

# ROBERSON MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTER

## Iroquois Culture Post-Visit Activity

**Grade Level:** 3-5

**New York State Learning Standards:** Arts 1-4; ELA 1, 3, 4; SS 1-3; MS&T 4

**Pennsylvania Learning Standards:** H 8.1, 8.3; A&H 9.2; S&T 3.4; E&E 4.2, 4.4, 4.8

**Objectives:** In this activity, students will be able to integrate their museum experience with the study of Iroquois culture by creating an exhibit in their own classroom and acting as museum educators to lead tours for other classes or parents. The students will make longhouse dioramas in groups, promoting the idea of teamwork and responsibility in Iroquois culture. They will display the pinch pots which they made at Roberson Museum and Science Center as well as models of longhouses as outlined by this activity. The students will work in groups to present a different aspect about the objects on display in the “museum” of Iroquois artifacts.

### **Materials:**

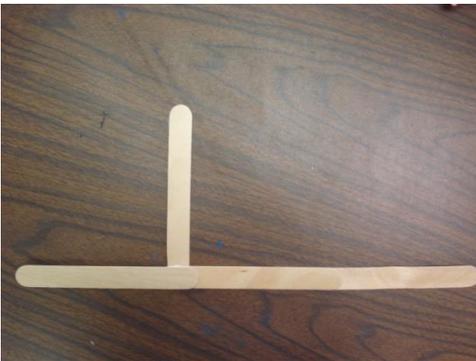
- Popsicle sticks (can be purchased at any crafts store)
- Glue
- 12-inch ruler
- Blank index cards
- Brown construction paper
- Brown tempera or poster paint
- Thin marker or pen
- Paintbrushes
- Clay
- Scissors
- Large cardboard sturdy enough to hold weight of longhouses
- Twigs, bark, rocks, and other materials and objects that can be added to the longhouse or the diorama
- Pinch pots made at Roberson Museum and Science Center
- Name tags (for when students act as museum educators)

## Procedure:

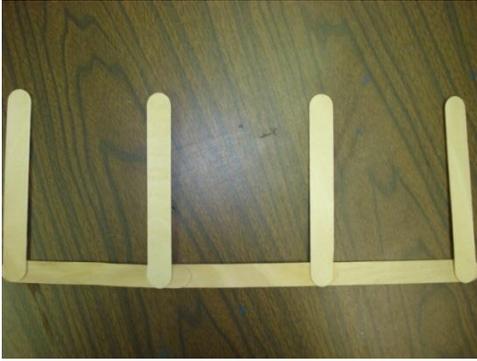
1. Have students work in small groups. These are the groups they will work in on the tour of the “museum.” Depending on the size of the class, there can be a different number of groups who will make a longhouse collectively.
2. Each student can be assigned a different task in the group: two people can make the two long walls, one can make the roof, one can make the doorway, and one person can paint the popsicle sticks at the end. However, cooperation should be encouraged throughout all stages of building the longhouse.
3. Students need to gather the materials on the above list, except for the pinch pots.
4. Students should glue 3 popsicle sticks together to make a single line. The sticks should be glued together and overlap  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from one end.



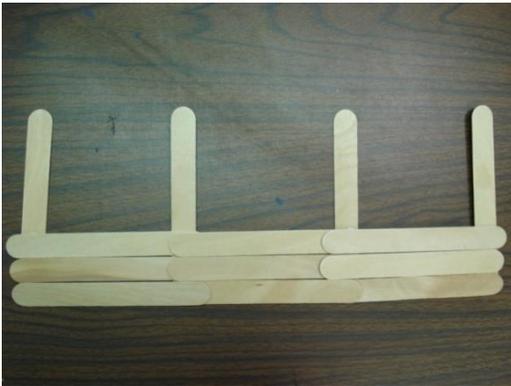
5. Make sure that students do not use too much glue or the structure will not dry in time to make the rest of the longhouse.
6. Once the first line of popsicle sticks is dry, glue 1 popsicle stick vertically and behind the first set of popsicle sticks. The vertical ones should be at the end of either side of the line of popsicle sticks so that the left and right sides have one.



7. Glue 1 popsicle stick vertically in each place where the two horizontal popsicle sticks meet.



8. Let this structure dry.
9. Continue building this wall of the longhouse by connecting popsicle sticks horizontally on top of the 4 vertical popsicle sticks. Make sure to stack the popsicle sticks as close together as possible.

