
Art Masterpiece: *Offerings to the Little People*, 1999 by Howard Terpning

Keywords: Tradition, Symbolism, Authenticity

Grade: 4th– 5th

Activity: Chalk Symbols/Pottery



Meet the Artist:

- Born in Illinois in 1927 and studied art. He went on to be a successful illustrator for magazines and movies (Sound of Music/Time Newsweek)
- When he was 50 he realized Native American (Plains) subject matter was his favorite. Iowa/Oklahoma/Dakotas. In 1976 he moved to Tucson, AZ to paint.
- The Native American community has honored him, giving him the title of "Story Teller".
- He is very realistic; he is known for his **authenticity**. He carefully studied the culture of the Native American Plain Indians. When you see a certain shield, clothing or headdress etc. chances are likely that he painstakingly painted it as it appeared in real life. His studio is filled with artifacts, books and photographs. Very few objects were painted from his imagination.
- He was known to take a subject full size, outlines it and then transfer that outline to a canvas to paint it.
- *Offerings to the Little People* is a depiction of a traditional tobacco ceremony practiced by the Crow Indians. Planting tobacco seeds was a religious event and performed by certain esteemed members of the tribe. They would plant the seeds in prepared earth near water, like a river or stream. They would then dig up the earth and along with the seeds, plant "medicine" bundles with long sticks. These were considered offerings to the little people of the earth who would help with success of the crop. (berries-herbs-miniature clothing)
- He is a member of CAA (Cowboys of America Association)

Questions:

- Can you see the story being told? (see hi-lighted info above in bio)
- Does it make you think of your traditions? Share.
- Talk about various ways of storytelling. (Books, plays, movies, oral, and visual)
- The Native Americans respect and trust Howard to tell their story. Why? (He takes great care to paint in detail with authenticity)
- Introduce how the Native Americans appreciate story telling through the use of visual symbols. They use these symbols in their pottery, blankets, jewelry and more. Their art uses symbols and signs to represent their ideas, beliefs, dreams and visions.
- Native Americans have created different designs which have become characteristic of their tribe. What to us may look like just a beautiful design to the Native the symbols and patterns are telling so much more.

PROJECT: Native American Chalk Design Pottery

Materials: Native American symbol sheet. Brown construction paper imprinted with a stencil of pottery vase 1/ student. Colored chalk. Scissors, Glue sticks, Hair spray (for fixing chalk) Black mounting paper.

In addition: Several copy-paper box LIDS to collect chalk dust.

Newsprint or butcher paper to use as a placemat at each desk.

Hand-wipes to clean hands and desks when done.

Before you begin: 2 points to be made before beginning...

1. Introduce the story telling traditions of the Native Americans through the use of symbols instead of written word. Hand out and review the symbol sheet. Build a short story or message from the shapes. (Use document camera or on the white board to demo).
2. Discuss the chalk medium. Chalk can be a great way to add brilliant color to artwork but it can also be extremely messy. When artists work with chalk they are extremely careful not to waste their precious medium. They also work carefully not to ruin their artwork by the chalk transferring onto areas of the artwork that they did not want colored. To aid the artist they

