booth Western Art Museum follows the guidelines of the Smithsonian and uses the term American Indian when referring collectively to the Native peoples of North America. For more information from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, please refer to their Native Knowledge 360° Did You Know? Webpage: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/>



© Lakota Sioux, *Beaded horse-mask with American flags*, c. 1890. Erik & Renee Lee collection.

Lesson Plan Summary: Creative Creatures

Summary: Students will explore the idea of mythological/legendary beasts by learning about the Cherokee Uktena and creating their own beast.

Objectives: After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that the Uktena is a legendary beast featured in Cherokee folklore.
- Recognize that hybrid mythological creatures are common to many cultures around the world.
- Create their own legendary beast with a guided writing activity, and accompany their story with an illustration.

Georgia Standards of Excellence: ELAGSE2RL2, VA2.CR.2a, VA2.CR.1b

National Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2, VA:Cr1.2.2a, NSS-USH.K-4.3A

Materials Provided:

Lesson Plan Summary, Creative Creatures student handout

Additional Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Drawing paper
- Art supplies for adding color to their drawings—crayons, colored pencils, markers, or paints

Procedure:

1. **Explain:** The Uktena (ook-tay-nah) is a legendary beast from a traditional Cherokee **myth** (a story that is told to explain a practice, belief, or natural occurrence). According to the myth, long ago a man was magically transformed into the Uktena—a giant snake with horns on its head, wings on its back, and a red jewel on its forehead. The Uktena lived in the Great Smoky Mountains, hiding in deep bodies of water or in lonely mountain passes. Hunters and other people traveling through these areas had to be careful to avoid the Uktena, or else he might eat them!
2. **Explain:** The Uktena is a **hybrid** beast—a creature with body parts from different animals. Many cultures around the world have myths and legends that feature hybrid beasts.
3. Lead students through “Creative Creatures” handout.
4. Optional—provide students with Uktena coloring sheet (page 7)

Additional Resources:

Cherokee Language Program (2020). Children’s Books. (Free printable children’s books written in the Cherokee language with English translations, includes books about traditional myths and legends). Retrieved from <https://language.cherokee.org/learning-materials/children-s-books/>

Image Credits:

Lynnette Torres Ivey, *Uktena*, 2020. Booth Western Art Museum.

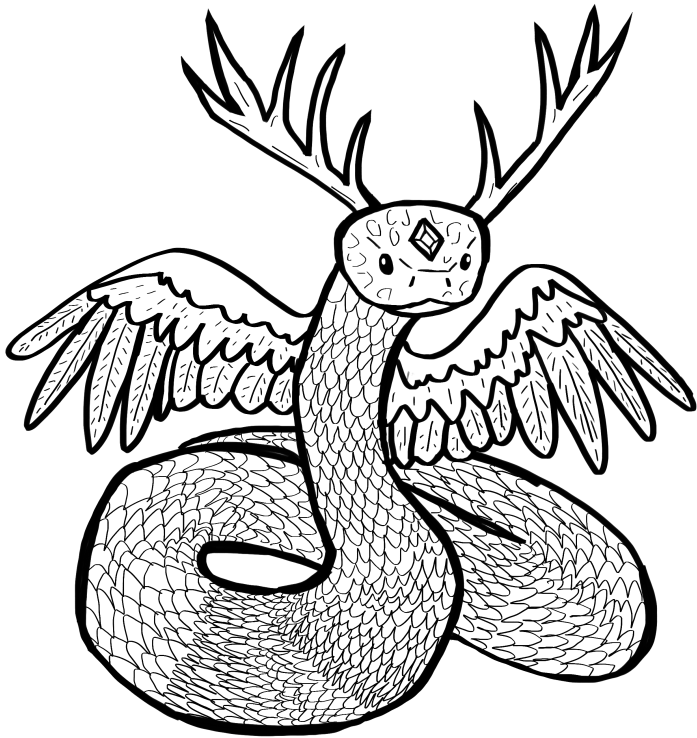
GDJ, *Griffin*. Pixabay. Public Domain.

Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *Sea-Horse*, 1909. Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

Bénard, Robert, *Lièvre cornu*, 1789. Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

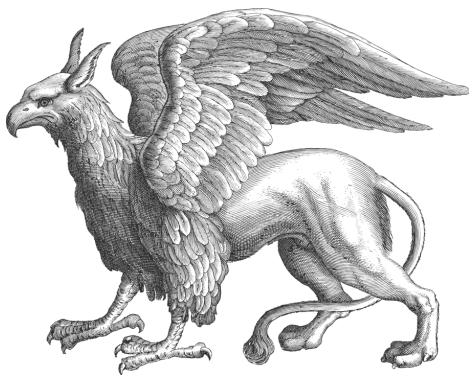
Maclock, J., *Rompo*, 1815. Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

Creative Creatures!



The legendary Cherokee Uktena (left) has the body of a snake, the horns of a deer, the wings of a bird, and a jewel on its forehead. Many cultures around the world have stories about creatures that are made of the body parts of different animals.

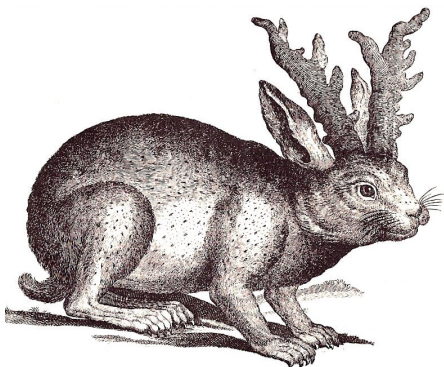
Take a look at the legendary creatures below. Which animals do you think each creature is made of?



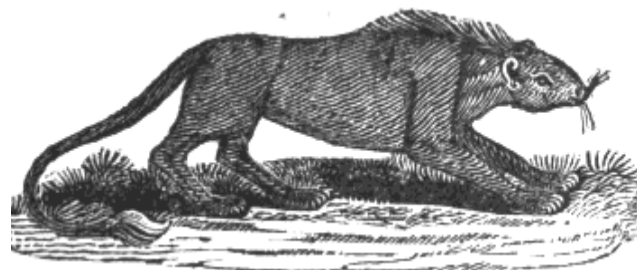
Griffin (Europe and the Middle East)



Hippocampus (Greece)



Horned Hare/Jackalope (Europe and USA)



Rompo (Africa and India)

Create your own legendary beast!

Fill in the blanks below to write a story that describes your beast.

My beast is called a/an _____ . It has the body of a/an _____ ,
(Name of Beast) (Animal)

the head of a/an _____ , and the tail of a/an _____ . It also has
(Animal) (Animal)

_____. The _____ lives in _____ .
(Other Features like Wings or Fangs) (Name of Beast) (Place, like a Country or State)

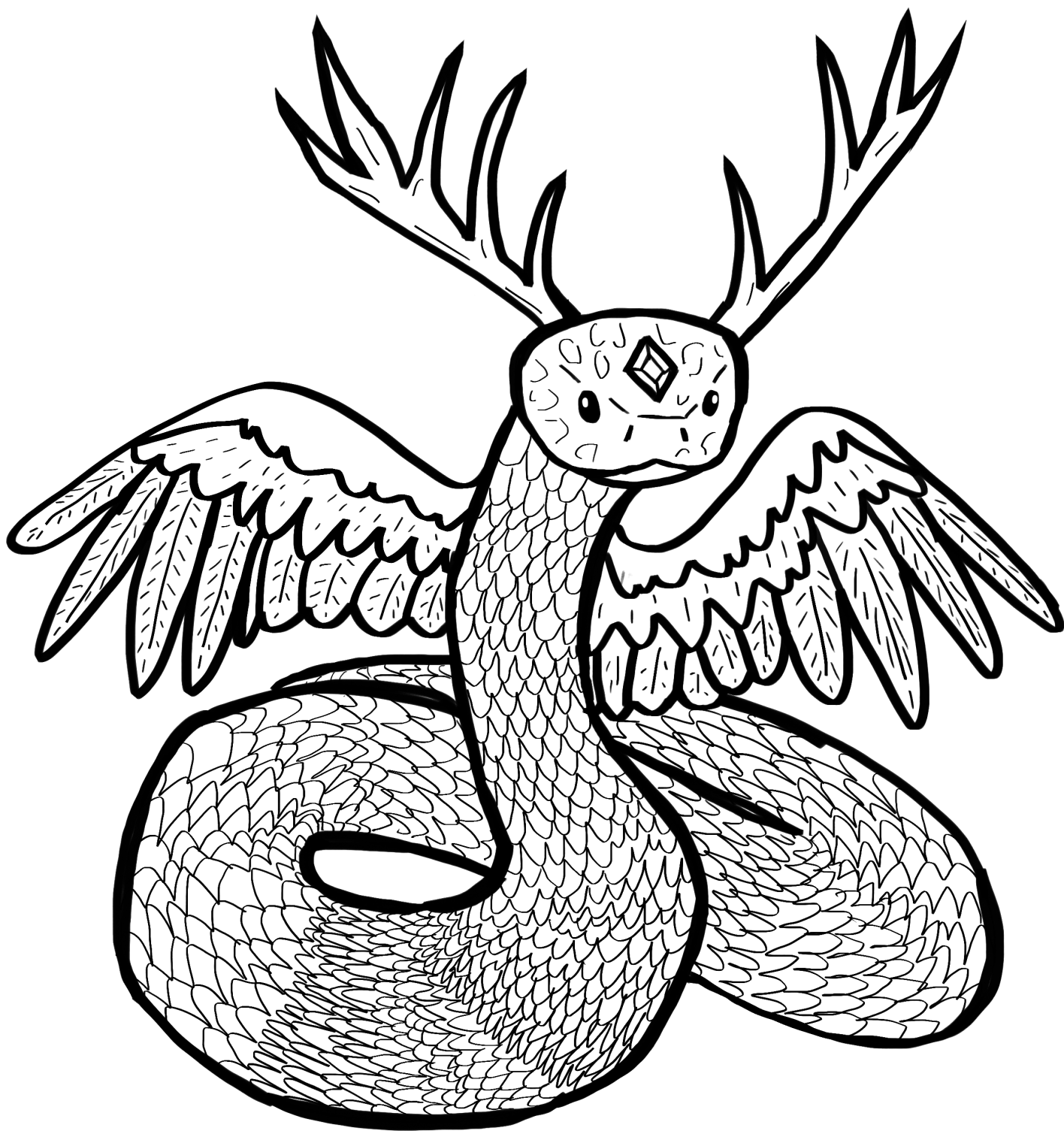
It can be found in the _____ , where it likes to eat _____ .
(Habitat, like Forest or Ocean) (Food)

