

NEBRASKA BY HEART

Folk Arts • Traditional Arts • Folklife
Curriculum Unit • Grades 6–8
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Teacher's Resource

Quilting Instructions and Templates

Grades: 4–8

Estimated Time: five to six 30 minutes sessions.

Instructional Objective

Students will:

1. Learn the history and function of American quilts over time.
2. Design and assemble a quilt square/block using colored construction paper, glue, and scissors or using scrap fabrics, needle and thread, thimble, and scissors. The squares/blocks can be assembled into a group paper or fabric quilt, or finished as individual pieces for students to take home, as desired. (Note: If the students will be making one large fabric quilt from their blocks, it is recommended that a volunteer sew the blocks together, add backing and batting, and mark a simple quilting pattern or sites for yarn ties on the top beforehand, outside of class time.)

Quilting as an Art Form

Quilting is an art form found in many cultures in Nebraska and around the world. Quilters transform pieces of fabric into household linens and clothing used for both functional (bed coverings and keeping warm) and aesthetic purposes.

The basic process of quilting can be defined as sewing three layers of fabric together with running stitches or knots. Quilts can be made as whole cloth, appliqued or pieced quilts (see definitions in glossary.) This lesson deals only with pieced quilts. The top layer of a pieced quilt is traditionally created by assembling blocks, primarily squares, composed of smaller pieces in groups of four, six, nine, or more patches. These patches form geometric designs by repeating an object or a feature in a landscape. The names of the patterns often reflect this symbolism, such as in the “bear’s paw”, “bowtie”, “shoo fly” or “delectable hills” patterns. Quilts have also been used to record history, geography or social situations.

Quilting connects the social life of large and small groups and quilts are made for many reasons. Some of these are warmth, celebration, friendship, fundraising, honoring loved ones who have passed away, and storing other memories.

Paper Quilt

Have students draw scenes from material (people/events/characters/etc.) covered in class on 8-inch square pieces of paper. Have students work in small groups, discussing what they are constructing, to imitate the social discussion/activity of a quilting bee.

Once completed, have students explain the significance of their drawings and their reasons for choosing the imagery they created.

Place the “quilt blocks” on a bulletin board over a quilt background. Explain that quilts can convey information and memories in much the same way that the students’ paper quilt explores a place, event, character, etc.

Making A Fabric Quilt or Coverlet

Instructions For Students

Days One and Two

1. Listen to a short presentation on quilting and learn the vocabulary. Watch a demonstration, if available.
2. Trace template pieces for a quilt block with a black ink pen onto a sheet of cardboard or plastic template material; cut out template pieces with scissors.
3. Put your name on the back of each template piece.
4. Trace around each template on the back side of the appropriate color of fabric, making the number of fabric pieces necessary to make one block of a chosen pattern.
5. Carefully cut out each piece of fabric.

Day Three

6. Observe how to construct your quilt block by watching a demonstration.
7. Sew the block together, paying attention to the following things:
 - a. Sewing the pieces together in the right positions and order
 - b. Making the sewing as straight as possible
 - c. Keeping the seam allowance the same on all pieces

Day Four

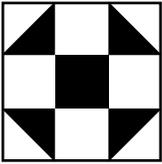
8. On the back side of the block, press the seams with an iron, if available.
9. Work with other students to lay out the blocks in the most pleasing arrangement of colors. If the blocks are to be joined together either help make a sketch of the layout or take a photo if it. This is done so the blocks will be sewn together in the right order.

Day Five

10. Observe how to do a simple quilting stitch or how to insert a yarn tie into a quilt block.
11. Quilt or tie your individual block or, if the class is making a large quilt or coverlet, try your hand at quilting or tying one area on the quilt top.
12. Observe how to finish your own block at home to use as a wall hanging or potholder. (Or watch a demonstration on how the large quilt will be finished.)

Be sure to follow instructions for cleanup each day.

Making a Shoo Fly Quilt Block



This block uses two fabrics, Fabric A  and Fabric B 

Traditional Piecing Method

To make this block use the two templates on the following page:

Template A  and Template B  (Both include 1/4 inch seam allowances.)

Cut the following pieces:

- 1 Template A in Fabric A 
- 4 Template A in Fabric B    
- 4 Template B in Fabric A    
- 4 Template B in Fabric B    

Piecing the Block

1. Make four squares by piecing (sewing together) the four Template Bs of Fabric A to the four Template Bs of Fabric B. 
2. Make one strip by piecing two squares from Step 1 to one Template A of Fabric B, then repeat the same process to make a second strip.  
3. Make the last strip by piecing two squares of Fabric B to one Template A of Fabric A. 
4. Piece the three strips together to form the finished Shoo Fly block. 