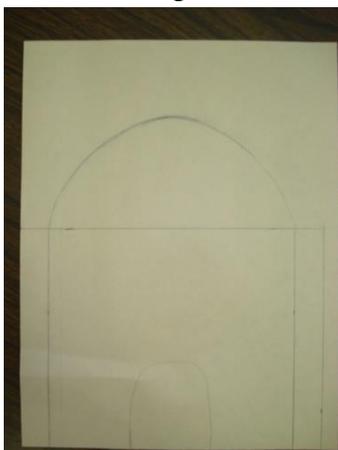


10. Once students reach the height of the vertical popsicle sticks, lay the structure flat on the table and let it dry.

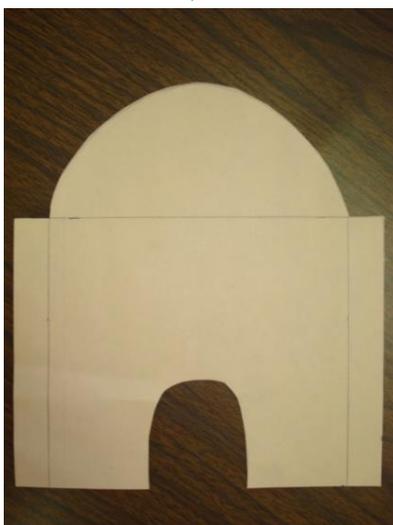


11. As one wall of the longhouse dries, students should repeat steps 4 through 10 for the other wall of the longhouse.
12. As the second wall dries, on the brown construction paper, have students hold the paper vertically. The students should draw the outlines of the walls, which are 8 inches wide and 4 inches tall (**Note: Match this height with the height of the popsicle sticks**).

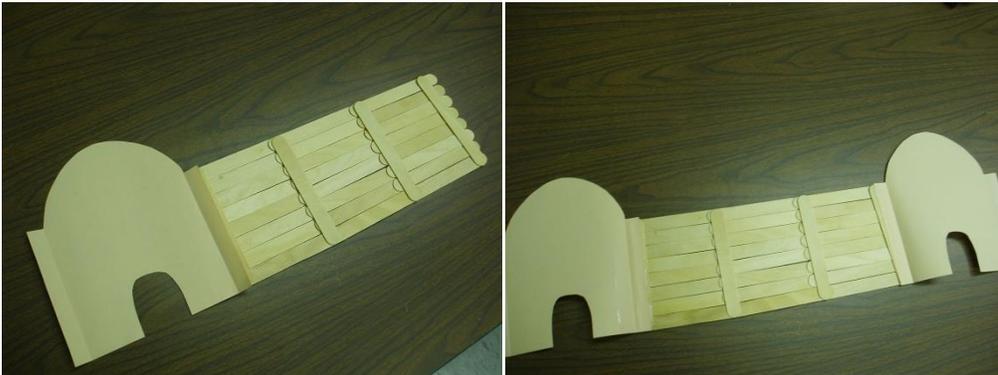
13. Students should use a ruler to measure  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from either side of the 8 inches and draw a vertical line because this is where they will fold the construction paper. Then draw a half-circle above the long side with a radius of about 2.5 inches.



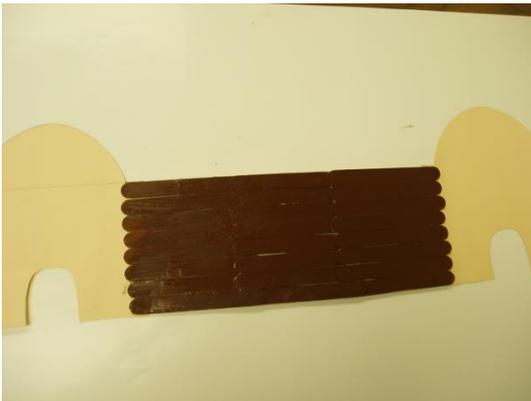
14. Students should cut this shape out and trace it onto a second sheet of brown construction paper.  
15. Draw the lines for the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch flaps on each side of the construction paper.  
16. Cut out this shape as well.  
17. Students need to fold in  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from the left and right sides of the construction paper for both sheets. The total width of the construction paper doorway should be 6.5 inches.  
18. On both sheets, students should draw the outline of a small doorway and cut this section out.



19. Holding one wall of the longhouse down, glue the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch flap of one side of both sheets of construction paper doorway to the first wall, making sure that the vertical popsicle sticks are facing the inside of the longhouse.



20. After the glue on the first wall has dried, students can paint the outside of the popsicle sticks brown. They should also paint the second wall.



21. As the paint dries on both walls, students can make models of Iroquois people, animals, and other objects to be placed inside the longhouse. Have them be as creative as possible. For the following steps, when the structure needs to dry, students can continue to work on their clay figures.
- A. These clay figures can be set aside to dry once students are done and continue to work on the longhouse. If possible, students can paint these figures.

B. Students can make trees out of the twigs and bark they gathered and place them around the longhouse on the cardboard. Also, students can use the twigs and bark to make a small “fire” for the inside of the longhouse.



22. Once the paint is dry, hold up the wall to glue the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch flaps of the two sheets of construction paper to the other wall. Have students hold up the structure until it dries, or prop it up against something.



23. Mold four pieces of clay into small mounds.

24. After the entire longhouse body is dry, set the four mounds of clay underneath the four corners of the longhouse, where the popsicle sticks meet the construction paper. (This is to make sure that the longhouse does not move around on the cardboard.)



