



Children's  
Discovery  
Museum  
of San Jose

## California Content Standards

### Kindergarten:

- History-Social Science K.6.3
- English-language Arts – Listening and Speaking 2.1, 2.3

### First Grade:

- History-Social Science 1.4.3, 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3
- English-language Arts – Writing 1.2, 1.3, 2.2; Listening and Speaking 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, 2.4

### Second Grade:

- History-Social Science 2.1.2, 2.4.3
- English-Language Arts – Listening and Speaking 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.2

### Third Grade:

- History-Social Science 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.5.2
- English-language Arts – Writing 1.1, 1.2, 2.2; Listening and Speaking 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.3

# Cornhusk Dolls

## Teacher's Guide: Grades K – 3



### What's Going On?

The **Cornhusk Doll** exhibit, exposes children to one of the ways in which early Americans contributed to our arts and culture. Dolls are one example of toys that are found around the world and throughout history. The materials with which various toys are made and the way children are taught to use them reflect local customs and available textiles. In the activities described in this guide, children are encouraged to think about the commonalities among toys from around the world and the way that they differ – at the same time understanding how they are alike and different from other children around the world.

### Before You Visit

**Before You Visit CDM**, research toys from around the world and ask children to think about their own favorite toys.

### During Your Visit

**During Your Visit to CDM**, encourage children to make their own cornhusk dolls.

### After Your Visit

**After Your Visit**, make your own simple toys from natural and found objects.



# Before You Visit

## Exploring the World of Toys

### What you'll need:

- ❑ Books about toys from around the world, such as:

*Traditional Wooden Toys: Their History and How to Make Them,*  
by Cyril Hobbins

*Toys and Games,*  
by Philip Steele

*Kids Around the World Play!: The Best Fun and Games from Many Lands,* by Arlette N. Braman

*Kids Around the World Create!: The Best Crafts and Activities from Many Lands,* by Arlette N. Braman

*Toys,*  
by Meryl Doney

*Native Crafts: Inspired by North America's First Peoples,* by Maxine Trottier

*Folk Toys Around the World and How to Make Them,* by Joan Joseph

*Abracadabra: Mexican Toys,*  
by Mauricio Martinez

### Objective:

Children compare and contrast one aspect of daily life – playing with toys – throughout history, culture, and place.

### What to Do:

1. Ask children to bring one of their favorite toys to school. Ask each child to explain how he or she plays with the toy, how long he or she has had the toy, and why it is a favorite.
2. Ask each child to find 1-3 (depending on grade level and ability of the children) examples in the books of toys that are similar to his or her favorite toy. Ask them to compare and contrast the toys orally, in pictures, or in writing.
3. Some questions for discussion or written reflection include: How were the toys made? What materials were used to make them and where were they found? How do the toys relate to grown-up tools and styles? What do the variations in the toys tell us about the area and culture from which they came?
4. Ask the children to share their comparisons with the rest of the class.

### Assessment:

Do children's comparisons show understanding of cultural similarities through toys from various places?

### Extensions:

- Ask each child to research toys from a particular country or time in history.
- "Curate" a classroom toys exhibit by grouping the toys that children brought from home, creating short descriptions of the groupings, and displaying them somewhere in the room.



# During Your Visit Guided Exploration of the Exhibit

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## What to Do:

Encourage children to make their own cornhusk dolls. Ask the exhibit guide to explain how the cornhusks are prepared for the activity. Talk to the children about why they think cornhusks were used for dolls and how children might have played with the dolls. Help children create dolls that reflect themselves by adding details such as hair, clothing, and jewelry.

## What you'll need:

- Hands, eyes, and brains



### What you'll need:

#### Assortment of natural and found objects, such as:

Acorns, Leaves, Rocks, Small twigs, Empty pint-sized water bottles, Empty pint-sized milk cartons, Film canisters, Spools, String, Laundry detergent scoops, Wooden dowels, Unsharpened pencils, Metal washers, Popsicle sticks, Empty egg cartons, Bottle caps, Corks, Cardboard, Pipe cleaners, Thin wire, Paper, Aluminum foil, Glue

*(Note: One way to collect these items is to send the list home with children asking them to donate "junk" from home.)*

# After Your Visit

## Making a Toy

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### Objective:

Children will learn about other cultures as they make a toy from found objects.

### What to Do:

Make a toy using found objects. Children might use one of the ideas listed below, model a creation after a toy found in a book or use their own imagination.

#### Some simple toy ideas:

**Top** – Trace a circle onto cardboard, cut it out, decorate it, and poke a pencil or wooden dowel through the center.

**Snake** – Thread wire or pipe cleaner through bottle caps, corks, or egg carton sections.

**Cup and ball toss game** – Poke a pencil or dowel through the center of a laundry detergent cup, egg carton section, or film canister. Tie one end of a string onto the pencil that is inside the cup and the other end onto a ball fashioned out of paper or foil. Hold the free end of the pencil, and try to get the ball to fall into the cup.

**Ring and pin game** – Tie one end of a string onto the end of a pencil, dowel, or popsicle stick. Thread some washers (big enough to fit easily around the pencil, dowel, or popsicle stick) onto the string. Create a stopper out of cardboard. Tie it onto the other end of the string so that the washers are secured to the toy. Hold the free end of the pencil, throw the tethered washers into the air, and try to catch as many as you can on the pencil.

**Nature doll** – Make a person with acorns for a head and body. Use twigs or leaves for limbs.

### Assessment:

Ask the children to explain how the availability of raw materials (found and natural objects) influences the types of goods (toys) that can be made.

### Extensions:

- Make a toy using only objects that can be found in the classroom (pencils, paper, blocks, etc.).
- Ask each child to make a toy that would teach a young child how to perform an important household task, such as making a bed or setting the table or an important school task, such as adding numbers.

### Related CDM

#### Lesson Plans:

- [Making Cornhusk Dolls](#)

#### Web Links:

- [www.worldplay.org/paw/list.html](http://www.worldplay.org/paw/list.html)
- [www.gamesmuseum.uwaterloo.ca/index.htm](http://www.gamesmuseum.uwaterloo.ca/index.htm)

**Cornhusk Dolls Teacher's Guide: Grades K – 3**  
**Making a Toy (continued)**

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