

Oconto County 4-H

As you work on your project throughout the year, you may find it helpful to take pictures and keep notes. They can come in handy as you plan for ways to share what you have learned and look back on what you've done.

Suggestions for showcasing your project work:

- Tell about what you've learned at **Speaking Fest**
- Show what you've learned at **Demonstration Fest**
- Take your project to the **Oconto County Fair**
- Enter local contests **outside of 4-H** like essay contests, shows and speech contests
- Look for creative ways to share what you've learned with your **club**, your **school** and your **community**

Stay in Touch!

Here's how you can contact your key leader(s) this year:

Glori Heimke (920) 846-0195

Adult Leader

This Project Guide was written and formatted by Johnathan M. Kruse.

University of Wisconsin—Extension

Oconto County 4-H

Project Development Committee 2007



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WELCOME TO THE OCONTO COUNTY 4-H

FOLK ARTS

PROJECT!



Folk art is art that is done in a way traditional to a certain culture or people. It is often done by artists who have no formal training in the art except for the skills that are passed down from generation to generation. Even though folk art is made by everyday people like you and me, it is often some of the most beautiful and creative art ever made. It shows who you are.

To help you get started this year, we have outlined a folk arts activity for each month.



Have fun!

Beginning of the Year

Here is what I would like to learn this year (my goal) in the Folk Arts project:

During the Project Year

Here are the steps I will take to meet my goal:

During the Project Year

Here's what I learned, and how I felt about my project experience:

Did you enjoy FOLK ARTS?

Was this project fun for you? If not, **that's okay**. It isn't likely that you'll like every project. What's important is that you **tried something new** and that you **learned something**.

What did you learn in this project? What could you have done better? What are you really proud of? These are all good questions to think about when you finish a project.

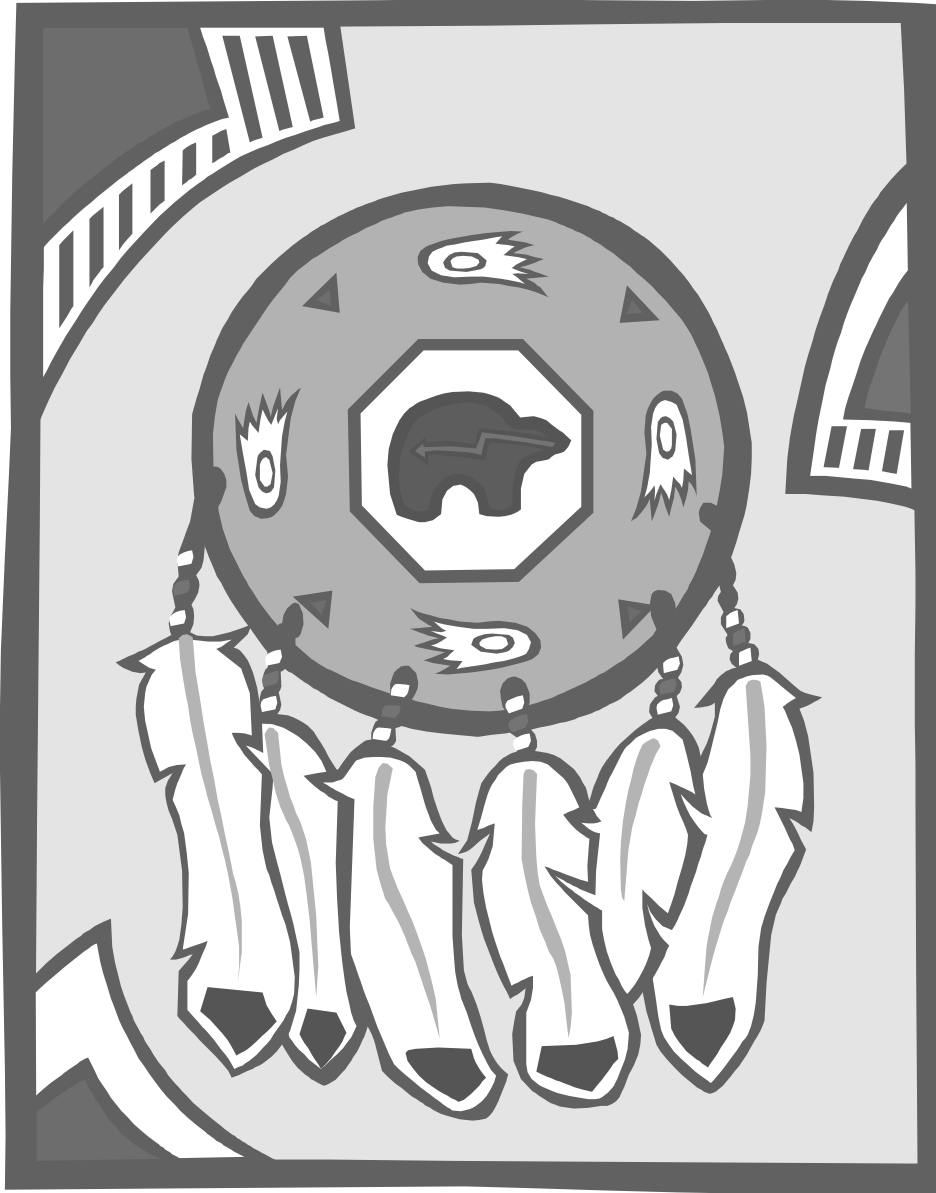
Thanks for trying out the FOLK ARTS PROJECT!

