

## Quill Decorating

### Objectives:

- Participants will identify natural resources used by the Plains Indians
- Participants will show how Plains Indians used natural items in decorating
- Participants will create an original art project

### Standards:

South Dakota Social Studies Standards						
K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
	1.E.1.1	2.US.2.1 2.E.1.1	3.US.2.2 3.E.1.1	4.E.1.1	5.US.1.1 5.E.1.1	6.W.1.1 6.E.1.1

South Dakota Visual Arts Standards							
	K benchmarks	1 <sup>st</sup> benchmarks	2 <sup>nd</sup> benchmarks	3 <sup>rd</sup> benchmarks	4 <sup>th</sup> benchmarks	5 <sup>th</sup> benchmarks	6 <sup>th</sup> benchmarks
Standard 1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Standard 3	2	2	2			2	2

**Timeframe:** 45-60 minutes

**Materials:** Provided by instructor or participants  
colored toothpicks\*  
feathers (optional)  
Brown wrapping paper or paper bags  
Glue

\* To color toothpicks, soak flat toothpicks in water for about five minutes and drain. Place toothpicks in small paper cups and add 5-10 drops of food coloring to each cup. A cupful of toothpicks can be dyed at once – just stir them around in the cup to distribute the color evenly. Use a separate cup for each color. Spread dyed toothpicks on paper towels to dry.

### Background Information:

The Plains Indians used materials found in their environment such as porcupine quills as decorating material. Porcupine quills are smooth hollow tubes with a barbed point on one end. After being colored with natural dyes made from plants or minerals, the quills were wrapped, braided, or sewn onto clothing and household objects. Quill designs were often geometric, using bars, oblongs and rectangles. Colored quillwork made clothing and household objects more decorative and personalized.

### Activity Steps:

1. Prior to class, dye toothpicks and cut one shirt shape from brown paper for each participant.
2. Put the colored toothpicks and feathers in a central location.
3. Have participants pick up toothpicks and feathers for their shirt design.
4. Each participant should work out a decorative pattern for their shirt. Toothpicks can be broken into smaller pieces if desired. Encourage participants to experiment and try several different designs before gluing the toothpicks and feathers in place.
5. Display the decorated shirts and have participants describe their design to the group.