

Activity—Wetland Mud Cloth

Standard V

Students will understand the physical characteristics of Utah's wetlands, forests, and deserts and identify common organisms for each environment.

Objective 2

Describe the common plants and animals found in Utah environments and how these organisms have adapted to the environments in which they live.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Use science process and thinking skills.
4. Communicate effectively using science language and reasoning.

Standard V

Objective 2

Connections

Wetland Mud Cloth



Mud cloth is a type of textile painting that is traditional in some areas of Africa. This adaptation takes the tradition and makes it a part of the study of wetlands through the use of art. The cloth can be used as a unique cover for a book of classroom poetry about the wetlands, or perhaps each student can create a unique science journal for specific use in the study of this ecosystem.

Instructional Procedure

1. Pre-wash material to remove any sizing. Tear into individual pieces the size of the book covers (if each student is creating a journal). Place on a piece of cardboard or old magazine (something that will protect the surface below the material).
2. Mix flour paste with the flour and water that is just thin enough to squeeze out the bottle's tip as a paste.
3. Students will need to draw designs on the muslin material with the flour/water mixture. This project can connect with art targets for fourth grade. Repeat elements in artwork to create a sense of movement. Encourage students to look for repeated patterns in anything they see in the ecosystem (ripples in the water, waving bulrushes, etc.).

Materials

- Muslin or similar cloth material
- Flour
- Water
- A bottle with lid that will squeeze out a thin line of paste.
- Mud
- Tempera or textile paint (green and blue are good "wetland" colors)

4. Allow the designs to harden and dry on the material.
5. Using mud from the wetland, add enough water to get a mixture with the consistency of paint. Add the tempera or textile paint to get a desired color. (The mud will darken the color, so students might want to do test samples before making a large quantity.)
6. Paint over the entire surface, letting it soak into the material.
7. Let dry completely.
8. Wash and rinse the material under running water. The mud should dissolve and wash off along with the flour paste. The results should look like batik with a "wetland" colored background.
9. Use the material as the outer cover for a journal. If only doing one large book, tear leftover strips and let each student have one to decorate an item such as their pencil. Attach plastic beads to the end for color.

