

Dakota, Nakota, Lakota Life (Beadwork Designs)

Background Information:

About 8.3% of South Dakotans hold dual citizenship. Most of the 64,000 American Indians living in South Dakota are members of the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota Nation (also known as the Great Sioux Nation) as well as Americans.¹

Lakota histories are passed from generation to generation through storytelling. One story tells about the Lakota coming to the plains to live and becoming *Oceti Sakowin*, the Seven Council Fires. The story begins when the Lakota lived in a land by a large lake where they ate fish and were warm and happy. A man appeared, and told them to travel northward. The Lakota obeyed, and began the journey north. On their way they got cold, and the sun was too weak to cook their food. Two young men had a vision, and following its instructions, they gathered dry grasses and struck two flint stones together, creating a spark and making fire. There were seven groups of relatives traveling together. Each group took some of the fire, and used it to build their own fire, around which they would gather. As a result, they became known as the Seven Council Fires, or *Oceti Sakowin*.²

During the mid-17th century, nearly all the Sioux people lived near Mille Lacs, Minnesota.³ Pressured by the Chippewas, they moved west out of northern Minnesota in clan groups by the early 18th century.⁴ The three tribes spoke the same general language, but each developed dialects or variations, which also became their known name. The tribes become known as the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota. Each of the three tribes was organized into smaller bands, listed below.

Lakota (Teton) – who live on the prairie bands	Nakota (Yankton) bands	Dakota (Santee) bands
Sicangu (Brule)	Yankton – who camp at the end	Mdewakanton – community of the sacred lake
Oglala – they scatter them	Yanktonais – who camp at the lesser end	Wahpekute – who hunt in the woods
Hunkpapa – who camp by the entrance		Wahpeton – dwellers among the leaves
Minneconjou – who plant by the water		Sisseton – lake village
Sihasapa (Blackfeet) – black feet		
Oohenunpa (Two Kettle) – cook their food twice		
Itazipo (Sans Arc) – no bows		

¹ South Dakota Census Data. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/46000.html>

² Red Cloud History. *The Story of the Seven Councils Fire of the Lakota*. <http://redcloudschool.org/history/oceti.htm>

³ Herbert T. Hoover, *Sioux Country: A History of Indian-White Relations* (Sioux Falls: The Center for Western Studies, 2000), 37.

⁴ Duane Champagne, ed., *The Native North American Almanac* (Detroit: Gale Group, 2001), 23.

Lakota

One of the earlier clans to leave Minnesota was the Lakota, including the Teton band. They settled in the Sioux and James River valleys during the 18th century, then pushed west past the Missouri River. The Lakota creation story tells how they came to hunt the buffalo.

The Great Spirit Skan made us with bones from Stone, bodies from Earth, and souls from himself, Wind and Thunders. The gifts of Sun, Wisdom, Moon, and Revealer gave us life. A council of the spirits named us Pte Oyate—Buffalo Nation—and told us to care for the spirits. One day Spider sent Wolf to the Underworld to tell Tokahe that life would be easier on the surface of the earth. Tokahe ignored the warnings of the holy man Tatanka, and led the people up through Wind Cave. Life there was hard, so Tatanka came to help—as a great shaggy beast. Since then the people have lived here with the buffalo.⁵

Every Lakota person has many relatives. All of them are part of his/her *tiyospaye*, the circle of relatives including mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins and all relatives from marriage and adoption. When you know your relatives, you know where you come from and who you are. Kinship provides direction for daily living. All values and judgments of right and wrong relate to the duties and benefits of kinship. Each member of the group must act to insure the good of the *tiyospaye*.

Nakota

By 1708, the Nakota, which included the Yankton band, had moved from their Minnesota home to the northwestern corner of Iowa.⁶ By 1804, they had moved further west to the mouth of the James River where they met Lewis and Clark.⁷ By 1857, tensions rose between the Nakota and white settlers trespassing on tribal land. Chief Struck By The Ree went to Washington, DC, where he and other tribal leaders signed a treaty ceding the eastern half of South Dakota to the US government.⁸ The treaty relocated the Nakota from Yankton west to Wagner, SD.

