

present

A World of Art PROJECTS FOR KIDS

CENTRAL AMERICA — For centuries, Central American artists have woven beautiful cloth for clothing & household uses. Today, villagers from Guatemala to Panama wear traditional costumes woven in individual styles.

GATHER SUPPLIES: Paint, paper, brushes, straws, colorful yarn, heavy-duty paper plates, colored paper, scissors & glue

Colorful Huipil

The huipil is a rectangular garment worn as a blouse by Mayan women since ancient times. Embroidery often surrounds the neck & sleeves. Traditional designs & colors are different in each native village.

- ◆ Paint a colorful huipil on white paper.
- ◆ Use bright colors, geometric shapes & images from nature.
- ◆ Plan your huipil to have designs painted in woven strips or circling the neck & sleeves in lush embroidery.



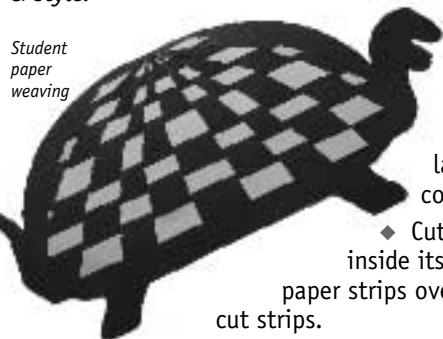
Student painting of huipil

Search the internet for huipil images.
Start with: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/maya/default.htm

Wild Animal Weaving

Guatemalans weave images from nature into their fabric. The designs might be realistic, whimsical or symbolic. Over time, each village has developed its own imagery & style.

Student paper weaving



- ◆ Choose a wild bird, animal or fish. Outline & cut out its large shape from colored paper.
- ◆ Cut parallel slits inside its body. Weave paper strips over & under the cut strips.
- ◆ Glue your wild animal weaving to background paper.



Mola

The Cuna of the San Blas Islands off the coast of Panama sew colorful fabric molas. The women hand-stitch brightly colored reverse appliqué panels for their blouses.

- ◆ Outline & cut out a large nature shape from colored paper.
- ◆ Layer & cut new papers around shape & its background several times to create a colorful design.
- ◆ Stack & glue your mola.

View more molas: www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/the_art_of_being_kuna



In Guatemala, kids tell their troubles to worry dolls—tiny figures they hide under their pillows at night. Make your own worry doll with bits of fabric, string & twigs.

Photos by Mary Bender

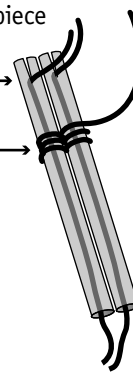


Belt Loom

Guatemalan women weave fabric & belts on a backstrap or belt loom that can be tied to a tree during use & then rolled up & put away. This ancient weaving tradition passes from mother to young daughter, allowing the community to maintain its own culture.



- ◆ Make a straw belt loom. Cut a long piece of yarn & thread ends into straws, pulling ends into snipped slits.
- ◆ Weave new yarn around straws in continuous figure eights. As yarn shortens, tie on new pieces.
- ◆ As you progress, gently push some weaving down & off straw ends.
- ◆ To finish, slide weaving completely off straw loom & tie ends. Wow! What a weaving!



Weaving Sampler

Every fine weaving tells a story. Patterns come from myths, religious stories or nature. The weaver changes how she winds threads through the loom to create patterns & pictures.

- ◆ Create a sampler. Cut an odd number of 1/4" slits at ends of a heavy-duty paper plate or cardboard.
- ◆ Wind the "warp" yarn tightly around the slits, back & forth across the plate.
- ◆ Weave yarn pieces over & under these yarn threads, continuing the weaving from side to side.
- ◆ Make a sampler of weaving patterns. In each section, vary the number of strings the yarn crosses over. (i.e. over 1, under 3, over 1, under 3.) Experiment!

Activities & content created by



COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ARTS

FINN CENTER

230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View, CA 94040
650.917.6800 | www.arts4all.org

Supported by:



Pacific Gas and Electric Company



Look in the Mercury News

- ◆ Native costumes hint at where Central American people live. Look at newspaper photos for clues about where people live, based on their clothing.
- ◆ Weavers wind threads together to create designs. Writers weave words together to communicate. Search for a story that uses words in a way which creates a vivid picture in your mind.