

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

PK-2

Subject

**Social Studies
Art**

Lesson Title

**A Lesson in Symmetry:
Navajo Rugs**

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ["The First Blanket" story](#) told by Long Mustache of Klag-e-toh
- 2 pieces of construction paper
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Scissors
- [Navajo Rug Design Images](#) (Printable PDF)
- [Youtube Step-by-step video guide of the activity](#)

STEPS

Read ["The First Blanket" story](#) told by Long Mustache of Klag-e-toh with your child.

Creating Your Own Symmetrical Rug Activity

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community. Your child may need extra help from an adult to demonstrate the activity, as well as with cutting out the pieces.

1. Watch the ["Step-by-step Activity Guide" - Youtube Video](#)
2. When you begin the activity, fold one piece of construction paper in half.
3. On one side draw four different single line patterns, one pattern on top of the other going up one side of the page.
4. Cut off the top most single line pattern.
5. Open the paper and you will see that one outermost side of the paper looks exactly like the other outermost side of the paper.
6. Place the second piece of construction paper down on the table, and place your first piece of construction paper right on top of it.
7. Color the edges of the entire length of your line pattern that you cut out, making sure to color the line pattern so that your pattern appears on the second piece of construction paper.
8. Repeat these steps with each of your line patterns, using a different color each time.
9. Notice that your first piece of paper gets smaller and smaller each time you cut it, and that a different color pattern is being created each time you color onto your second piece of paper.

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HELPFUL TIPS

- While reading [“The First Blanket”](#), show your child pictures of a Navajo rug, and explain to your child that these are traditional wool weavings made by the Navajo people.
- While your child is creating their symmetrical rug, share that [symmetry](#) means that a design or object looks the same on both sides of the center of it. It's a mirror image. If you fold it in half, one side of the design would match , or look exactly like, the opposite side of the design. Share with your child that this is how most Navajo rug designs look, they are symmetrical from left-to-right and top-to-bottom. If a line was drawn vertically down the center of the rug, or horizontally across the rugs center the shapes and colors would look exactly alike.
- Discuss these questions with your child to provoke additional thoughts about [symmetry](#) while they are completing the activity.
 1. What is a pattern?
 2. Where do you see patterns in this classroom? What about in the world?
 3. What does it mean if a pattern has symmetry?
 4. Do you see examples of symmetry in this room? Where do you see symmetry in the world?
 5. Where do you see symmetry in the pictures of the Navajo rugs?

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity may open to other talking points around the culture, traditions, and history of the Navajo people.

- Learn more about [Navajo culture and traditions](#).
- Learn more about the [full history of Navajo blankets and rugs](#).
- Engage with your child on additional [Navajo culture learning activities](#).

Activity Resource Links:

- “The First Blanket Story: told by Long Mustache of Klag-e-toh: <https://navajopeople.org/navajo-rugs.htm>
- Images of Navajo Rug Designs: <https://www.education.com/download/lesson-plan/recognize-indigenous-peoples-day-with-navajo-rug-design/attachments/two-grey-hills-navajo-patterns.pdf>
- Step-By-Step Activity Guide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5tpMETsNOQ>
- More Information on Navajo Culture & Traditions: <http://navajopeople.org/>
- Full History of Navajo Blankets and Rugs: <https://www.heddels.com/2017/04/navajo-blankets-and-rugs/>
- Navajo Culture Student Learning Activities: <https://mathersmuseum.indiana.edu/doc/Hozhocurr.pdf>

Adapted by:

- <http://web.archive.org/web/20080130134231/http://www.mpsaz.org/arts/elements/balance/page1.html>
- <https://www.education.com/lesson-plan/recognize-indigenous-peoples-day-with-navajo-rug-design/>