The Nakota never officially took up arms against the United States. They did sometimes fall victim to angry whites who punished them anyway, as did Fort Randall soldiers soon after the 1862 Minnesota Uprising when they killed a Nakota hunting party that had legal permission to hunt in the area.⁹

⁵ South Dakota State Historical Society. *Lakota Creation Story*. <http://travelsd.com/onlyinsd/sioux/>

⁶ Elmer Duane Cwach, "A History of the Yankton Indian Agency During the Nineteenth Century," (MA Thesis, South Dakota State University, 1958), 1.

⁷ Harry H. Anderson, "The Diplomacy of Lewis and Clark among the Teton Sioux, 1804-1807," *South Dakota History* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 41.

⁸ Hoover, *Sioux Country*, 53.

⁹ Cwach, "History of the Yankton Indian Agency," 22.

Dakota

The Dakota, or Santee, along with the Nakota formed the eastern Sioux tribes. *Dakota* means "Allies" or "Confederates," expressing their close ties with the Nakota and the Lakota, the western Sioux tribe. The Santee stayed in Minnesota until 1862, when they fought a desperate war with the whites who were pushing them into smaller plots of land. After numerous treaties, they had so little land left that they could not sustain themselves. The US government promised money and food for the land, but the payments were so late the Santee were dying of starvation. The neglect worsened after the government became preoccupied with fighting the Civil War.¹⁰ After many years of starvation and disappointment, the Santee demanded help in feeding their families in 1862. Violence broke out and the Minnesota Uprising lasted about 40 days, taking hundreds of lives. Afterward, the whites wanted revenge on the Santee, both guilty and innocent. Many Santee fled west to escape the angry whites. Those who stayed in Minnesota were held responsible. About 1,700 Santee were captured and put in prison and over three hundred were sentenced to hang. President Lincoln called for a careful review of the evidence, and the number hanged was reduced to thirty-eight.¹¹ When the sentence was carried out on December 26, 1862, it was the largest mass execution in United States history.

Forced Santee Relocation

Following the Minnesota Uprising, 1,300 Santee were relocated to Crow Creek in Dakota Territory, near Fort Thompson. Special Agent Ben Thompson had chosen the site, just weeks before the Santee arrived, with a priority on isolation from white settlements. He defended his choice for years, saying it was suitable, but few would agree. The land was sparsely wooded, especially compared to Minnesota. Since hundreds of their able men had been sentenced to prison in Iowa, the new arrivals were mostly women and children. They arrived already weakened and sick from crowded travel. Many had died along the way, and about 300 died from starvation, disease, and exposure the first year at Crow Creek.¹²

While their women and children were shipped to Crow Creek, about two hundred Santee men were sent to prison at Fort McClellan, Iowa. There many of the prisoners converted to Christianity and mixed freely with surrounding white neighbors, learning farming skills.¹³ By the spring of 1865, most

¹⁰ Roy W. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 112.

¹¹ Champagne, *Native American Almanac*, 42.

¹² Meyer, *Santee Sioux*, 146.

¹³ Paul Stuart, ed., *Dacotah: A History of the Flandreau Santee Sioux* (Flandreau, SD: Tribal History Program, Flandreau Sioux Tribe, 1971), 53.

of the prisoners were returning north to Dakota in time to meet their families moving south from Crow Creek to a new reservation on the Niobrara River bordering Nebraska. Although some of the Santee liked Niobrara, the government was years away from declaring it their permanent reservation. This uncertainty of a title to their home, in addition to a desire to live closer to the Minnesota border prevented some of them from putting down roots.¹⁴ By the spring of 1869, twenty-five families left Niobrara to establish a colony on the banks of the Big Sioux River. These families became the Flandreau Indian settlement, comprised mostly of heads of household who had learned white ways while imprisoned in Iowa.¹⁵

