

Yarn Bottles (art + social studies)

Mexican Huichol Indians are the last of the North American tribes to presently follow their pre-Columbian traditions. The Huichol Indians used yarn to decorate gourds, clothing and other items. The yarn was applied in rows of varying colors and patterns. Bottles are a 3-D surface that offers endless design possibilities. The plans need to stay free form and change as the yarn is added. Placing the yarn side by side creates bands and areas of bright color. Beads are used in the design to finish the edges and add shine and brightness. Variations of this Mexican Indian technique make wonderful and unusual art. Variations include applying yarn to a variety of items, including boxes, bracelets, and hats. The background should be flexible yet firm.

Grade Levels K-6

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Draw a simple design on the bottle with the black marker. Do not include the top “neck” of the bottle. The design or removal of the bottle neck can be addressed after the main part is finished. The “neck” helps to provide a place to hold the bottle while it is worked upon. Leave large open areas in the design to adapt as the yarn changes size slightly.
2. Cut several lengths, 20” long, of several colors of yarn. A longer length is hard to manage and can tangle.
3. Sobo® glue dries to a flexible bond and is best for the fabric surfaces and plastic. Squeeze directly on the bottle in a small space. Use a tiny piece of cardboard to spread where the yarn will be applied.
4. Start the yarn by dropping it slowly on the glue and next to the marker line. Continue the yarn along the line reverse, and place next to the first yarn line. Repeat until the yarn runs out or a color is changed.
5. To make a dot-like area, apply the glue then add the yard on the outer edge and follow the circle to the center. Finish all blank bottle areas.
6. Finish the bottle top. Cut off the neck with an craft knife. Add glue and seed beads to cover edge or paint the neck and continue to cover with yarn.
7. Add acrylic gems for highlights and contrast. Glue a large gem to the top as a lid.



Materials

[Blick Yarn Barn](#) (65204-1009), box of 20 skeins, assorted colors, distribute throughout class

[Snippy® Scissors](#), (57040-2009), 12 pack pointed, need one per student

[Sobo® Glue](#) (23820-1004) 4-oz bottles, need eight per class

[Sharpie® Ultra-Fine Point Markers](#), Black (21315-2003), need eight per class

[Indian Seed Beads](#), Multi, 3-oz bag, (60725-1000) need four bags per class

[Acrylic Gems](#) (60722-0001) 1-lb bag assorted, need two bags per class

Empty, clean plastic bottles, 6-8” high. These can be soap bottles, water bottles, juice bottles, etc. Need one per student

National Standards

Content Standard #4 —Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

- K-4** Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
- 5-8** Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- K-4** Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art
- 5-8** Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry