

NORTH CAROLINA AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE, AMERICAN CULTURE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Historical Overview

African traditions were not lost when African people were brought to North America. Traditions in foodways, architecture, music, textiles, and more were introduced and then passed down from generation to generation, helping form community for black families in difficult circumstances. Some of these cultural touchstones blended with other cultures and other traditions, and in turn were influenced by new surroundings and new materials.

Lesson Objectives

- Students will read for information and understanding a nonfiction article about cultural traditions in African American communities.
- Students will learn about some cultural traditions of African Americans in North Carolina, and they will focus on different experiences in those traditions.

Time

One to three 45-minute sessions

General Materials

- Copies of “Discovering the Past through Cultural Traditions,” by Alice Eley Jones (*Tar Heel Junior Historian*, Fall 1995), as needed

General Procedure

- Have students read or listen to the article.
- Have a class discussion about the article. Ask students,
 - What struck you about this piece?
 - Are you surprised by anything you read (or heard)?
 - What? Why, or why not?
 - What new information or insights did you gather from this article?

Extension

- Have students research strip quilts. Can they find any local examples—in their homes, communities, or a museum in the area? What elements do strip quilts have in common? How do they differ?
- Have students research shotgun houses and locate examples in their communities. What elements do they have in common? How do they differ?

Materials for Making a Shotgun House

- Copies of the shotgun house template (located in a separate PDF file within this section of the notebook), as needed
- Construction paper or wallpaper samples
- Scissors, glue, crayons or markers

Procedure for Making a Shotgun House

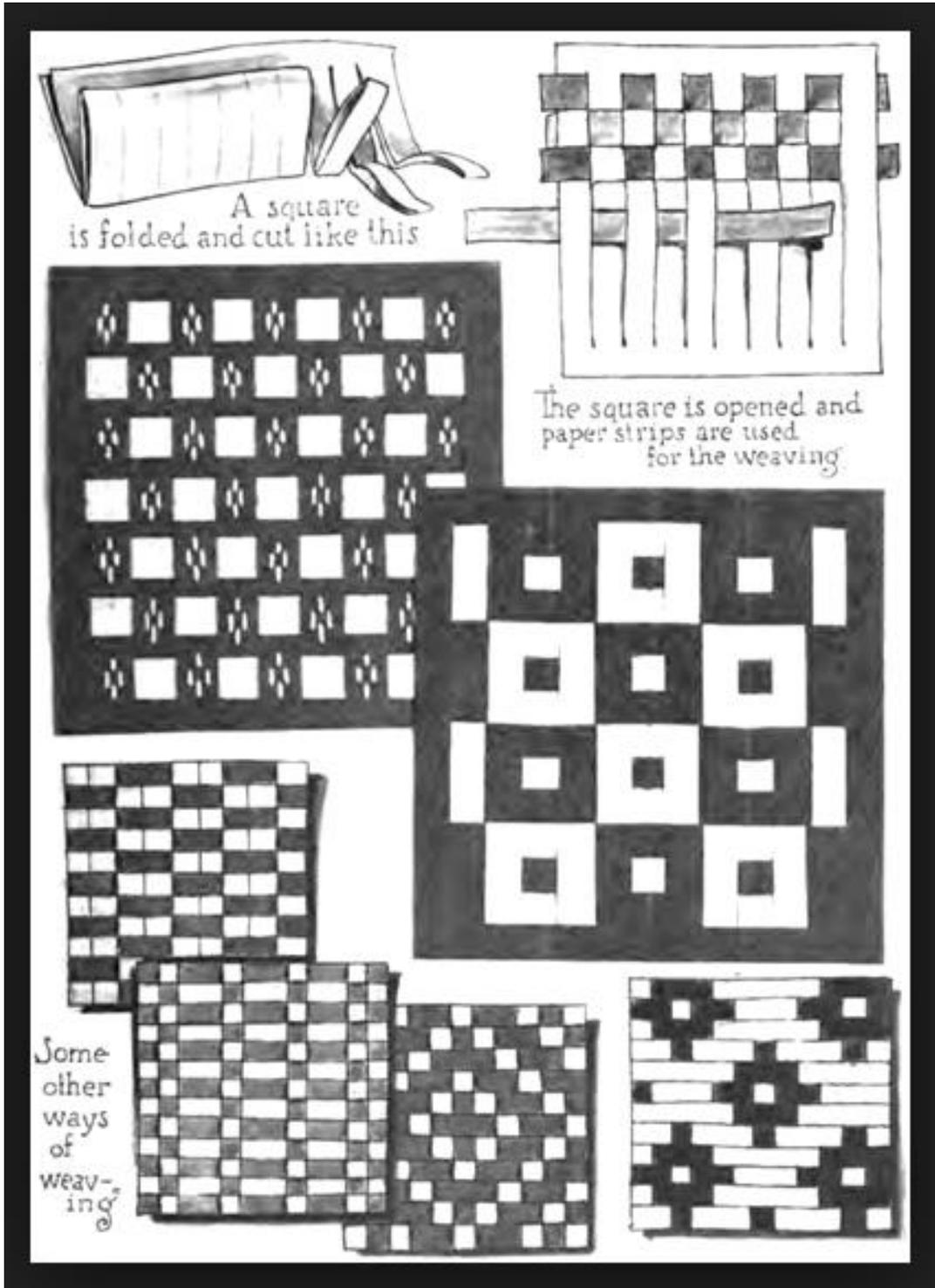
- Have students follow the directions on their copy of the template to create their own model house.
- Allow students to complete and present their projects.

Materials for Making a Paper Strip Quilt

- Copies of the Paper Strip Quilt Instructions (located at the end of this lesson), as needed
- A rectangular piece of sturdy paper to use as a base or background. Black or another plain color is effective, but something like wallpaper can also be used.
- Strips of brightly colored paper, 1/2-inch wide and at least as long as the width of the background paper
- Ruler, pencil, scissors, glue

Procedure for Making a Paper Strip Quilt

- Distribute the instructions and have students make their own strip quilts.
- Create a display of the finished quilts or allow students to present their projects.
- Once students have mastered the basic pattern in the instructions, encourage them to experiment and try some of the alternate patterns illustrated here:



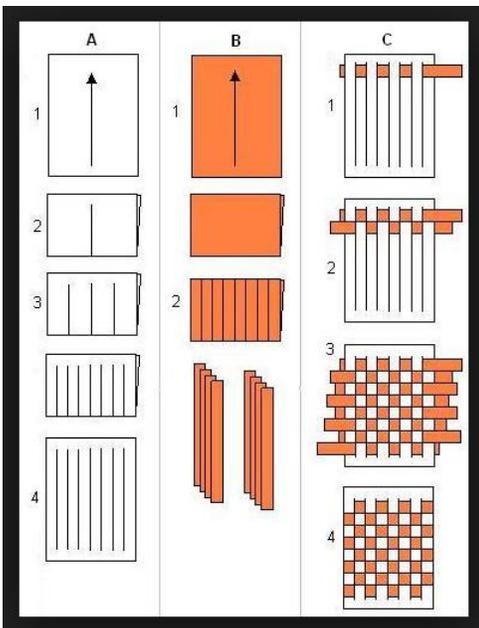
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PAPER STRIP QUILT INSTRUCTIONS*

Paper weaving can be done with any size of background paper and any number or size of strips, depending on how large you want the finished project and what you want to use it for—a coaster, a place mat, a cover for a book or folder, or as the background for another piece of artwork.

Instructions:

1. Fold up the two shorter ends of your background paper to meet each other (as shown in the diagram, drawing A-1), then crease the paper to fold it in half (drawing A-2).



2. Place the ruler $\frac{1}{2}$ " in from the uncreased edge, opposite the creased edge, and use a pencil to draw one line that runs across the entire background paper.

3. Next, draw lines, $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart, that are perpendicular to that top line; start at the first line you drew and continue to the folded edge. It is important to measure accurately so that your weaving will be even.

4. Now, use the scissors to cut along the parallel lines; begin at the creased edge and stop at the first line you drew.

5. When you finish cutting along the last line, unfold your background paper and lay it flat; it is now complete (drawing A-4). Set it aside and, from other sheets of colored paper, cut strips that are $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and long enough to completely cross the

background paper (drawing B-1, B-2).

6. You are ready to start weaving. Take one colored strip of paper and weave it under the first "slat" and over the second, under the third, over the fourth, and so on—all the way across (drawing C-1).
7. Select a second strip; use the same color or a different one. When you begin the second strip, weave it over the first slat and under the second, and so on—opposite the previous row (drawing C-2).
8. After weaving the second strip completely across, push it tightly up against the previous one.
9. Continue weaving until the background sheet is full (drawing C-3).
10. When the paper strip quilt is finished, apply some glue to the outside ends of the strips and stick them down to keep the quilt from unraveling (drawing C-4).

* additional instructions are available at teachkidsart.net/african-kente-cloth-weaving/

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