Two other Dakota bands, the Sissetons and Wahpetons, though largely innocent of participating in the Minnesota Uprising, had fled Minnesota and eventually settled the area west of Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake by 1864. Fort Wadsworth, later renamed Fort Sisseton, was established near their settlement.¹⁶

Traditional Village Life

On the plains, the horse culture of the Lakota thrived. Life centered on the buffalo, which provided food and shelter. Other foodstuffs included prairie turnips, chokecherries, other wild game, and fish. Trade with the earth lodge tribes along the upper Missouri River brought in corn, beans, and squash.

The four seasons set the rhythm for village life. In the spring, women repaired or replaced tipis, and made clothing. They began gathering ripening berries and roots. For the men, spring brought the first buffalo hunts. It was also a time for repairing weapons, hunting other game, and hide painting. Socially, springtime meant dances sponsored by various tribal groups, and vision seeking.¹⁷

Summer brought more buffalo hunting to ensure the winter food supply. It was also a time for raiding parties to set out, and for trading with other tribes. Ceremonies such as the Sun Dance were held in the summer. Camp had to be moved every few days to follow the buffalo and reach new grazing land for the horses. Tipis provided good easily moved shelter. The main components of the tipi were the poles, the hide cover, a liner, and anchoring stakes or stones. Women made and owned the tipis. A family of eight could live comfortably in a 14-foot tipi.

To set up the tipi, three poles were tied together to form a tripod. Other poles were laid against the tripod to form a sturdy frame. The tipi's hide cover, made from sewing buffalo hides into a semicircle,

¹⁴ Stuart, *Dacotah*, 63.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁶ Meyer, *Santee Sioux*, 198.

¹⁷ Thomas E. Mails, *The Mystic Warriors of the Plains* (New York: Mallard Press, 1991), 25.

was tied to the last post and pushed into place. Once spread over the poles, the cover was laced together in front with wooden pins. The tipi cover was staked down or anchored with stones around the edge to hold it in place. Smoke flaps on top of the tipi could be adjusted for ventilation and protection from the rain. An interior liner was tied to the tipi poles. This provided privacy since when the central fire was lit, shadows would be cast on the liner and not on the outside tipi cover. Grass stuffed between the liner and the cover provided insulation. A tipi could be set up in 15 minutes.

Inside the tipi, good order was essential. The door always faced east toward the rising sun. Generally, men's places were on the north, and women's on the south of the tipi. Personal belongings were stored near an individual's sleeping place. An altar was set up just behind the central fire pit to the west, opposite the door. Firewood, food, and cooking utensils were kept near the door.

Fall meant preparation for the coming winter. Food had to be gathered and buffalo meat dried. Wood had to be collected and stored. A fall hunt made sure the winter's meat supply would be adequate.

Life slowed down in winter camp, with less moving of camp from place to place. If enough food had been preserved and the area was secure, winter brought time for making and repairing clothing and doing intricate quill and beadwork. It was also a time for socializing, gambling, storytelling, and passing on tribal oral history.¹⁸

Lakota Reservation Life

While the Santee were being moved from Minnesota to Crow Creek to Niobrara, the Teton Lakota were hunting buffalo in the country west of the Missouri River. The occasional white men who passed through their land were tolerated and useful trading partners. In 1866, the number of whites coming into Lakota territory greatly increased on the Bozeman Trail to Montana's gold mines. Less interested in trading with the Indians, the travelers began to scatter and thin the buffalo. Fierce fighting against this incursion prompted the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, forming the Great Sioux Reservation that included all of west-river South Dakota and halted travel along the Bozeman Trail.¹⁹ The treaty also promised the Black Hills would always be the Lakota's hunting grounds.

