

Navajo Weaving

This presentation focuses on the tradition of weaving in the Navajo Nation. This tradition goes back over 300 years. Navajo rugs are not only a celebrated art form in the Four Corners region, but all over the world. The rugs are known for their incredible symmetry, geometric designs, and the skill it requires to make them. Two women explored in this presentation are Clara Sherman and D.Y. Begay.

Vocabulary Words:

Symmetry, Churro, Warp, Weft

Catalyst Questions

- One way to learn how to acquire a skill is to spend lots of time watching someone who is very good at it. Can you think of things that you learn from watching people? Have you ever had the fun of sharing with others something that you know how to do?
- Sometimes we call this type of learning relationship that of *a mentor and an apprentice*. Could the stories of the weavers, Clara Sherman and D.Y. Begay, give you some ideas about how to find a mentor?
- If you are anxious to learn how to do something and there is no one around to watch, can you think of other ways to learn something new?
- Sometimes objects that are useful, when made with great care, will also be beautiful. Navajo weavings were originally made to be clothing and blankets. Weavers found ways to make them very beautiful. Describe some objects in your life that are beautiful as well as useful?
- Think about projects where you did a little bit of work on it everyday and it took a long time to complete. What projects do you like to do that take a really long time?

Art Project

An art project where participants use paper to weave, accompanies this presentation.

Links:

#1) A video of Clara Sherman on weaving

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_p7OIghMVw

#2) DY BeGay

<http://navajo-indian.com/>

#3) Brief History of Navajo Weavers

<http://www.collectorsguide.com/fa/fa064.shtml>