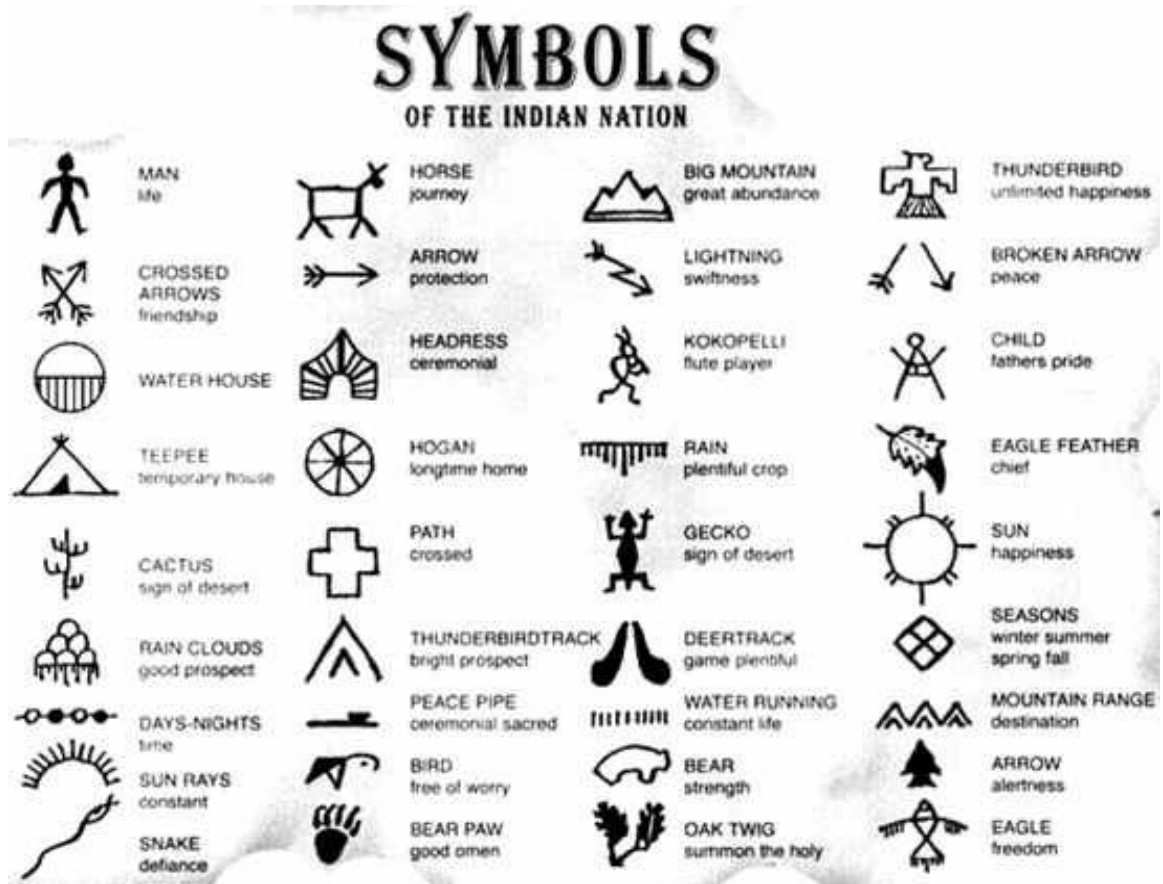
preplan their design and then work from the top of the artwork and go downward. This will prevent hands and arms from smudging areas already worked. Lastly, artists will spray a fixative over their completed chalk work to keep it from moving. (Demonstrate these tips under the doc camera.) These techniques should be kept in mind as the students work.

