

Ed-Digenous Traditions

North American Indigenous Kayak



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North American Indigenous Kayak Making

History:

The kayak is a traditional watercraft developed by the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic since time immemorial, including the Inuit, Yupik, and Aleut. Crafted for hunting and travel across icy waters, kayaks were expertly built from driftwood or whalebone frames and tightly covered with animal skins such as seal. Their design reflected the environment and purpose, narrow for speed and quiet movement, making them ideal for approaching marine animals like seals and whales. Each kayak was custom-made to fit the individual user, often passed down through generations. These vessels not only highlight the ingenuity of Indigenous Arctic cultures but also their deep connection to the sea and their environment.

Materials

- 5 - 12" sticks
- Masking Tape
- 1 Tapestry Needle
- Sinew
- 2 Spacers
- Deer Rawhide
- 1 Furl

Time: 45 min – 1 hr

Tools needed: Scissors, masking tape

Instructions:

- Soak Deer Rawhide for 3 hrs prior to assembling
- Lace in sinew through eye of needle pull through lace to half way, make sure it is even on both sides and tie 1 knot
- With one lace begin to sew in through the holes of the skin till you reach the center hole take the needle out and lace in the other piece of lace and sew in through the holes again but in the opposite direction of the recent sewn area
- Fold Rawhide in half then flip the long end tip over by ½"
- Placeholder
- Placeholder
- Placeholder
- Placeholder
- Placeholder

Curriculum Connections:

History / Science / Numeracy / Social Studies / Geography / Art / Music / Language and Culture