

Tools and Clever Inventions

Week 19 • Wednesday • Hands-On: Build and Try Native Tools

Reading Time

Native nations were brilliant inventors! With stone, wood, bone, and plants, they made everything they needed.

They carved **canoes** to travel rivers — some from birch bark, light enough to carry! They wove **baskets** so tightly they could hold water. They invented **snowshoes** to walk on top of deep snow, and warm **moccasins** for their feet.

Plains hunters made bows, arrows, and a carrying frame called a **travois** that horses or dogs could pull. Many of these inventions were so smart that people STILL use them today — canoes, snowshoes, and moccasins are in stores right now!

Reading Questions

1. What materials did nations use to make tools?

2. What were snowshoes for?

3. What is a travois?

4. Which inventions do people still use today?

Hands-On: Weave a Paper Basket Mat

You need: two sheets of different-colored paper, scissors, a grown-up helper.

Step 1: Fold one sheet in half. Cut slits from the fold toward the edge, stopping about an inch from the end. Unfold — this is your loom.

Step 2: Cut the second sheet into strips.

Step 3: Weave each strip over-under-over-under through the slits. Start the next strip under-over-under-over.

Step 4: Push the strips snug together. You've woven like a basket maker!

Bonus: Try walking with big flat objects (like cardboard) strapped under your shoes on a soft surface — that's the snowshoe idea: spreading your weight so you don't sink!

After the Activity

1. Was weaving easy or tricky? What was the pattern?

2. Why do snowshoes keep you from sinking in snow?

Match the Tool to Its Job

Draw a line or write the letter to match each tool to its job.

Tool	Job (write A, B, C, or D)
Canoe	A. Walking on deep snow
Snowshoes	B. Traveling on rivers
Basket	C. Carrying loads behind a horse
Travois	D. Holding food and even water

Draw the Inventions

Draw a birch bark canoe and a pair of snowshoes.



Review

I did it!	Circle one
I wove a paper mat	YES / NOT YET
I can name four Native inventions	YES / NOT YET
I know which are still used today	YES / NOT YET