It's favorite thing to do is _____ , but it does NOT like to
(Activity)

_____. When it sees people it feels _____ , so if you ever
(Activity) (Feeling, like Happy or Angry)

find one you should _____ !
(Activity)

Now, on separate sheet of paper, draw a picture that illustrates
(shows) a part of your story!



UKTENA

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Lesson Plan Summary: Mapping the Trail of Tears

Summary: Students will map the journey of the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole people that were forced to leave their homelands and relocate to the Oklahoma territory following the Indian Removal Act.

Objectives: After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that American Indians were forcibly removed from their homelands during the 1830s.
- Recognize that the removal of American Indians drastically changed the map of Georgia.
- Create a color-coded map showing the location of the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole American Indian territories before and after the Trail of Tears.

Georgia Standards of Excellence: SS2G2ad, Supports GSE Map and Globe Skills/Information Processing Skills

National Standards: NSS-US.H.K-4.4A, NSS-US.H.K-4.5A

Materials Provided:

Lesson Plan Summary, map of Georgia counties, Trail of Tears student handout, map answer sheet

Additional Materials Needed:

- Three different colored crayons, colored pencils, or markers **per student**

Procedure:

1. Show students the maps of Georgia Counties on page 9.
2. **Explain:** These maps are **primary sources**—original documents or objects that were created at the time of an event. The map on the left shows all of the counties in Georgia in 1827. The map on the right shows all of the counties in Georgia in 1851.
3. **Ask:** How do these two maps look different?
4. **Explain:** In 1827, much of the land in northwest and west Georgia belonged to the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) American Indians. They used the **natural resources** found in those parts of Georgia to survive—they had trees to build houses and had fertile soil to grow crops, for example. There were many valuable resources on Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) land, including gold, that European Americans wanted for themselves. In 1830, the United States government passed a law called the Indian Removal Act. This law said that all American Indians living east of the Mississippi River had to leave their homelands and relocate to new territories in what is now the state of Oklahoma—over 2,000 miles to the west. Eventually, in 1838, American Indians still living in the east were forced by the Army to leave their homes and walk to the Oklahoma territory. This became known as the **Trail of Tears** because of the sadness and hardships they faced during their long forced march. Sadly, thousands of American Indians died during these removals.
5. Pass out Trail of Tears student handout (page 10).
6. **Explain:** We are going to color in a map that shows the journey that the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole made from their homelands to the Oklahoma territory.
7. Refer to Trail of Tears map answer sheet (page 11) for this activity.
8. **Explain:** First, look at the map's key and find the pattern that represents the Seminole tribe. Color it one color. Next, find the Seminole homeland in Florida, and color it the same color. Then, follow the path (dotted line) that represents their journey to the West, and find where they settled when they arrived. Color this area the same color as well.
9. Repeat using different colors for the Cherokee and the Muscogee (Creek) tribes.
10. **Optional:** students may wish to mark the location of their home or school on the map, label the names of the states, or draw additional details like rivers and the Appalachian Mountain range.

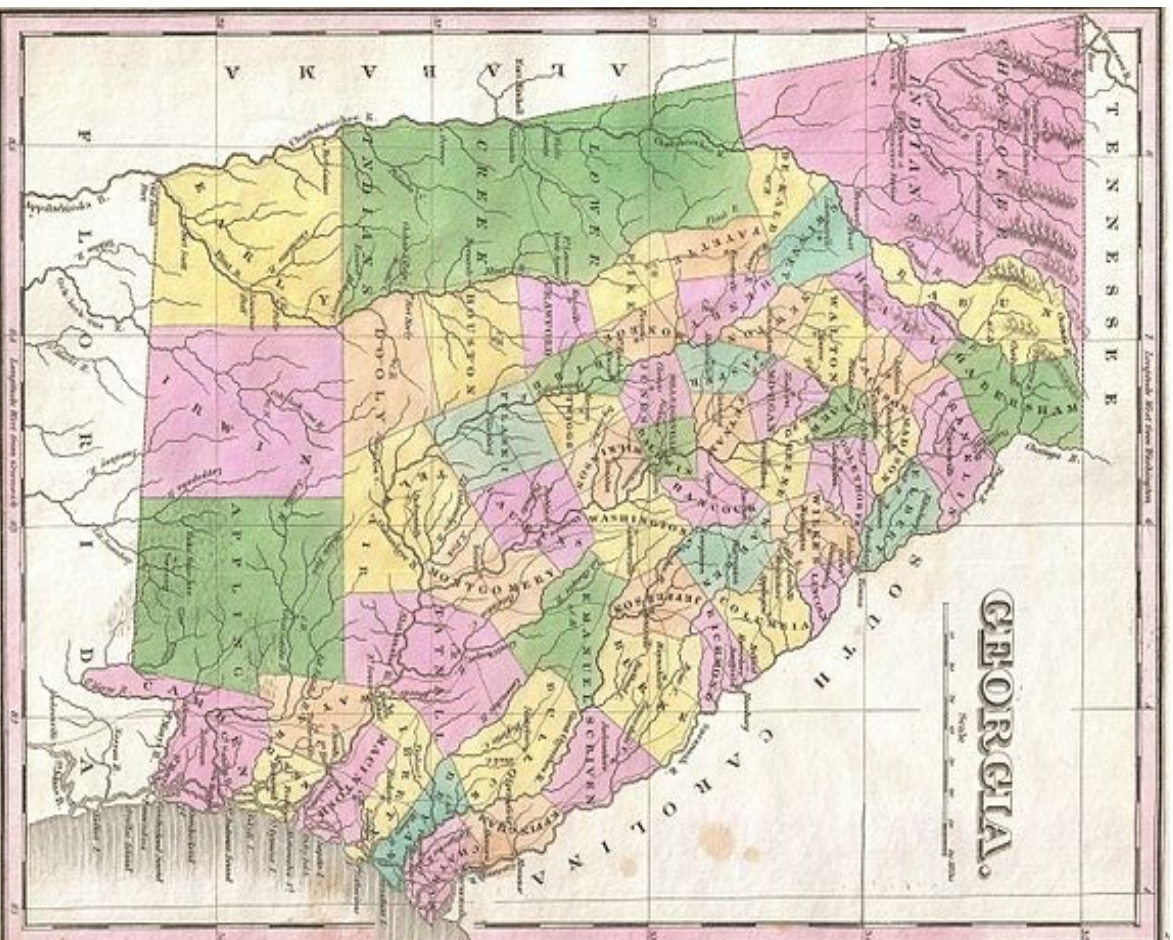
Additional Resources:

Library of Congress (2020). Indian Removal Act: Primary Documents in American History Digital Collection.

