

Virginia Roots: A Journey through Traditional Crafts Episode Guide

The series *Virginia Roots: A Journey through Traditional Crafts*, is produced by Blue Ridge PBS in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education. Each video ranges from 5-12 minutes. The series showcases Virginia craft traditions and people keeping them alive today.

Accompanying resources for each episode include a description of the video, discussion prompts for before and after viewing, and links to standards-aligned sample lessons.

Sample lessons were developed by a team of Virginia visual arts educators to enhance and further the learning of traditional crafts in each episode. The accompanying sample lessons may be used as stand-alone learning experiences or expanded into units of instruction.

Although specific grade levels and standards are provided, the lessons may be adapted for local instruction of a variety of grade levels and courses. Videos can be viewed by clicking the title.

Basket Weaving

Basket weaving is a craft with deep cultural roots around the world. In Virginia, various communities have passed down methods, techniques, and designs through generations. This video explores basket weaving techniques at Historic Jamestown as well as traditional Appalachian weaving methods from Floyd County. Both basket makers demonstrate materials and methods that highlight how baskets can be both beautiful and functional.

Discussion prompts before viewing

- What do you think of when you hear the words basket weaving?
- Where do you most often see a basket? What is it used for?
- Do all baskets look the same?
- What materials are used to make a basket?

Discussion prompts after viewing

- Why was it important for colonial Virginians and those in Appalachia to have baskets?
- What are some functions that baskets serve? How does the design of a basket impact its function?
- How does basket weaving help keep Virginia's history and culture alive?
- How can today's artists be influenced by traditional basket weaving techniques?
- Why do some people use white oak to make baskets? What do basket weavers have to consider when choosing materials?
- What are some other materials featured in the video that have been used to make baskets? Do you see anything in the classroom that we could use to make a basket?

Sample Lessons

- [Baskets with a Modern Twist](#) - Students will create a functional and aesthetically pleasing woven basket using modern materials.
- [Getting Started with Basket Making](#) - Students will learn weaving techniques to create their own basket design.
- [Basket Weaving with Traditional and Non-traditional Materials](#) - Students will experiment with traditional and non-traditional materials to design and create their own woven work of art.

Engraving

In colonial times, metalworking served various purposes, including marking ownership, displaying social status, and conveying information to the public. In this video, we witness how silver is transformed into precious objects and engraved with words and imagery by skilled artisans. Additionally, we explore the connection between engraving and printmaking, which enables images and information to be shared widely. Contemporary artists continue to use traditional engraving techniques in innovative ways.

Discussion prompts before viewing

- What do you think engraving is?
- Is engraving a career choice? What would this person be called?
- What types of material can be engraved?
- What tools do you think artists use to engrave?
- How are engraving and printmaking connected?

Discussion prompts after viewing

- What was the importance of silver? In what ways was it shaped into other objects?
- Why did individuals have pieces engraved in early America?
- What types of tools are used for engraving? How have these tools changed over time?
- How many jobs were involved in the process of engraving and printmaking? How does this relate to manufacturing processes today?
- We live in a time with instant access to information and images. Is printmaking still important?

Sample Lessons

- [Landscape Prints Showing Depth](#) - Students use processes of engraving and printmaking as practiced by colonial and contemporary Virginia artists.
- [Metal Embossed Medallions](#) - Students learn about imagery embossed on metal from Colonial Williamsburg. Then, they will emboss imagery with personal significance.
- [Impressions That Last: Engraving for Printmaking](#) - Students learn about the history and design of printmaking, then create and refine their own carved printing plates while experimenting with different printing techniques.

Pottery

In this video, we explore the work of two contemporary potters from Virginia who each employ different methods while honoring historical traditions. One potter harvests natural clay and uses hand-building techniques to craft modern pieces that reflect her cultural heritage. The other potter creates unique clay vessels on the wheel. Both artists share a deep passion for their craft and are dedicated to preserving traditions while expressing their individuality through their work.

Discussion prompts before viewing

- What is clay? Where does it come from?
- Have you used clay to make an object before?
- What methods do artists use to create objects out of clay?
- What are the stages of clay?

