

Immigration and Personal Tote Bag

This craft is a fun and creative idea that can be incorporated into a lesson or unit on immigration. Help your students get a sense of what it was like for the immigrants who left their homelands and could bring only a few items with them.

5-6

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

Objectives

- The learner will demonstrate the ability to discuss and write about what it was like for the immigrants in the early 1900's.
- The students will learn that the immigrants were limited to what they could carry when they came to America and that they had to make many sacrifices in order to come here.
- The students will be able to create their own unique tote bag.

Materials

- Photos of immigrants
- The Long Way to a New Land by Joan Sandin
- Tote bag
- Brush-on fabric paints: pink, tan, and mint
- Dimensional/Writer fabric paints: rose, copper, and teal
- One small sponge
- Roll of paper towels
- Elastic band
- Wax paper cover board to fit inside project

- 1/2 yard of 1" wide ribbon
- Two lady bug buttons
- Scissors, paper plate, straight pins, masking tape, measuring tape or ruler, and thread

Procedure

1. Read the story *The Long Way to the New Land*. Discuss the hardships the immigrants had to face traveling to America, and the sacrifices they had to make. Explain that for the majority of the immigrants the commitment to come to America meant spending every penny they had.
2. Explain that the passengers brought very little from home since they were charged for every bundle or parcel they brought on board the ship. Parcel size and weight were important considerations because everything had to be carried by hand. The immigrants had to make very difficult decisions regarding what to take and what to leave behind.

Continued on the back...

“Personal Tote Bag” project continued...

3. Ask the students:

- A. How do you think the immigrants felt while making these decisions?
- B. What would you take with you if you could only bring a few things?
- C. How would you feel leaving important things behind?

4. Have students write a journal entry responding to these questions.

5. Next, explain to the children that they are going to imagine that they are immigrants traveling to a new country and they are limited in what they can carry. Hold up the tote bag and tell them that the items must fit inside it. Have the students think about what items in their lives are the most important to them.

6. Next, explain that the students are now going to create their own personalized tote bags that will hold the items they choose. These bags should be special as they will hold the few items that are most important to each student.

7. Make the tote bags.

Directions

1. Wash, dry, and press tote bag. DO NOT use fabric softener.
2. Place board inside tote. Pin or tape tote to board.
3. Cut a 1" square and one leaf shape from the sponge. Set leaf aside. Wet the 1" square sponge with water to soften. Squeeze out the excess water, leaving the sponge barely damp. Dip into tan paint. Blot excess paint onto paper towel. Center the square 2" from the bottom edge and lightly press to make print. Print again. Refer to the model and repeat this process to create a checkerboard basket shape in size desired.
4. Remove 5-7 paper towels from the roll. Fold in half lengthwise. Fold again lengthwise. Tightly roll from one narrow end to the other, "Jelly Roll" fashion. Wrap elastic band around the roll to secure. This becomes the pattern for the flower. Use more or fewer towels to create the desired flower size. Dip folded end into pink paint. Blot off excess onto paper towel. Refer to the model for suggested placement and printed flower shapes. Print as many flowers as desired, allowing shapes to overlap a bit. Print a single flower shape along the lower right side of the basket.
5. Print leaves using the mint paint, following directions in step #3 for sponging. Refer to model for suggested leaf placement.
6. Use the dimensional paints to accent the design. "Squiggle" lines help to define the flower shape. Rows of five narrow horizontal lines in the open areas of the checkerboard make the basket seem woven. Simple outlining and a single center line create the leaf edges. Allow to dry.

7. Tie a simple bow with the ribbon. Trim ends to desired length. Stitch to the top right edge of the basket, or pin in place for easy removal when washing.
8. Stitch lady bugs in place, as desired.
9. Have students bring in their items from home to fill their totes and share with the class why they chose each item. A brief written explanation may also be included.



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