Retrieved from <https://guides.loc.gov/indian-removal-act>

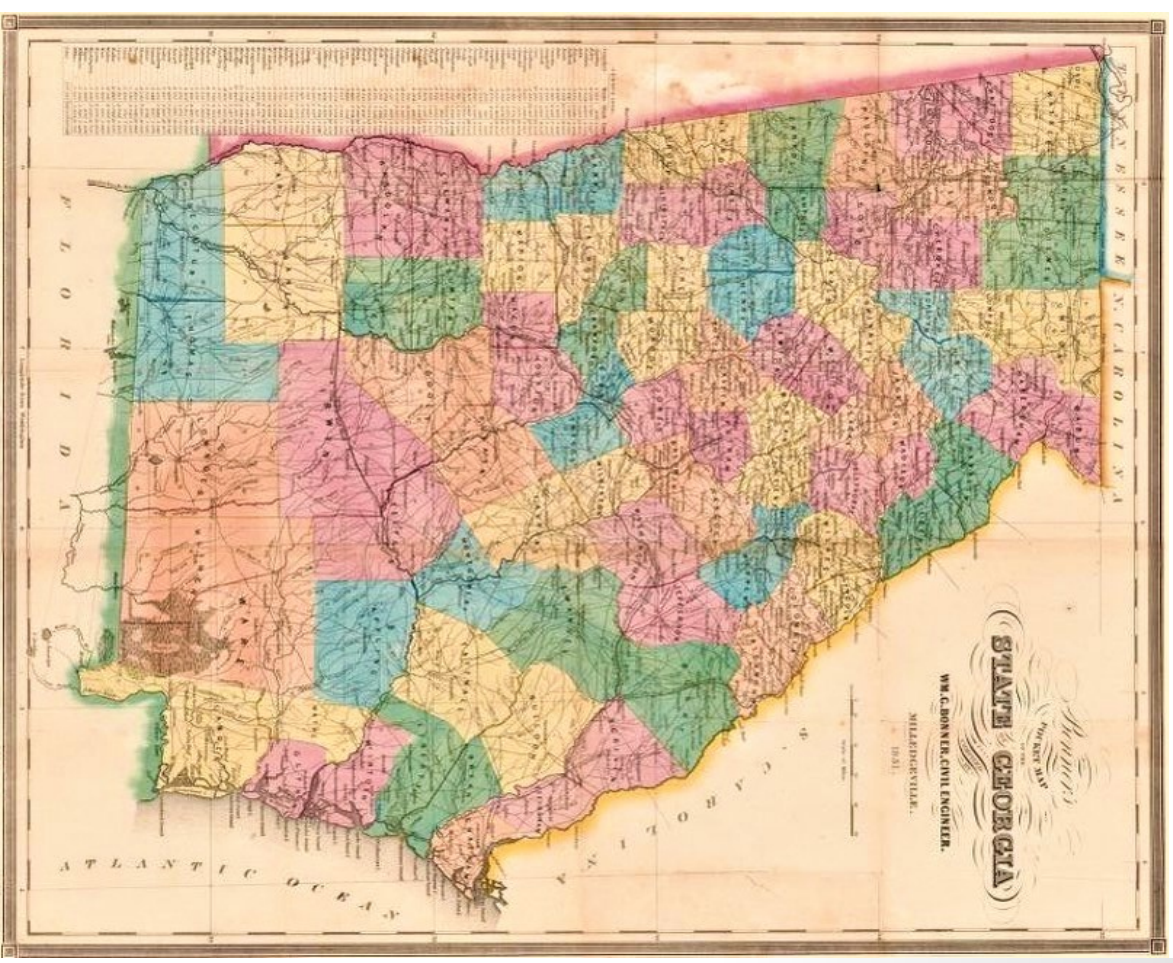
Counties of Georgia

1827



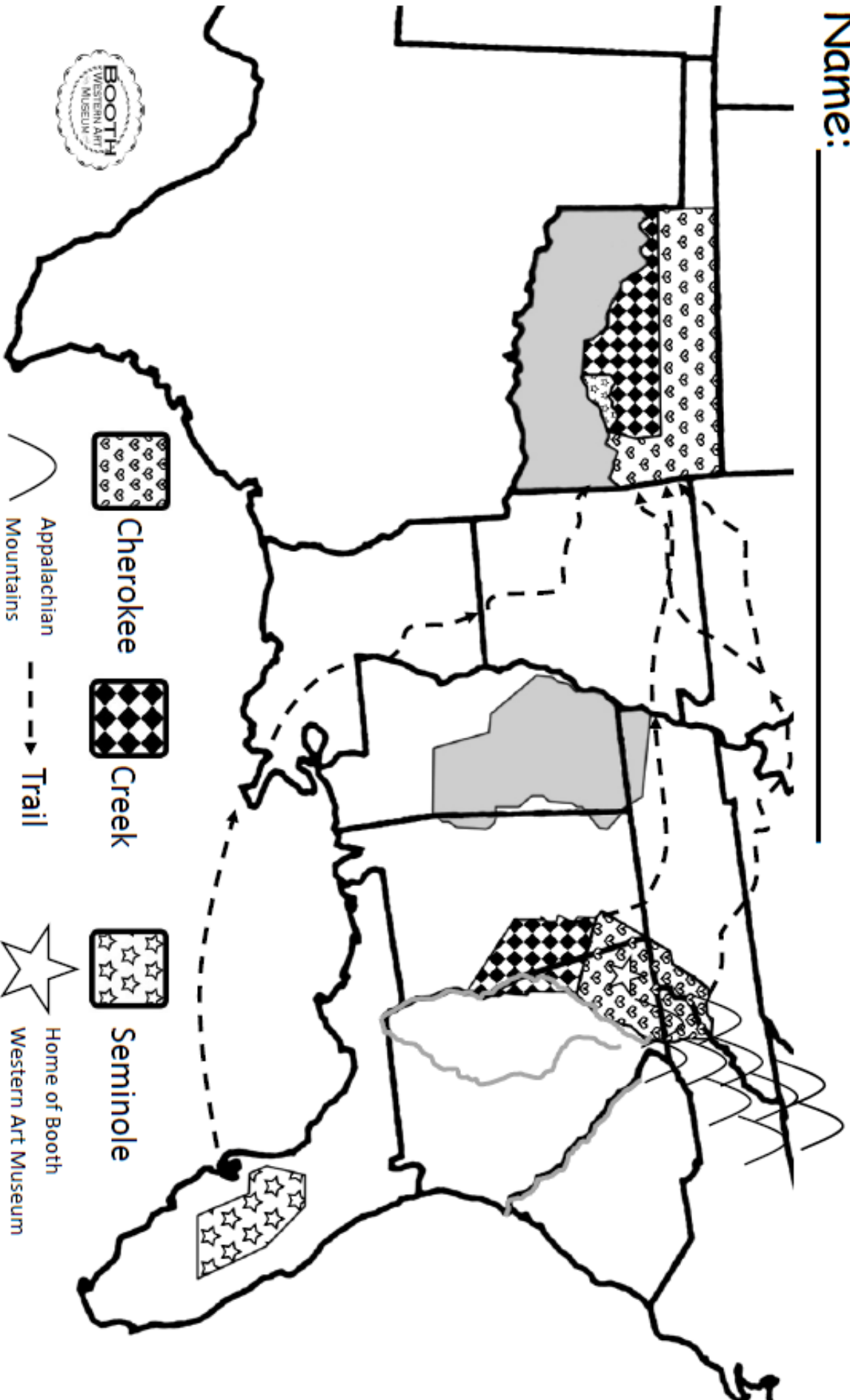
Finley, Anthony, 1827. *A New General Atlas, Comprising a Complete Set of Maps, representing the Grand Divisions of the Globe, Together with the several Empires, Kingdoms and States in the World; Compiled from the Best Authorities, and corrected by the Most Recent Discoveries.* Wikimedia Commons.

1851

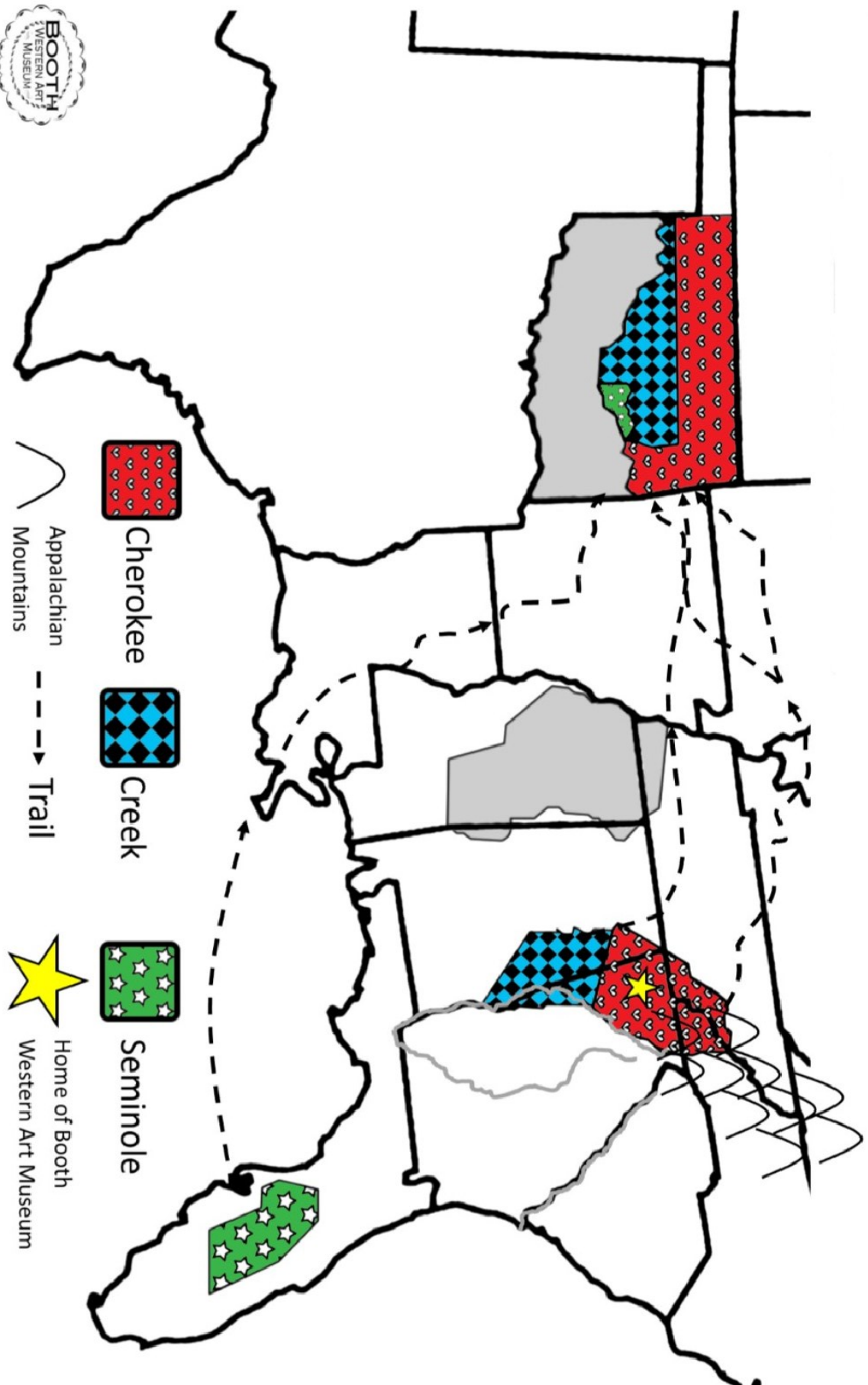


Bonner, W. G., 1851. *Bonner's pocket map of the state of Georgia.* [Milledgeville, Ga.: Wm. G. Bonner]. Library of Congress.

Name: _____



Trail of Tears Map Answer Sheet



Lesson Plan Summary: An Autumn Tale

Summary: Students will learn the tale of the Three Sisters and how this story relates to American Indian agriculture, and will create their own artwork that incorporates multiple elements of art.

Objectives: After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that The Three Sisters is an American Indian story, and was communicated throughout their history by oral tradition.
- Recognize that the story of the Three Sisters communicates knowledge about American Indian agricultural practices.
- Create a drawing of a pumpkin that incorporates multiple elements of art.

Georgia Standards of Excellence: ELAGSE2RL2, VA2.CR.2

National Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2, VA:Cr1.2.2a, NSS-USH.K-4.7A

Materials Provided:

Lesson Plan Summary, *An Autumn Tale: The Three Sisters* story, pumpkin drawing instructions, color wheel

Additional Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Drawing paper
- Art supplies for adding color to their drawings—crayons, colored pencils, markers, or paints

Procedure:

1. **Explain:** We are going to read a story about three sisters. This story was told by many tribes in North America, but the version we will hear is an eastern woodlands American Indian story that originated with the Iroquois, or Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-oh-show-nee), people. Before American Indians had a written language, stories like this one were passed down by word of mouth, or **oral tradition**. They would memorize the stories and tell them to other people. These stories preserved information about their culture's way of life, and often contained important lessons.
2. Read *An Autumn Tale: The Three Sisters* aloud to students, or have students take turns reading the story aloud.
3. **Explain:** In this story, each of the Three Sisters represents a crop that the Haudenosaunee (and many other American Indian groups) farmed. These **staple crops** were the basis of their diets and served as their main food source. The little sister represented beans, the middle sister represented squash, and the oldest sister represented corn.
4. **Ask:** What message about farming do you think that the Haudenosaunee were trying to tell with this story? How are the three crops like three sisters?
5. **Explain:** The message of this story is that corn, beans, and squash should always be grown together. Corn plants stand tall and provide support for the bean plants, and the squash vines grow along the ground, providing protection from weeds and keeping the soil moist. American Indians taught this way of farming to European settlers, and the Three Sisters planting method is still used today.
6. Lead students through pumpkin drawing activity.

Additional Resources:

Cornell University (2020). The Three Sisters: Exploring an Iroquois Garden. Retrieved from

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden/lessons/curricula/the-three-sisters-exploring-an-iroquois-garden/>

An Autumn Tale: The Three Sisters

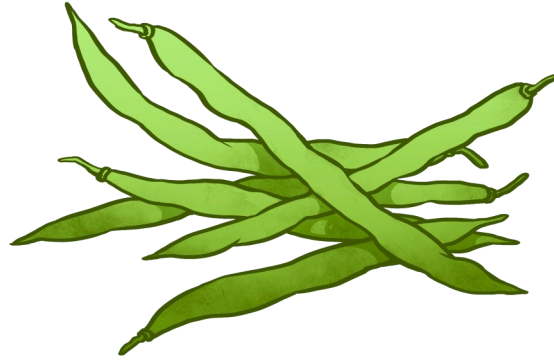
Once upon a time, very long ago, there were three sisters who lived together in a field. The first sister was so young that she could only crawl. The second of the three was always running off. The third was the eldest, standing straight and tall above the other sisters, trying to protect them. There was only one way in which the three sisters were alike. They loved one another very much, and they were never separated.



After awhile, a stranger came to the field of the three sisters, a little American Indian boy. The three sisters were very much interested in the little boy. They watched him fit an arrow in his bow, saw him carve a bowl with his stone knife, and wondered where he went at night.



Late in the summer of the first coming of the little boy to their field, one of the three sisters disappeared. This was the youngest sister, the sister who could only crawl. She was scarcely able to stand alone unless she had a stick to hold. Her sisters cried for her, but she did not return.



That night, the second of the sisters left, the one who always wanted to run away. She left no sign of leaving, but it may have been that she set her feet in the moccasin tracks of the little boy.



Now there was but one of the sisters left. Tall and straight she stood in the field, not once bowing her head with sorrow, but it seemed to her that she could not live here alone. The days grew shorter and the nights were colder.



But one day, when it was the season of the harvest, the little boy heard the crying of the third sister who had been left to mourn in the field. He felt sorry for her, and he took her in his arms and carried her to the lodge of this father and mother. Oh, what a surprise awaited her there!

Her two lost sisters were there in the lodge of the little boy, safe and very glad to see her! They had been curious about the boy, and they had gone home with him to see where he lived. They had

liked his warm home so well that they had decided now that winter was coming to stay with him, and they were doing all they could to be useful.

The little sister, now quite grown up, was helping to stir the dinner pot. The middle sister sat on the shelf drying herself, for she planned to fill the dinner pot later. The third sister joined them, ready to grind meal for the family. And the three were never separated again!



Text source: "The Three Sisters – Exploring an Iroquois Garden," Cornell Cooperative Extension, 1997.

Illustrations: Lynnette Torres Ivey, *An Autumn Tale: The Three Sisters*, 2020. Booth Western Art Museum.

Pumpkin Drawing: The Three Sisters



Pumpkins are a kind of squash! They are native to North America, and you can eat almost every part of it.

Remind students that pumpkins come in all shapes and sizes (short and wide, tall and skinny, a perfect circle, or wonky shapes with bumps). If their drawing does not look like yours it's okay because pumpkins come in all sorts of varieties.

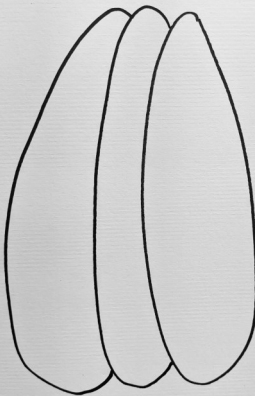
Note: This drawing can be done with the long side of the paper vertical or horizontal.

1.



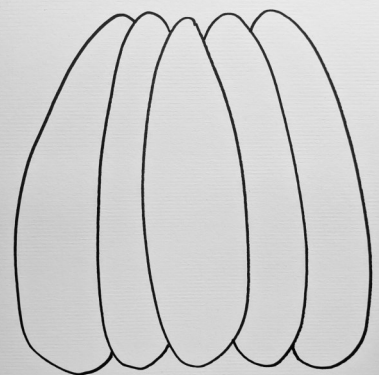
Step 1: Draw an oval in the middle of your paper. This oval is tall and skinny because I wanted to draw a tall and skinny pumpkin, but yours can be shaped differently.

2.



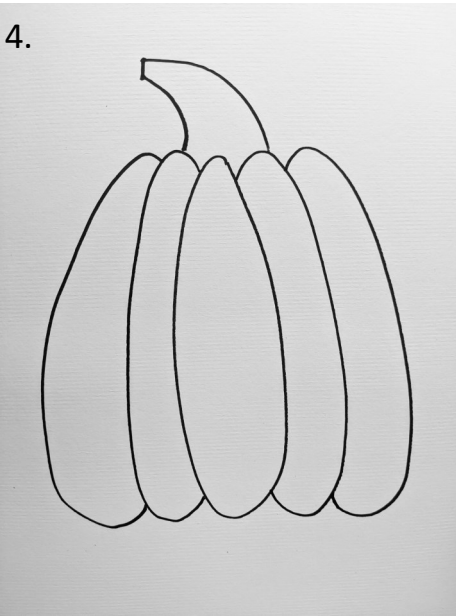
Step 2: Draw two curved lines that look like the letter "C". Start at the top of your oval and connect the line to the bottom of the oval.

3.



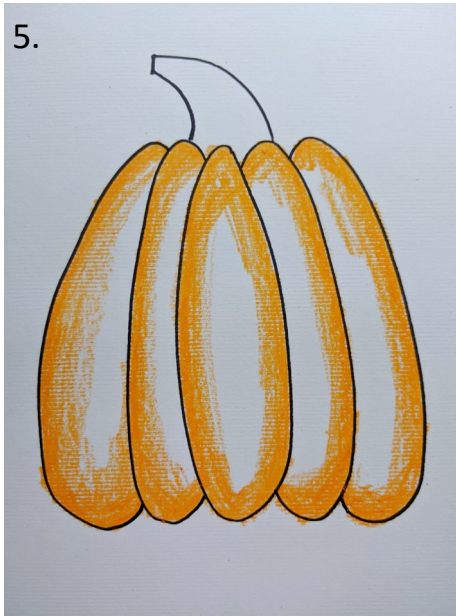
Step 3: Draw two more curved lines that look like a backwards letter "C" on the other side of your oval. Start at the top of your oval and connect the line to the bottom of the oval.