Discussion prompts after viewing

- How does Allison Gray's pottery show the traditions of the Pamunkey Tribe?
- How is clay harvested from the banks of the Pamunkey river?
- How do potters learn their craft?
- What are some common uses for traditional clay vessels?
- Describe the ways artists decorate the surfaces of their pottery.
- Why is it important for ceramic artists to be patient and show perseverance when making pottery?
- How do contemporary potters keep traditions alive while also trying new styles and ideas?

Sample Lessons

- [Story Pots](#) - Students will examine ways in which potters have used their ceramic vessels in a variety of ways from functional, to storytelling, to sources of income. Students will use the coil method to create pottery.
- [Handbuilding Pottery](#) - Focusing on traditional handbuilding techniques, students will learn about clay's properties and cultural traditions.
- [Clay Vessels](#) - Students will explore the traditional craft of Pottery from various communities in Virginia, then will make creative choices regarding methods, forms, and finishes, resulting in an original ceramic piece.

Gourd Art

Gourds have a long history of use as natural containers and tools across many cultures. They can be dried and transformed into a wide range of functional items such as storing food and water, making musical instruments, utensils, and decorative objects. In this video, we are introduced to Yvonne Goad, a gourd artist whose work is inspired by indigenous designs, nature, and traditional pottery. Yvonne shares her techniques, tools, and experiences as an artist, offering a glimpse into her creative process.

Discussion prompts before viewing

- What are gourds? Where do they come from? What are they used for?
- Do you consider gourds art?
- What could we do to the gourd to make it art?

Discussion prompts after viewing

- What utilitarian purposes of gourds are highlighted in the video?
- Why is it important for communities to keep traditional crafts alive?
- What methods does Yvonne Goad use? What tools does she use and what safety considerations are associated with them?
- How are artists inspired by objects in nature to create unique and contemporary designs?
- How is working on a three-dimensional surface like a gourd similar and different from working on a two-dimensional surface like paper?

Sample Lessons

- [Painting People with Personality, Inspired by Gourd Art](#) - Students will use the natural form of a gourd as inspiration for a fun face with human qualities.
- [Painting on Natural Objects](#) - Students will design artwork on a natural surface.
- [Transforming Found Materials into Sculptures](#) - Students will collaborate with others to create sculptures from unconventional materials.

Quilting

The art of quilting originated out of necessity and has transformed into a celebrated artistic expression. In this video, we meet three women who share a passion for quilting and a desire to pass on their knowledge to others. From Christiansburg to Roanoke to Broadway, Virginia, we explore the common ties to quilting traditions and observe how these artists are integrating contemporary methods into this traditional art form. Quilting is regarded not only as an art but also as a social activity and an educational opportunity for passing skills down through generations.

Discussion prompts before viewing

- What is a quilt? What is it used for?
- Who makes quilts? What materials are used to make a quilt?
- What do you already know about the history of quilts?

Discussion prompts after viewing

- In what ways did early quilt makers have to be resourceful?
- How have quilting methods and designs changed over time?
- In what ways is quilting a social activity? Why is this important?
- Where do quilters find inspiration?
- How do quilters learn their art?
- Why is math important for quilting?
- Quilts are often precious objects from family members. Do you have anything similar that is important to you and your family?

Sample Lessons

- [A Classroom Quilting Collaboration](#) - Using foam sheets, students will design and create a quilt square that features repetition and pattern. Basic sewing techniques will be used to create a collaborative class quilt inspired by the customs of quilting circles.
- [Stories In Stitches: Quilting in Virginia](#) - In this cross-curricular lesson, students will explore the history and art of quilting through activities that connect personal identity with traditional and modern quilting techniques.
- [Pixelated Quilts](#) - Students will explore the traditional craft of quilting from the past and present in Virginia communities to create a work of art based on the idea of community. Students will use digital media to design and assemble a quilt design.
- [Collaborating, Abstracting, and Constructing to Create Collages Quilt Blocks](#) - Using a manufacturing model of collaboration, students will work together to create painted patterns on paper to be used for collage quilting.