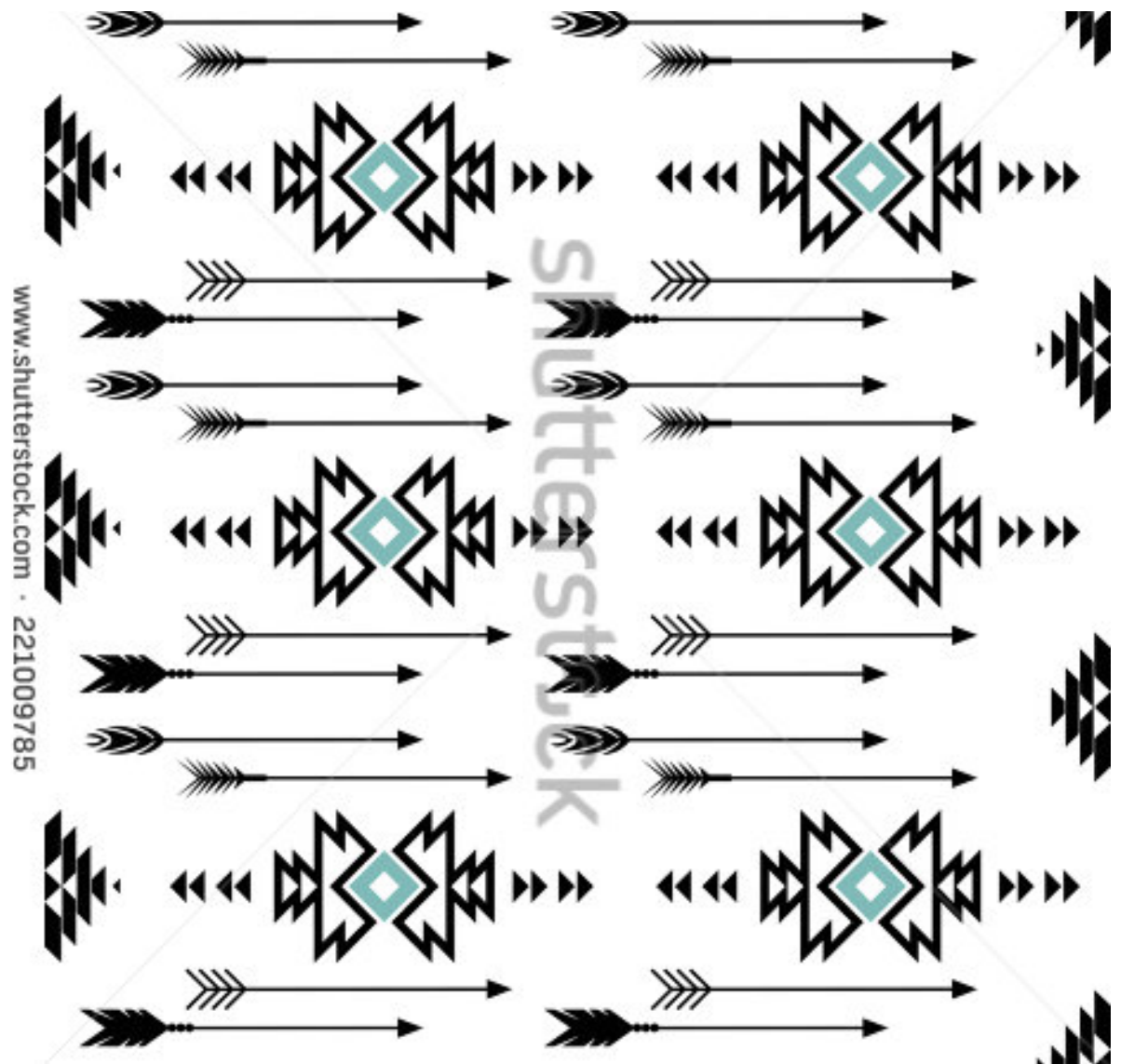
Challenge the students to work carefully today.

Process:

1. Allow student to pick their pottery vessel shape.
2. Hand out the page with the Native American symbols to give the students a starting point. Students can create their personal story out of these symbols or symbols they self-create.
3. Encourage students to use a piece of scratch paper and with pencil sketch a couple designs before they begin their actual design.
4. Using colored chalks they should begin at the top of the vessels and work down to the base.
5. Any excess chalk powder can be tipped into copy-paper box lid. Encourage them to tip their artwork over the lid boxes frequently to remove excess chalk.
6. Discourage LARGE areas of color. Bands of color or small sections are ok.
7. When art piece is done a volunteer will seal with hairspray outside the classroom.
8. Students should then return to their desk to cut out the vessel and glue it to a black piece of construction paper.
9. Have fun!

The following pages can be shown in the classroom to generate design ideas.
Print as needed or show on classroom screen.