4.



Step 4: Add a stem to the top of your pumpkin.

5.



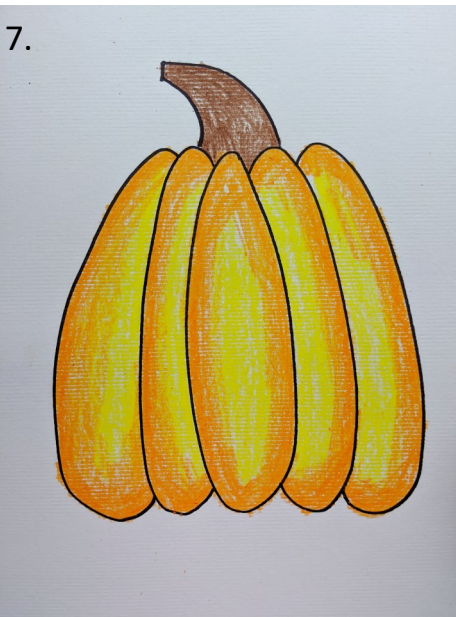
Step 5: Start coloring by adding orange inside of your pumpkin along the pencil lines that you drew.

6.



Step 6: Fill in the white spaces on the inside of your pumpkin with yellow. Go back and add more orange (or even red!) as needed.

7.



Step 7: Color the stem of your pumpkin brown.

8.



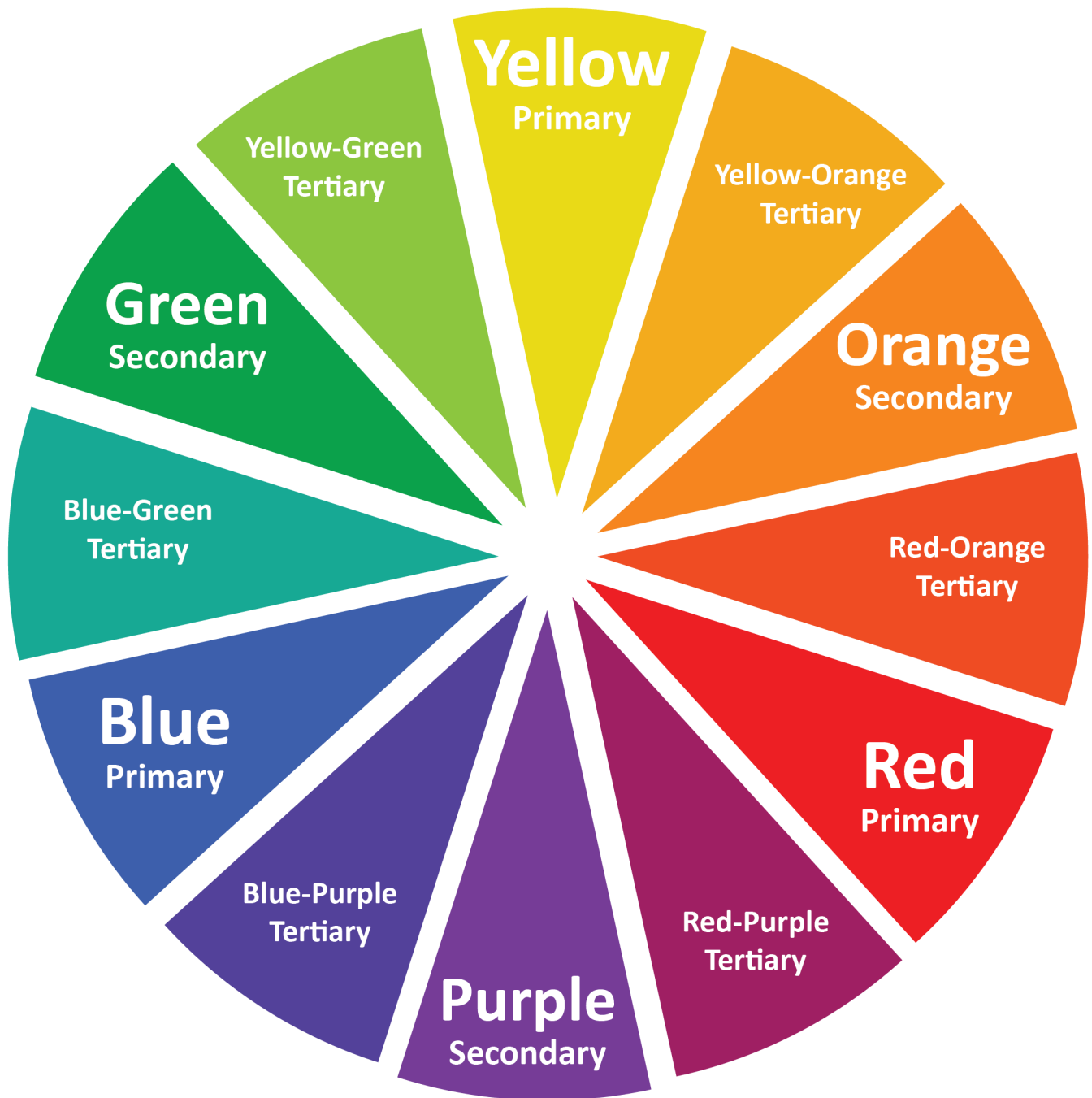
Step 8: Draw the outline of your background. Feel free to add clouds to the sky, the sun, grass or flowers to the ground.

9.



Step 9: Encourage students to color the sky blue and explain that blue and orange are complementary colors. Use the color wheel on page 18 to illustrate what you're talking about.

THE BOOTH MUSEUM Color Wheel



Primary Colors:

Red, **Yellow**,
and **Blue**.

Secondary Colors:

When two primary
colors are mixed
together, they create
Green, **Orange**, and
Purple.

Tertiary Colors:

When a primary
and secondary
color are mixed
together.

Complementary Colors:

Two colors that are
opposite of each other
on the color wheel.

Blue and **Orange**
Red and **Green**
Yellow and **Purple**

Lesson Plan Summary: Warp, Weft, Weave!

Summary: Students will discover the versatile art of traditional American Indian weaving, and make a woven mat themselves using a paper loom.

Objectives: After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

- Understand that American Indians used woven materials for many purposes, including making baskets and clothing, and that they used the natural resources available to them to create woven products.
- Recognize that American Indian artists and craftspeople are still creating woven products using traditional methods passed down through generations.
- Create their own loom and woven mat using paper.

Georgia Standards of Excellence: SS2G2d, VA2.CR.4c

National Standards: NSS-USH.K-4.2B, NSS-USH.K-4.3A, VA:Cr2.1.2a, VA:Cn11.1.2a

Materials Provided:

Lesson Plan Summary, weaving example images, paper weaving instructions, loom template

Additional Materials Needed:

- 9 strips of colored paper, approximately 9 inches long and 1 inch wide, **per student**
- Pencil
- Scissors

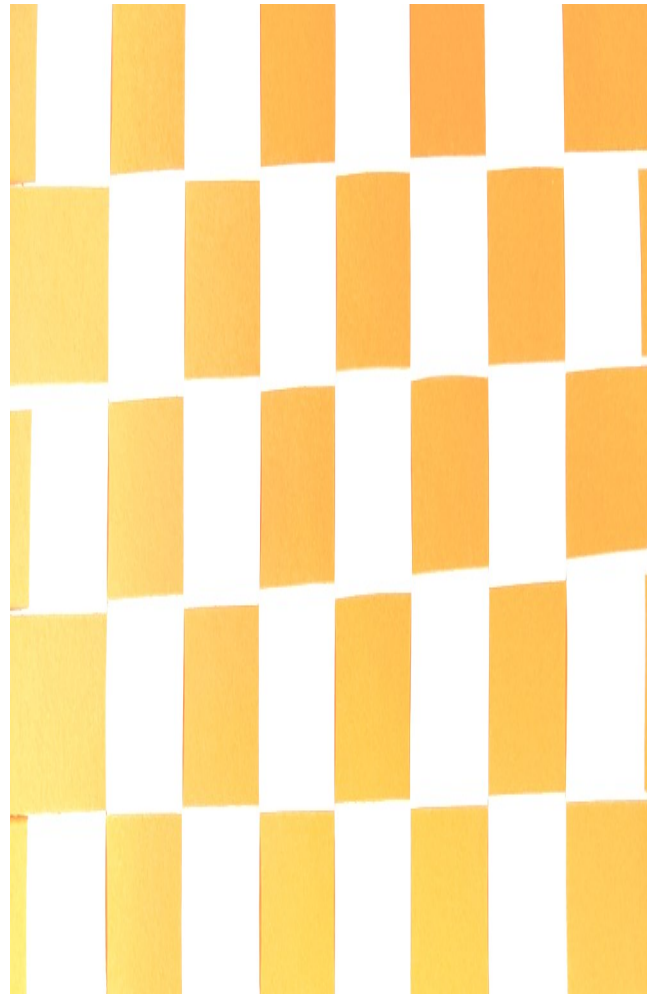
Procedure:

1. **Explain:** American Indians used woven materials to make many of the items that they needed, such as baskets, blankets, and clothing. They used materials that they found in nature—**natural resources**—to create these items. The Cherokee in Georgia lived in the wooded and hilly environment of the northern part of the state. They were able to use many of the resources found here to make their baskets. Oak and hickory trees, rivercane, and honeysuckle vine could be cut into strips to weave the baskets. Black walnut, bloodroot, and berries could be used to **dye** their baskets.
2. Show image of Cherokee baskets and basket maker.
3. **Explain:** These baskets were made by the Cherokee. They began weaving baskets thousands of years ago and still do so today. Traditional Cherokee basket makers like the one in this picture do not use patterns, drawings, or models to make their baskets. Instead, they rely on memory and imagination to create baskets that are inspired by mountains, streams, forests, and the traditions of the Cherokee people. These baskets are not only useful, they are works of art too.
4. Lead students through paper weaving activity.