When gold was discovered in the Black Hills, the government could not hold back the miners. Buffalo hunters began a systematic killing of buffalo for their skins and tongue meat in 1871.²⁰ The Lakota and Cheyenne killed Custer and all his men at Custer's Last Stand in 1876, but other soldiers

¹⁸ Mails, *Mystic Warriors*, 30.

¹⁹ Hoover, *Sioux Country*, 57.

²⁰ Champagne, *Native American Almanac*, 44.

retaliated severely. The railroads and buffalo hunters continued the buffalo killing and by 1885, the millions of buffalo that had roamed the plains were gone.

In 1889, the Crook Commission signed an agreement with the Sioux opening the Great Sioux Reservation to white settlement. The Sioux agreed to move onto reservations with specified boundaries.²¹ The Lakota were moved onto reservations at Pine Ridge and Rosebud. The huge shift between a life of hunting buffalo and reservation life caused massive culture shock. Men used to hunting considered farming women's work. The reservation land was too dry to farm anyway, so many stopped trying. Supplies promised by the government were late in coming, or short-changed by dishonest agents.²²

Dawes Act of 1887

In 1887, the Dawes Act allotted reservation land to individual Indians rather than keeping it communal property owned by the tribe. The government hoped individual ownership would lead to less dependence on food rations and loosen tribal bonds. The lands not immediately allotted to Indians, were sold to white settlers, further reducing the Indian land base. The Indian landowners knew little about land management and often fell prey to whites who leased or bought the land for low prices. To the government, these "landless Indians" represented a problem requiring more support as the Indian land decreased in size.²³ Some Indians thought the Dawes Act provided valuable experience, although there were bound to be mistakes at first.²⁴ However, most thought it was just another way for the whites to grab their land. The Dawes Act was officially repealed with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee

It was during this discouraging period that the Sioux heard about the Ghost Dance. The new religion promised that if they were faithful, the buffalo herds would come back, along with all their dead relatives. If they danced the Ghost Dance, the whites would disappear and leave them again to their old way of life.²⁵ At Standing Rock, the influential medicine man Sitting Bull encouraged the new religion among his people. The army moved to arrest Sitting Bull and stop his influence. He was killed

²¹ South Dakota State Historical Society, "Chronology of South Dakota History," 1889. http://www.sdhistory.org/soc/soc_hist.htm

²² Stephen D. Youngkin, "Prelude to Wounded Knee: The Military Point of View," *South Dakota History* 4, no. 3 (Summer 1974): 333.

²³ Richard Erdoes, *Native Americans: The Sioux* (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 1982), 11.

²⁴ Charles A. Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1916), 168.

²⁵ Erdoes, *The Sioux*, 20.

on December 10, 1890, while being arrested by tribal police.²⁶ Word of Sitting Bull's death grieved and angered the Lakota. Chief Big Foot and his followers fled the Cheyenne River area south toward the Badlands. The band was captured by U.S. military troops and surrendered at Porcupine Creek. After surrendering, Big Foot's band was taken to the small village of Wounded Knee. On December 29, 1890, the soldiers prepared to search the group for weapons. In the confusion, a gun fired and the soldiers began shooting with rifles and Hotchkiss guns. About 150 unarmed men, women, and children were killed.²⁷ For the Lakota, Wounded Knee ended any hope of a return to the old life.

Missionaries

The first known Christian missionary to meet the Sioux was Father Louis Hennepin, who lived among them as a captive in 1680 in Minnesota. Hennepin learned their language and studied their ways. He told of a hunting, fishing, and wild rice-gathering people who cooked fish eggs in earthen pots.²⁸

After they moved onto the plains and during the reservation period, missionaries continued to work among the Sioux. Missions were set up at Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Lower Brule/Crow Creek, Yankton, Flandreau, and Sisseton. Missionary Stephen R. Riggs helped publish the first newspaper in the Dakota language called *lapi Oaye* or Word Carrier. He learned the Dakota language so well, that he published a dictionary and bible in it.²⁹ Several of his children and grandchildren later served as missionaries and educators. Dr. Alfred Riggs founded the Santee Normal Training School in 1870. Thomas Riggs started the Oahe Mission near Pierre in 1874.