If you liked this project, you should consider signing up for another year! You will get to dig deeper into the project and discover many new and exciting things.

It's never too soon to get started on next year's projects!



See you in the next project year!



October

A Halloween tradition in North America is to carve faces or other designs into pumpkins. You may know these as **Jack-o'-lanterns**. What many people don't know is that the tradition started in Scotland and Ireland where vegetables, mainly **turnips**, were carved into lanterns much like the Jack-o'-lanterns we make today. The tradition was originally about the harvest season, not specifically Halloween.

The term Jack-o'-lantern originally meant a **night watchman**, but has inspired the classic Irish legend of the lazy farmer Jack. Read about the Irish folklore on **Wikipedia**, the free encyclopedia at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack-o-lantern>

After you've read the folklore behind this folk art, try your hand at designing and creating your own Jack-o'-lantern!

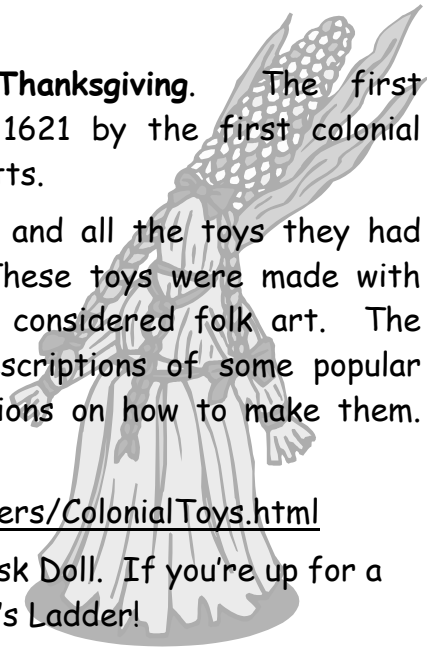
November

In November, we celebrate **Thanksgiving**. The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621 by the first colonial settlers of Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Kids in that time had few toys, and all the toys they had needed to be made by hand. These toys were made with traditional methods, and can be considered folk art. The **American Life** website gives descriptions of some popular colonial toys, as well as instructions on how to make them. You can find out more at:

<http://home.ptd.net/~berners/ColonialToys.html>

Try making a Whirligig or Corn Husk Doll. If you're up for a *real* challenge, try making a Jacob's Ladder!



December

As we talked about in November, many traditional toys are also considered folk art. While not exactly a toy, Native American cultures for many years played, and still continue to play, a game using pieces of folk art called **snow snakes**. The goal of the game is to slide your snow snake, which is a long, smooth decorated stick, as far as possible across the snow or icy surface.

To make a snow snake, take a **long stick** or **dowel**, make it smooth, and decorate it. Be careful if you use knives. For the path, use your gloved hands to make a path in the snow and pack it down, or use small amounts of water and let it freeze. You can also do this on the ice, but **be careful not to step on thin ice, or slip and fall**. Practice throwing the snake and have friendly competitions with your club, friends and family.