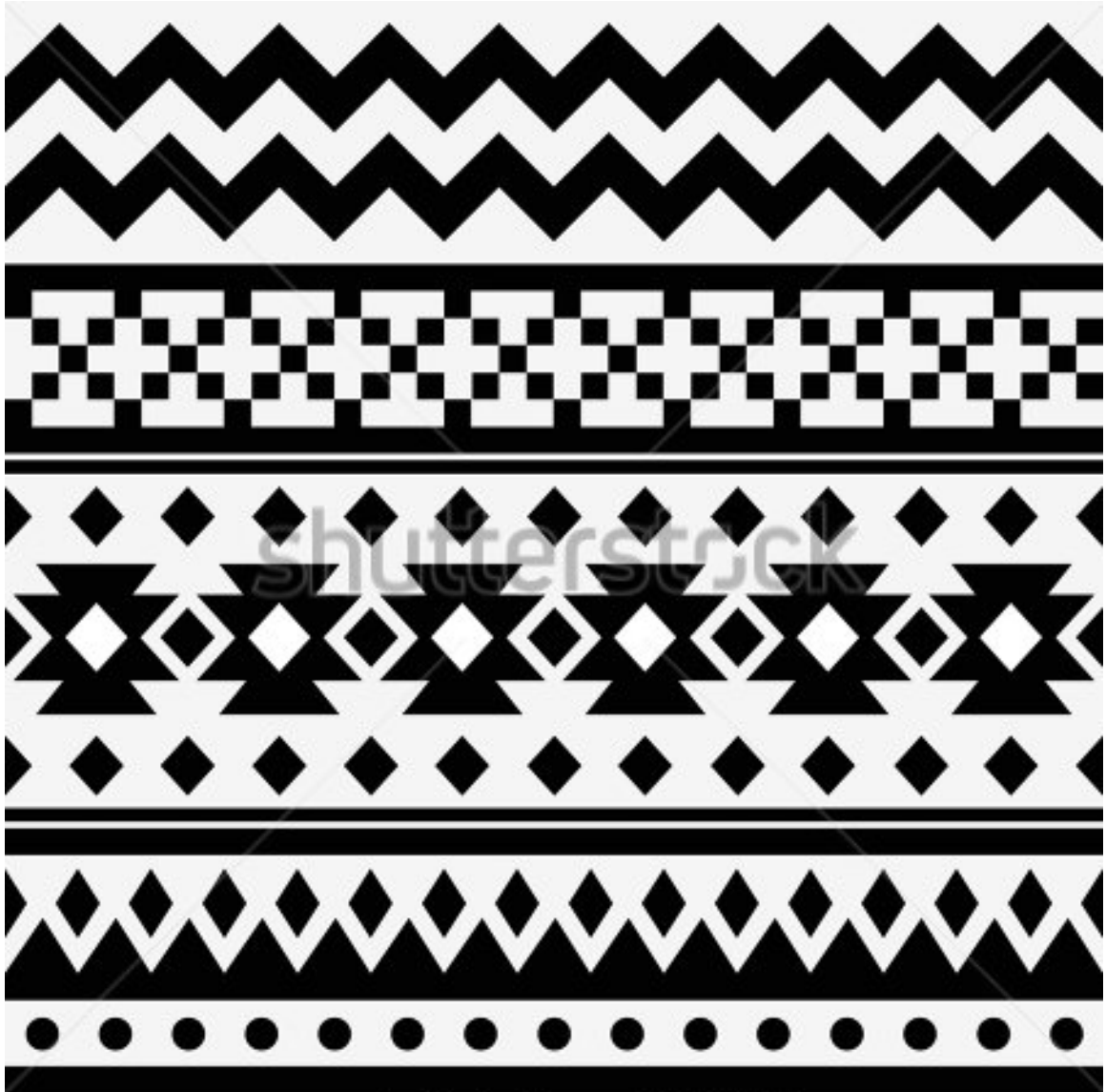






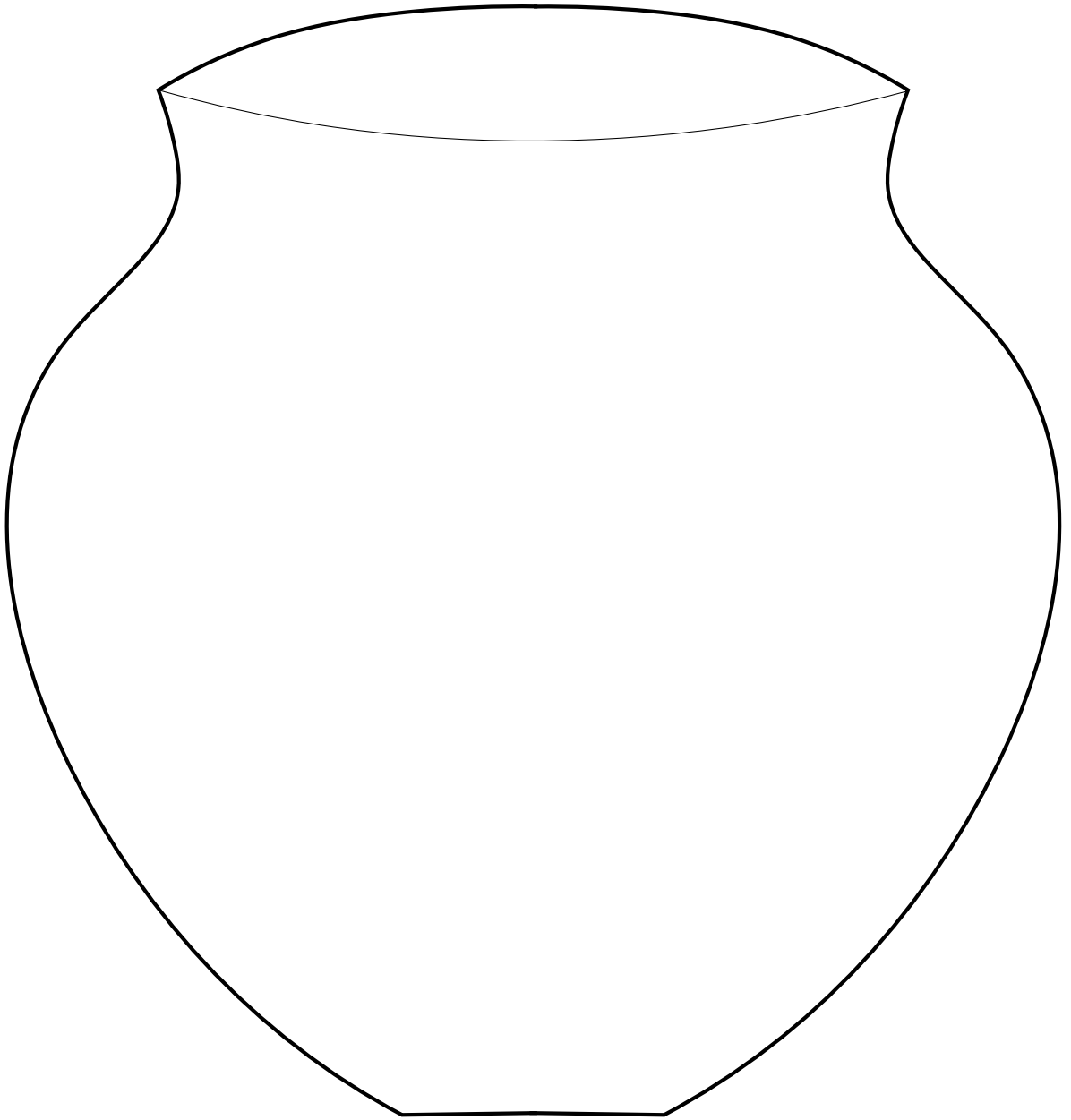
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