Education

The Sioux needed to learn some of the white mans' ways to survive in their changed world. By the 1870s, mission boarding schools were being founded with the idea of bringing Indian people more fully into the white culture.³⁰ Proponents of the schools hoped that young students would serve as messengers of civilized ways to their parents. Homesick children were more interested in reintegrating themselves into family and tribal life than in promoting white ways.

In 1879, Richard Henry Pratt started the first off-reservation boarding school, Carlisle Indian

²⁶ SD Historical Society, "Chronology", 1890.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Meyer, *Santee Sioux*, 8.

²⁹ Cwach, *History of Yankton Agency*, 30.

³⁰ Dana Newmann, *Plains Indians: A Complete Sourcebook for Teachers K-8* (West Nyack, New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1995), 115.

School, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.³¹ To counteract the tendency of the students to return to native ways, they were given jobs with white farmers during the summer. Limited contact meant students had less influence from their families and native culture, and more from white culture. The Carlisle School, with its total assimilation approach, was duplicated by schools nationwide between 1879 and 1902. In South Dakota, schools modeled on Carlisle opened in Pierre in 1890, Flandreau in 1893, and Chamberlain and Rapid City in 1898.³² Using total assimilation, schools forbade their students to speak native languages, and on the reservations holy ceremonies and dances were outlawed. The schools' success rates varied. If the students were forced to attend and their parents did not support their attendance, students generally returned home to much the same lifestyle they had before. Although few schools eradicated student ties to their native culture, they did succeed in teaching many students to read and write. Some off-reservation schools developed a more pragmatic approach with greater parental involvement and a gradual adaptation to white society and institutions.³³ The boarding schools that still exist in South Dakota now reinforce native culture and language.

Recent Times

During the 1950s, Sioux families were induced to move from their reservations and attempt to assimilate further into the workplaces of the larger cities.³⁴ Some tried, but with insufficient education, many struggled to find jobs. Others missed family ties and tribal culture and returned home to the familiarity of the reservation.

Modern day frustrations of past injustices and reservation life spilled over on February 27, 1973, when a militant group called the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied Wounded Knee. For seventy-one days, AIM demanded that the government look into the many treaties it had never fully honored. Newspapers, radio, and television provided national coverage of the siege. With bloodshed and considerable bitterness on both sides, the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation still carries great symbolic significance. The suffering and mistreatment of American Indians received worldwide attention.³⁵

³¹ Tsianina Lomawaima and Margaret L. Archuleta, eds., *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences 1879-2000* (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), 16.

³² David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 57.

³³ *Ibid.*, 299.

³⁴ South Dakota State Historical Society exhibit, *Changing Times: South Dakota in the 20th Century*, 2006.

³⁵ Rolland Dewing, "South Dakota Newspaper Coverage of the 1973 Occupation of Wounded Knee," *South Dakota History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 48.

Lakota, Nakota and Dakota culture and language are very much alive today. Grants provide funding and opportunities to document the language and interview elders.³⁶ Once prohibited from worshipping as they chose, Dakota, Nakota and Lakota people can now attend sweat ceremonies and Sun Dances. Powwows are enjoyed in many communities.

Problems on the reservations are acute. Lack of clean water, good highways, and investment capital impede progress in Indian Country. Health problems are made worse by severe poverty and overcrowded living conditions. Tuberculosis used to be the major health concern but today alcoholism and diabetes are more serious. Other big health concerns are mental illness, accidents, suicides, and homicides.³⁷

Casino gaming has brought some much needed financial gains to the reservations, but gambling alone cannot meet all the financial needs. By 2006, eight out of nine South Dakota tribes ran gambling operations. Tribal officials report 1,700 casino jobs with a thirty million dollar annual payroll.³⁸

Conclusion

Lakota, Nakota and Dakota people work, play, raise their families and contribute to the growth and development of communities throughout South Dakota and the nation. As with all people, individuals decide what combination of the traditional and the modern will shape their lives in the 20th century. Family, tribal, and cultural ties and the proud history of *Oceti Sakowin* provide a solid basis for tackling the financial, social and health problems that exist in Indian country.

