

Name: _____

A Beaded History

By Lisa Hart



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Some called them whimsies. Just fancy beaded tourist trinkets sold at Wild West shows, fairs, and medicine shows. They were much more than that. In fact, they were a Haudenosaunee (HO-den-uh-SHO-nee) tradition. This type of beading dates back to the glass beads offered by traders from Europe. Haudenosaunee beading served many purposes, like telling stories. Each Haudenosaunee nation developed its own style. The Mohawk nation's designs were the most common and widely traded.

Name: _____

There are at least sixty types of beaded items. They range from picture frames to purses. The designs often used themes from nature, such as birds and flowers. These themes pleased the Victorian ladies who bought them for keepsakes.

Paper patterns guided the crafter's hand. Double lengths of waxed white thread held the

many cushions. Some loops hung from the bottoms of other items.

Pincushions were the most common type of beadwork. They're also one of the oldest.



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and colored leaves framed the images on cushions. Loops of beads decorated the corners of



appeared. Hot-pink cotton replaced the once-popular purple velvet. Designs still used leaves, but in new shades of blue, red, green, and yellow. Some were made in new colors like pink and amber. Chalk-white beads began taking the place of clear ones.

Today, the Haudenosaunee see their beading as an important link to the past. Museums treasure any vintage pieces. Collectors value them as works of art.

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1. What was the author's main purpose for writing this article?
 - a. To teach about an important historical, Native American craft.
 - b. To teach you how to craft your own whimsies.
 - c. To explain how Haudenosaunee beading has changed over time.
 - d. To describe her personal experience with whimsies.
2. When this beadwork tradition started, what were the beads made of?
 - a. stone
 - b. wood



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4. The term *whimsies* comes from the word *whimsy*. What can you infer *whimsy* means?
 - a. something small and ugly
 - b. something old and serious
 - c. something large and colorful
 - d. something fanciful and enjoyable
5. Why do you think pincushions are one of the oldest and most common beaded objects?

Name: _____

A Beaded History



The following terms are vocabulary words from the article. Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing the corresponding letter on the line.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. _____ fabric | a. any practice passed down through generations |
| 2. _____ trinkets | b. small items, often of little importance |



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- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 6. _____ tradition | f. traveling acts common in the 1800s |
| 7. _____ tourist | g. group of Native American nations, also known as Iroquois |
| 8. _____ velvet | h. nickname for small, beaded items |
| 9. _____ design | i. a soft, fuzzy fabric |
| 10. _____ medicine shows | j. traveler visiting a place for entertainment |

Name: _____

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In the article, "A Beaded History," you read about the craft of Haudenosaunee beading.

According to the text, Mohawk beadwork was some of the most popular. Using the internet, search for images of Mohawk beadwork. Choose a beaded item and describe it on the lines below. Be sure to include what type of item it is, the colors used, any designs or patterns, and other details you find important or interesting.



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ANSWER KEY

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1. What was the author's main purpose for writing this article?

a. To teach about an important historical, Native American craft.

b. To teach you how to craft your own whimsies.



objects?

Answers will vary. An example is: Pincushions are used while sewing, and sewing

is very common and has been around a long time.

ANSWER KEY

A Beaded History



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9. e design

i. a soft, fuzzy fabric

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