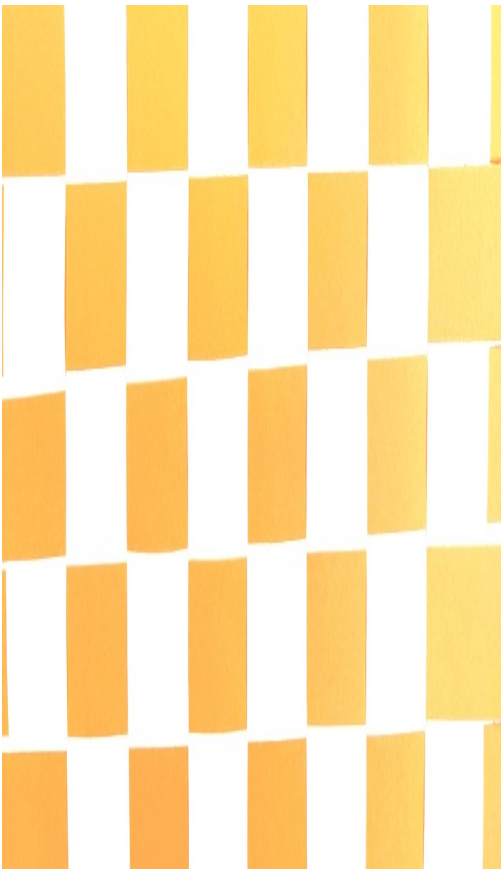
Additional Resources:

Cherokee Heritage Center (2016). Basket Making. Retrieved from

<https://www.cherokeeheritage.org/attractions/basket-making/>



© Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Louise Goings: Basket Maker, 2014, Photograph. National Museum of the American Indian.



Cherokee baskets , Collection of Jim Scott.

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Paper Weaving



Materials:

- Loom template (page 27)
- Strips of paper (can be any color). These should be about the same length as the short edge of the paper (For the example, they are about 9"). The width of the strips can range from 0.5-1.5" (For the example, they are about 1").
- Pencil
- Scissors

Create Your Loom

A **loom** is a frame that is used to weave materials together. While the pieces of yarn are being woven together, the loom holds all the pieces together until the weaving is complete.



© Kenneth Freeman, *Keeping the Tradition*, Not Dated, Oil on canvas

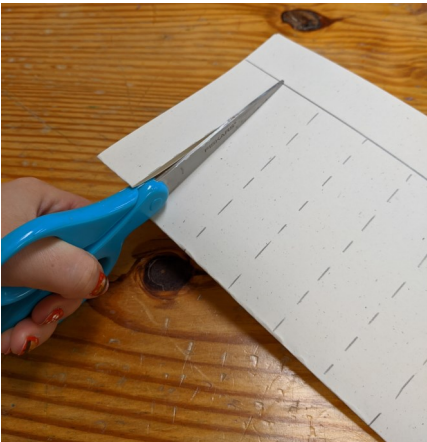
In this painting, a Navajo (Diné) woman is using her loom as her children watch and learn from her. The Diné use looms to weave blankets and rugs from yarn made of wool from sheep. Some looms today use machines to make the weaving process easier, but many Diné artists prefer using traditional looms like you see in this artwork. Weaving is a **cultural tradition** of the Diné. Cultural traditions are ways of doing things that have been done by a group of people for a very long time.

Today, we will make our own loom and weaving from paper!



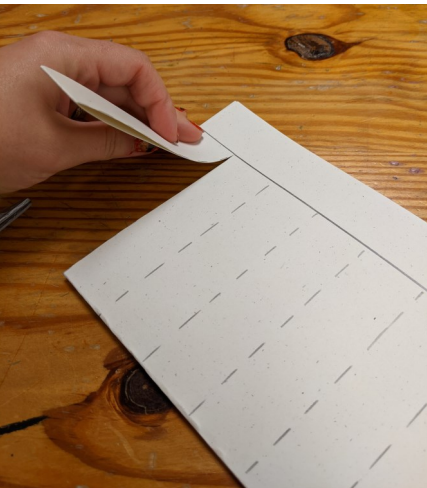
Step 1:

- Fold your loom template “hamburger style,” where the two short edges touch each other.
- Press and drag your finger along the fold in the middle of your paper to create a crease.



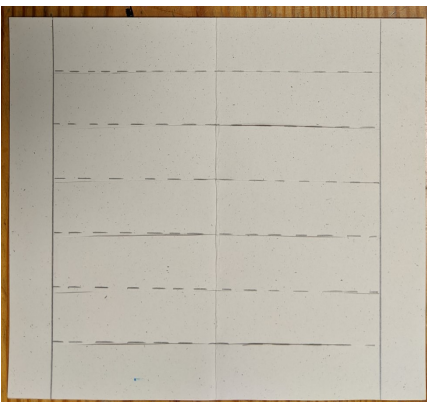
Step 2:

- Place your paper so that the fold in the middle is facing you.
- Using scissors, cut along one of the vertical lines. You will cut through the fold.



Step 3:

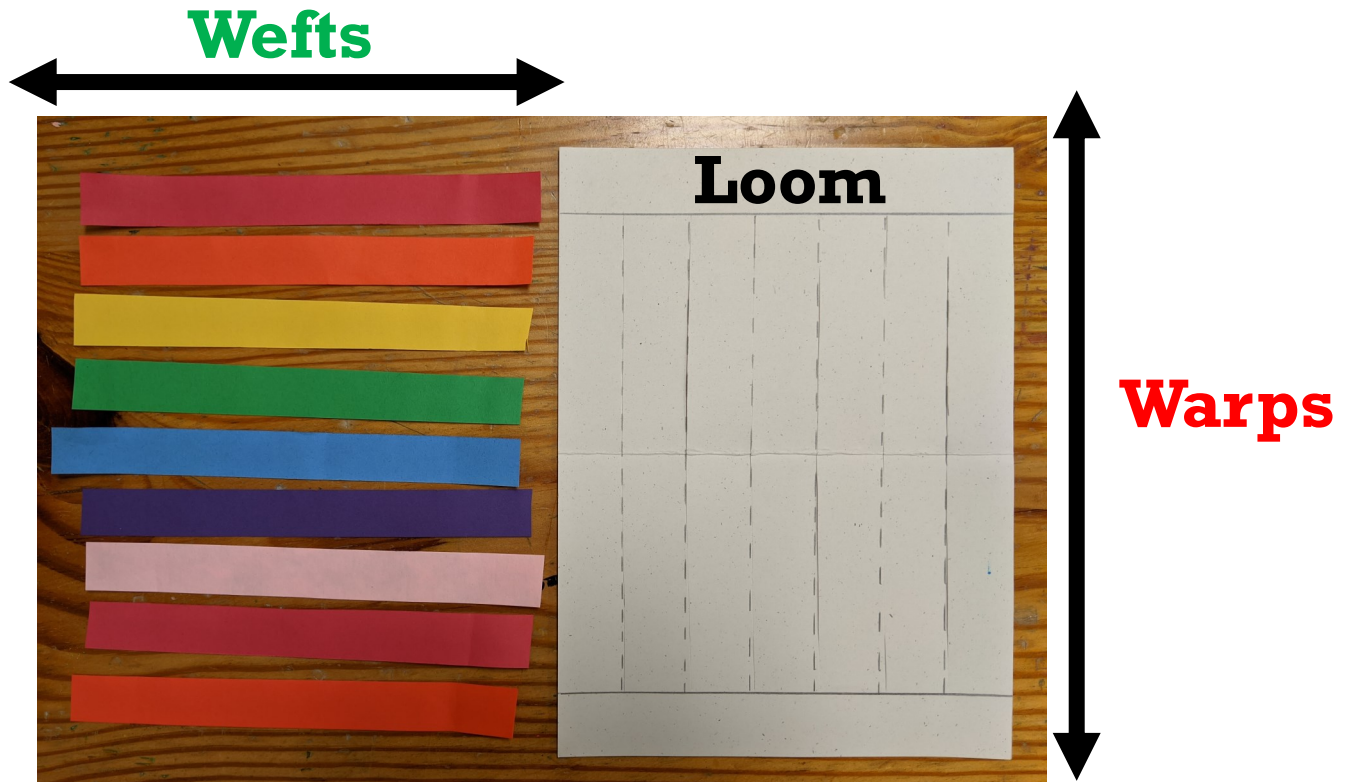
- Stop cutting when you reach the horizontal line at the top.
- Repeat with the other vertical lines and continue until each vertical line has been cut.