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³⁶ Albert White Hat, Native American Awareness Training session, Pierre, SD, November 15, 2005.

³⁷ Champagne, *Native American Almanac*, 77.

³⁸ Chet Brokaw, "S.D. Legislature Wants Say in Gaming Agreements," *Indian Country Today*, February 28, 2006. <http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096412561>.

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Beadwork Designs

Objectives:

- Participants will explain in their own words the relationship between beadwork and quillwork.
- Participants will identify eight designs used in Sioux beadwork.
- Participants will design their own beadwork pattern.

South Dakota Communication Arts Standards

K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
K.LVS.1.1	1.W.1.2	2.LVS.1.2	3.LVS.1.1	4.LVS.1.1	5.LVS.1.1	6.LVS.1.2
K.LVS.1.2	1.LVS.1.2	2.LVS.1.3	3.LVS.1.3	4.LVS.1.3	5.LVS.1.3	
K.LVS.1.6	1.LVS.1.3	2.LVS.1.4	3.LVS.1.4		5.LVS.1.4	
	1.LVS.1.6	2.LVS.1.6				

South Dakota Visual Art Standards

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Std. 1: Visual arts as communication, benchmarks 1-2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Std. 2: Understanding media, techniques, & processes, benchmarks 1 & 3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Std. 3: Relationship of art and history/culture, benchmarks 1-2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Timeframe: 60 minutes

Materials:

Included in kit

Beading Designs worksheet master

Provided by instructor or participants

crayons or markers

drawing paper

Background Information:

Porcupine quills are smooth hollow tubes with a barbed point on one end. After being colored with natural dyes, the quills were wrapped, braided, or sewn onto clothing and household objects. Quill designs used bars, oblongs and rectangles. Until white traders brought colorful beads to trade in the 1830s, quillwork predominated over beadwork.

The first beadwork was done in long, narrow bands using the same bars, oblongs and rectangles seen in quillwork. The squares and rectangles were often surrounded by a border of contrasting color. The bands of beadwork were used on leggings, robes and blankets, pipe bags, cradles and saddle bags. In the 1880s, Sioux beadwork designs adopted new elements. Elongated diamonds and pronged designs were used along with traditional rectangles, squares, triangles, and lines. The hourglass design also developed. A wider variety of colors began to be used, with green, yellow, and blue joining the favorite red. White was the most common background color with medium or light blue the next favorite background.

Activity Steps:

1. Share the background information with the group. Discuss:

- What was used to decorate items before traders brought beads?
- What kinds of designs were used in quillwork and early beadwork?

2. Give each participant a copy of the Beading Designs Worksheet to complete. When everyone has finished the worksheet, discuss:

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- Do the design names make sense when you see the design?
- What are some of the designs that were inspired by natural things? (dragonfly, turtle, lightning)
- What are some of the designs inspired by manmade things? (tipi)

3. Have each participant use their crayons or markers to create their own beadwork design on drawing paper. They can use designs from the worksheet as well as the ones described in the background information – rectangles, oblongs, squares, triangles, diamonds and lines. Common beadwork colors would include red, blue, yellow, and green, but other colors may also be used.

Name _____

Beading Designs Worksheet

horse tracks tipi hourglass turtle trails lightning dragonfly bird

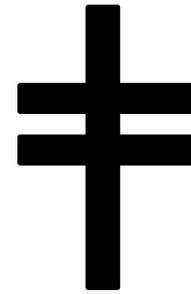
Write the name of the design from the list above on the line below that design.



