

NAVAJO BLANKET WEAVING

presentation :

- What is this a print of and who made it?... **Navajo Blanket** (c. 1900). Created by a Navajo weaver living in the four corners region of the United States. The four corners region includes Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado (show map of region). The Navajos are Native Americans living on a reservation. A reservation is an area of land owned by the Indian tribe, governed and ruled by their own people. Today, they are also US citizens and must also follow US law. They have been weaving for over 200 hundred years, a skill they learned from neighboring tribes (Pueblos) and perfected. They became the experts on blanket weaving and it became a main source of income for the tribe.

- What are they used for?... trade, blankets, rugs, clothing, saddle blankets, art...

- What features are prominent in all the weavings?...

Colors (reds, blacks, browns, yellows...)

Geometric shapes

Symmetry (horizontally and vertically)

Pattern - repetition (all created in the mind of the weaver. She did not work from a pattern on paper. She would have used many math skills to create the pattern in her rug.)

- How are they made?... Weaving is basically passing horizontal (**weft**) threads over and under vertical (**warp**) threads strung over a **loom** to create a woven fabric. (explained in book - The Goat in the Rug)

- Where did they get their materials from?... They made yarn from Churro sheep raised by the tribe. Wool was sheared, carded, spun and dyed with dye made from plants. Loom frame was made from wood branches. (explained in book - The Goat in the Rug)

- How long did it take to make a rug?... weeks to months depending on the size and detail of pattern.

Read the book **The Goat in the Rug** by Charles L. Blood and Martin Link

project:

- create your own Navajo rug using ribbon as the weft threads and cardstock paper cut vertically as the "warp threaded loom." Give students choice of four colors (red, black, yellow, orange). Challenge them to create their own unique pattern and learn the weaving process of over and under. Remind students to switch how they begin each row starting over or under to create woven effect.

- You could also use cut strips of colored paper for weaving. I found ribbon was easy to prepare for the project. I cut roughly 100 pieces of each color by wrapping ribbon around a card (4" wide) and cutting once to create 8" wide strips. I used different width ribbons (the wider ribbons were easier for the students to work with (1/2 in.)