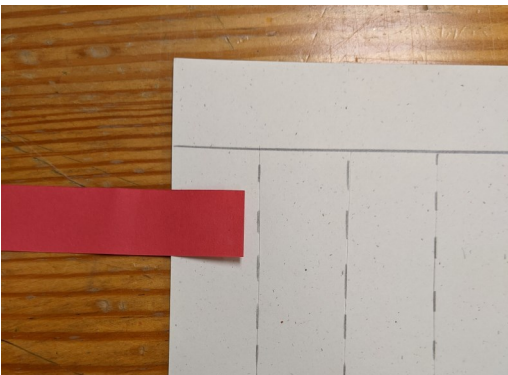
Step 5:

- Unfold your piece of paper. This entire piece of paper is your **loom**.

Create Your Weaving

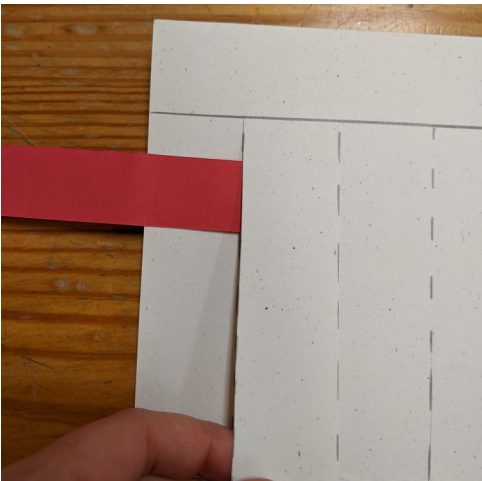


- The vertical (up-and-down) cut slits in your loom are called **warps**.
- The colored strips of paper you will use are called **wefts**.



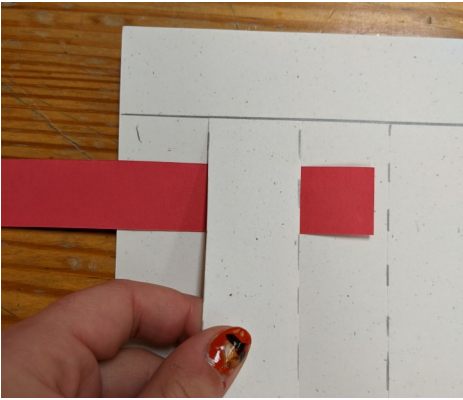
Step 4:

- Begin by selecting a **weft** (the colored strips of paper)
- Place it on top of the **warp** (the cut slits in your loom) farthest to the left.
- When you place a **weft** on top of a **warp**, you are going **over** the **warp**.



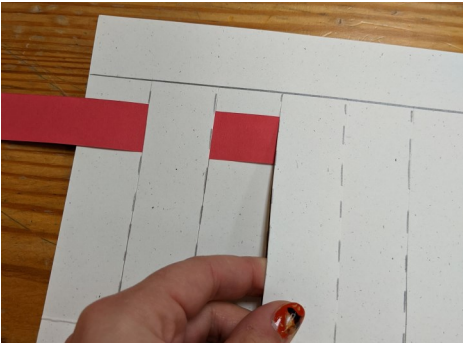
Step 5:

- Lift up the second **warp** and slide the **weft** below it.
- When you place a **weft** below a **warp**, you are going **under** the **warp**.



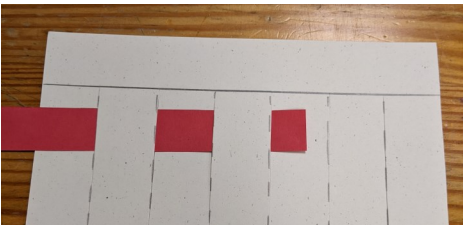
Step 6:

- Slide the **weft** so that it is **over** (on top of) the third **warp**.



Step 7:

- Lift up the fourth **warp** so the **weft** can go **under** (below) the fourth **warp**.



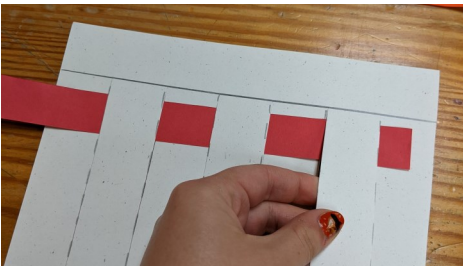
Step 8:

- Slide the **weft** so that it is **over** the fifth **warp**.



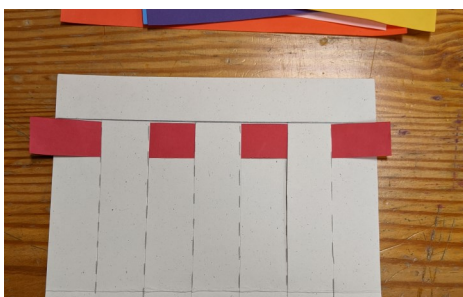
Step 9:

- Lift up the fifth **warp** and slide the **weft** **under** the sixth **warp**.



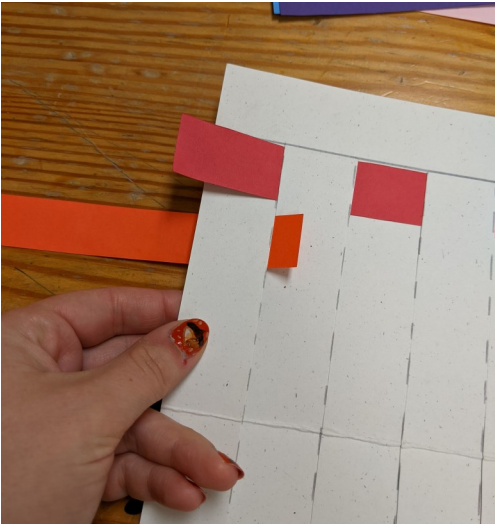
Step 10:

- Slide the **weft** so that it is **over** the seventh **warp**.



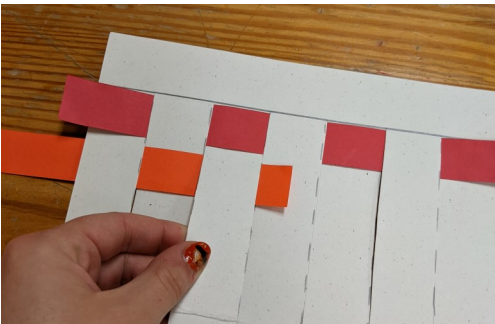
Step 11:

- Once you reach the end of your loom, push the **weft** as close to the horizontal line at the top as you can.



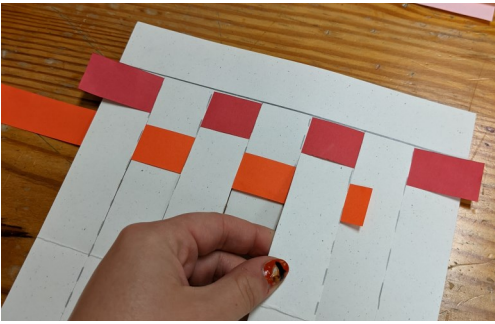
Step 12:

- Select a second colored strip of paper as your second **weft**.
- For this **weft**, you will do the opposite **over/under** pattern than you did for the first one.
- For the second **weft**, lift the first **warp** and slide the **weft under** it. You start by going **under** the **warp** because on the first **weft** you began by going **over** it.



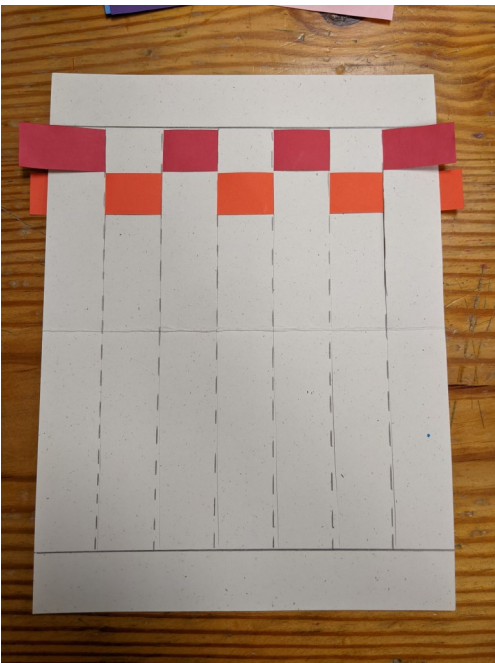
Step 13:

- Lift the third **warp** and slide the **weft under** it.
- Slide the **weft over** the fourth **warp**.



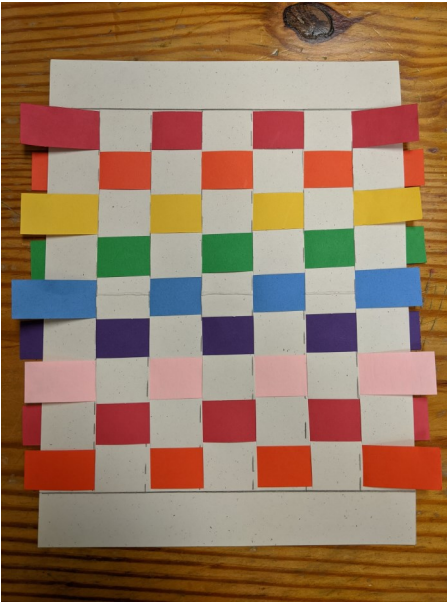
Step 14:

- Lift the fifth **warp** and slide the **weft under** it.
- Slide the **weft over** the sixth **warp**.