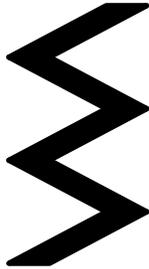
1. _____



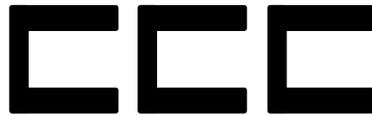
2. _____



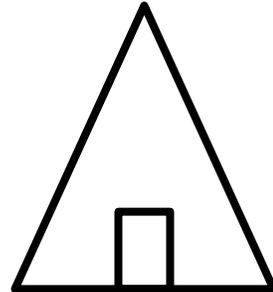
3. _____



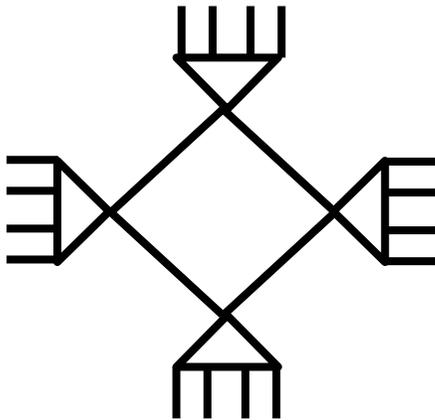
4. _____



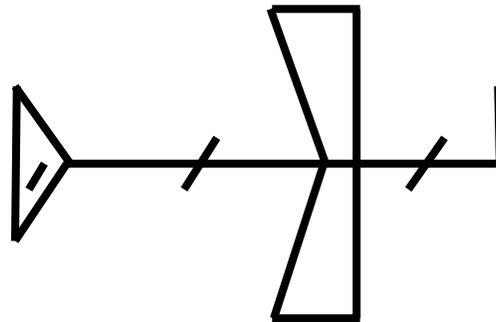
5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____

Beading Designs Worksheet Key

horse tracks tipi hourglass turtle trails lightning dragonfly bird

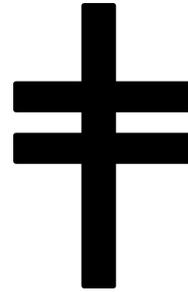
Write the name of the design from the list above on the line below that design.



1. Trails



2. Hourglass



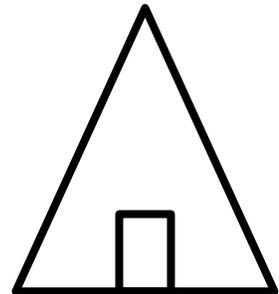
3. Dragonfly



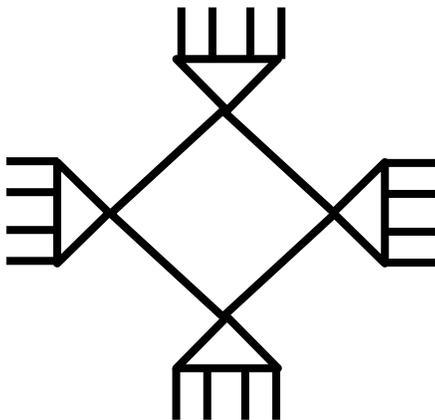
4. Lightning



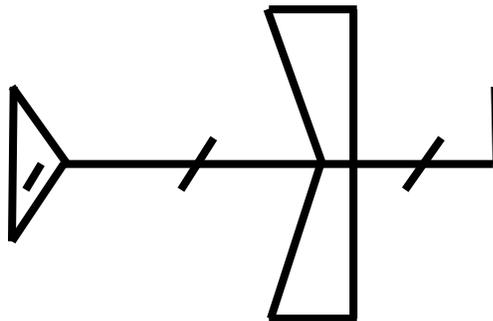
5. Horse tracks



6. Tipi



7. Turtle



8. Bird