January

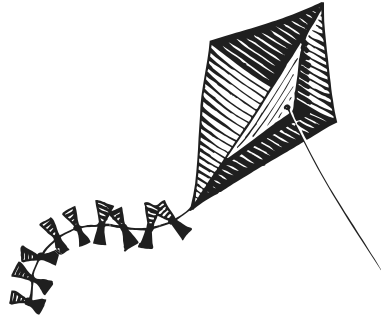
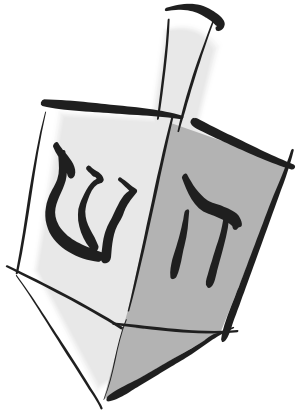
Did you know that **every** culture has folk art? Folk art is made by everyday people like you and me, often without any training in the art. It's all about **creativity**!

What kind of folk art is in **your** heritage? Take time this month to talk to your parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and other family members to find out what cultures your ancestors came from. Then take time to find out what kinds of folk arts they may have created.

Older family members are great resources for family history. They may even be able to teach you some folk art themselves. Wouldn't that be cool?

Notes





Many traditional toys are also considered folk art.

February

Just like we talked about toys being folk art, other things not meant to be “art” can be considered folk art. Furniture, tools, containers, and even things like **weathervanes** are often called folk art because of their traditional **craftsmanship**. Those who create these kinds of folk art often learned from their family and close friends, and put all their creativity and hard work into it. That is why it’s considered folk art.



This month, wherever you go, look for things that people use, and look at them as art. Think about your couch, the **signs on shops**, and even the way **buildings** look. You can also look at **gardens** and the **food** you eat! Take pictures of things you think are folk art, and make a poster or collage. Keep a list of the things you see.

March

Many famous artists such as Picasso, Matisse, and Vincent van Gogh were influenced by folk art from the people of Africa. There is a very old tradition of folk art in many countries of Africa. Look up traditional African art this month. If you can, visit a museum that has African art.

After you get a feel for the **themes** of African art, make an African mask, one of the oldest African folk arts, by cutting out cardboard and coloring it with paint, crayons, markers or colored pencil. Attach a stick or string. You can also try decorating the mask with other materials like colored feathers or beads.



April

Stuck inside because of the April showers? Around this month, all over Japan, cherry trees are showing their beautiful, white blossoms. The cherry blossoms are called sakura. Learn how to sing the traditional Japanese folk song "Sakura." You can find free mp3 and midi recordings to help you out on **Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia**, at the bottom of the page. You can also find lyrics and sheet music if you play an instrument. Here is a shortened URL that will redirect you to the article you need:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2cwz6x>

In Japanese we say, "**Gambatte kudasail!**"
That means, "Try your best!"



June

Storytelling is one of the world's **oldest** forms of folk art. Storytellers from every culture use stories as both an art form and as a way to teach lessons about life and being a good person. You can be a storyteller too!

Learn a story this month that you can tell (from memory if you can) to your family and friends. Ask everyone to sit down while you tell the story. If you need help finding a story, visit the **Community Learning Network**, where they have links to stories from many different cultures to choose from:

<http://www.cln.org/themes/fairytales.html>

(You can also visit your library and tell the story there!)

July

Many cultures have dances that are important forms of folk art. Wisconsin has a very rich history of folk art, and one important event every year is **Pulaski Polka Days**. Try to visit Polka Days, the largest polka dancing and music festival around. Take pictures of the dancers, and try to learn a dance yourself.

If you can't go to Polka Days, you can also go online and visit the **Wisconsin Mosaic's A Brief History of Wisconsin** website. They have an article there all about the history of Wisconsin folk art. Here is a shortened URL that will redirect you to the article you need:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2289sl>

August

Summer is at it's hottest, the sun is bright, and it's **County Fair** time! The fair is a great place to see folk art of all kinds. Visit the fair, and look all around you for traditional crafts. Some examples of folk art found at fairs include:

- **blacksmithing**
- **sculpture carving** (the chainsaw carvers are cool!)
- **jewelry making**
- many youth **fair entries**

Even when you're not at the fair, remember to always keep an eye out for **folk art!**