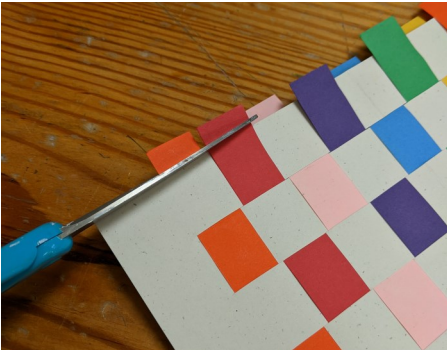
Step 15:

- Lift the seventh **warp** and slide the **weft under** it.
- Once you reach the end of your loom, push the **weft** as close to the **weft** above as you can.
- Your first two **wefts** should be opposite of each other. This will create a checkered board pattern throughout your weaving.



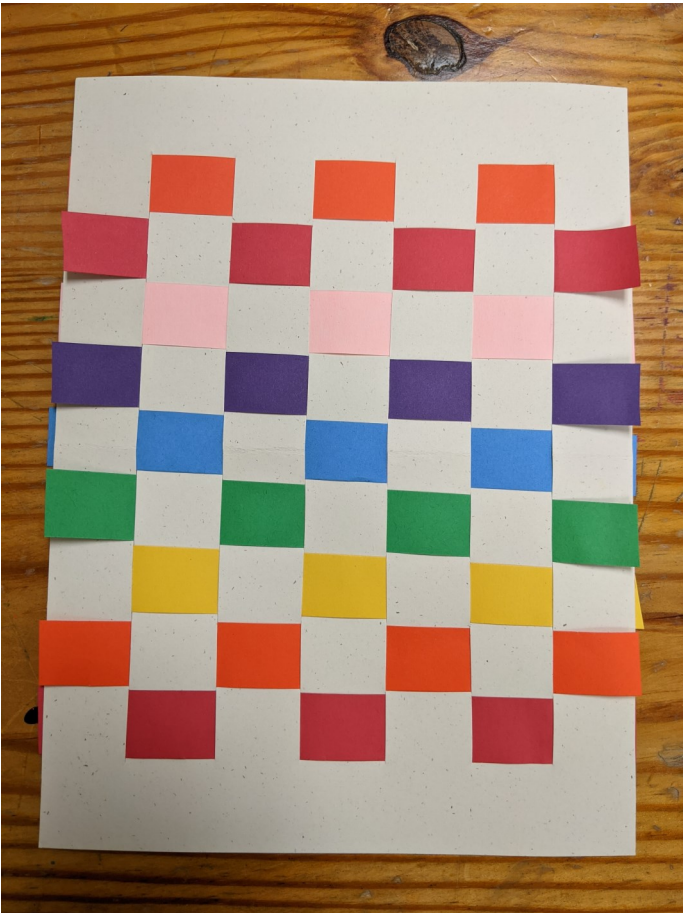
Step 16:

- Repeat the weaving steps as the first two **wefts** until you reach the bottom of your loom.



Step 17:

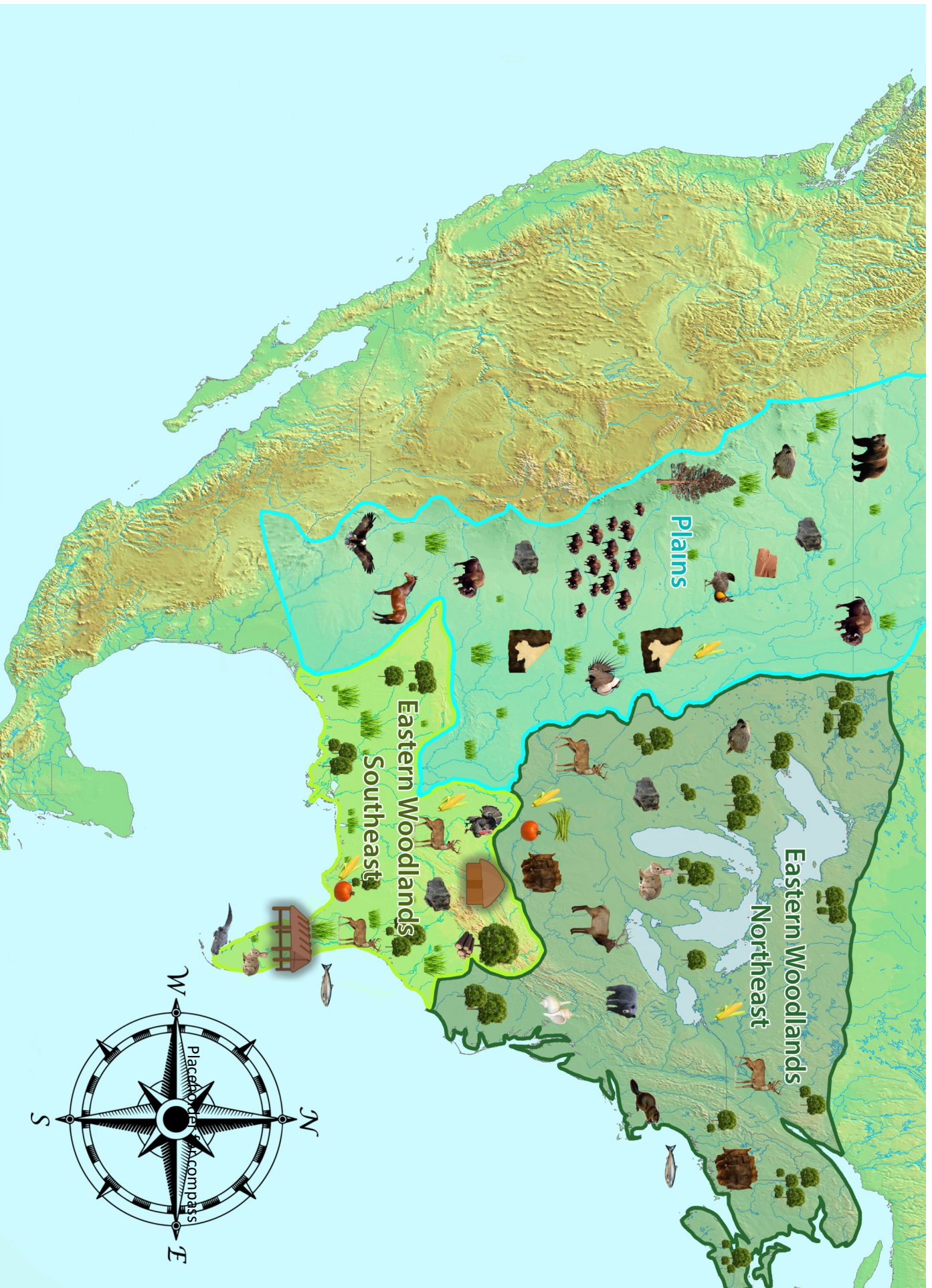
- If your **wefts** are hanging off the sides of your loom, you may leave them or cut off the extra with scissors.



Step 18:

- Flip your piece of paper over so the dotted lines of the loom are not visible.
- Your weaving is finished!
- You may write your name on it, draw on top of it, or cut something out and paste it on top.





Additional Resources: Compiled List

Websites - General Information

- Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian educator resources - <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>
- Interactive map showing pre-contact indigenous territories and languages - <https://native-land.ca/>
- Official Website of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (North Carolina) - <https://ebci.com/>
- Official Website of the Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma) <https://www.cherokee.org/>
- Official Website of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians (Oklahoma) - <https://www.ukb-nsn.gov/>
- Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual (traditional Cherokee arts and crafts) - <https://www.quallaartsandcrafts.com/index.php>
- From the Hands of our Elders: Cherokee Traditions (digital resource from Western Carolina University containing primary source documents and recordings) - <https://www.wcu.edu/library/DigitalCollections/CherokeeTraditions/>
- Cherokee Phoenix (Cherokee newspaper) - <https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/>
- Library of Congress: Native American Spaces (digitized historical maps and atlases relating to American Indians) - <https://guides.loc.gov/native-american-spaces/cartographic-resources>
- Library of Congress teacher resources - <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/native-americans/>
- Digital Public Library of America Primary Source Sets: Native Americans - <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets?subject=native-americans>
- National Archives DocsTeach program teacher resources - <https://www.docsteach.org/topics/american-indians>
- Native American Heritage Month.Gov teacher resources - <https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers/>
- Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual (traditional Cherokee arts and crafts) - <https://www.quallaartsandcrafts.com/index.php>
- Digital Source Sets: Cherokee Removal and the Trail of Tears from the Digital Public Library of America - <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/cherokee-removal-and-the-trail-of-tears>
- Indian Removal Act: Primary Documents in American History from the Library of Congress - <https://guides.loc.gov/indian-removal-act>

Websites - Language, Storytelling, and Music

- Gayle Ross, Cherokee storyteller at World Storytelling Café - <https://worldstorytellingcafe.com/gayle-ross/>
- Cherokee Language Learning Center (includes free printable posters, books, and coloring pages, along with audio recordings of storytelling) - <https://language.cherokee.org/>