25. Put glue where the popsicle sticks meet the clay.

26. Also, glue the mound of clay to the cardboard.
- A. The cardboard may be painted to simulate a landscape, it can be painted brown, or it can be left alone.
27. Let the clay set.
28. Once the clay has set, have students be creative in applying any twigs, bark, or leaves to the walls of the longhouse.
29. Place the clay figures inside or around the longhouse, and arrange them accordingly. Also, use any other appropriate found objects. Be creative.



- A. If students made trees, glue them onto the cardboard. If students gathered rocks, place them around the cardboard and glue them down.



- B. If you want to make the setting more realistic, buy a small bag of topsoil. Spread glue over the cardboard and sprinkle the topsoil onto the glue. Let this dry. For teachers with younger classes, this step should be completed by the teacher.

30. After the longhouses are complete, arrange them around the classroom.



31. Display pinch pots made at Roberson Museum and Science Center around the classroom. Ask students how they want to set up the longhouses and the pinch pots for display in their classroom museum. Be as creative as possible.
32. Have students work in groups and write something important or interesting about longhouses and the Iroquois' lifestyle as well as the pinch pots for the "museum tour."
- A. Brainstorm with students, asking them questions about the longhouses and pinch pots. Then list these ideas on the board or on a large poster so that students can write something about the objects.
  - B. For the longhouses, students can discuss the process of constructing a longhouse, the family structure promoted by a longhouse, or the reason for the shape and form of a longhouse.
  - C. For the pinch pots, students can discuss the purpose of pinch pots, the materials of pinch pots, the different designs and styles of pinch pots, or how they are made.
33. In the same groups, have students write labels for the longhouses. Then, each student can write a label for his or her own pinch pots.
34. Fold the index card in half. Using a thin marker or a pen, write the following information on it. The following information should appear on separate lines. The name of the item should be on the first line (such as "Iroquois Longhouse" or "Iroquois Pinch Pot"), followed by the name of the artist (the students), the date or year in which the object was created, and the materials used to make the object.
35. Place an index card alongside each longhouse and pinch pot.
36. Write out name tags for each student for their "museum tours."
37. Make sure each student prepares something different to say about longhouses and pinch pots during their tours.
38. Students should give the tour in the same groups in which they have been working. During the tour, have each student in the group say what they prepared about the longhouses.

39. Students can then bring their “tour group” to show them the pinch pots. These “tour groups” can consist of other classes or parents, if possible. However, if this arrangement does not work out, each group can take turns acting as the “museum educators” and present their longhouse and their description of the pinch pots to the rest of the class, which will be the “tour group.”
40. Each group of students can end the “museum tour” by thanking their “tour group” for coming.

**Conclusion:** When this activity is complete, students will understand the architecture of longhouses and why these structures were important to the Iroquois. Furthermore, the students will be able to integrate their museum experience with classroom activities, making a trip to the museum an important and relevant educational resource. The “tours” that the students conduct reflect how information about people and cultures is presented in museums, reinforcing that museums are important for preserving history. This activity merges art and history and allows for the practice of writing and public speaking skills.

Developed by: Michelle Cheng

Date: March 2008

## Suggested Readings

- Ancona, George. **Powwow**. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993.
- Braman, Arlette N. **Traditional Native American Arts and Activities**. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000.
- Bruchac, Joseph with illustrations by Thomas Locker. **Between Earth and Sky: Legends of Native American Sacred Places**. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996.
- Bruchac, Joseph with illustrations by Murv Jacob. **The Boy Who Lived with Bears and other Iroquois Stories**. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995.
- Bruchac, Joseph with illustrations by Anna Vojtech. **The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story**. New York: Dial Books, 1993.
- Bruchac, Joseph with illustrations by Susan L. Roth. **The Great Ball Game: A Muskogee Story**. New York: Dial Books, 1994.
- Bruchac, Joseph with illustrations by Teresa Flavin. **Pushing up the Sky: Seven Native American Plays for Children**. New York: Dial Books, 2000.
- Bruchac, Joseph. **Tell Me a Tale**. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997.
- Englar, Mary. **The Iroquois: The Six Nations Confederacy**. Mankato: Bridgestone Books, 2002.
- Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane with photographs by Lawrence Migdale. **Cherokee Summer**. New York: Holiday House, 1993.
- Kalman, Bobbie. **Life in a Longhouse Village**. New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2001.
- Keegan, Marcia. **Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds**. New York: Cobblehill Books, 1991.
- Levine, Ellen with illustrations by Shelly Hehenberger. **If You Lived with the Iroquois**. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999.
- Littlechild, George. **This Land is My Land**. California: Children's Book Press, 1993.
- Livo, Norma J. **Celebrating the Earth: Stories, Experiences and Activities**. Englewood: Teacher Ideas Press, 2000.
- Loyie, Larry. **As Long as the Rivers Flow**. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2005.

Normandin, Christine. **Echoes of the Elders: The Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska.** New York: DK Publishing, Inc., 1996.

Sonneborn, Liz. **The Iroquois.** New York: Franklin Watts, 2002.

Tehanotorens. **Legends of the Iroquois.** Summertown, TN: The Book Publishing Company, 1998.