



## THANKSGIVING ACTIVITY

### HOW TO MAKE CORNHUSK DOLLS



Native American children have played with corn husk dolls since time immemorial. Corn plays a central role in many Native American cultures. It is widely regarded as a blessing and a sacred plant that helps to feed families and brings communities together. Corn husk dolls were decorated with clothing but did not have a face.

### What You Will Need

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- Corn husks (3 for a doll wearing pants, 4 for a doll wearing a skirt)
- Pipe cleaners or string
- Scissors
- Bowl or other container (large enough to soak corn husks)
- Cold water

## TO MAKE A DOLL WITH SKIRT:






Illustration	Instructions
	<p><b>1.</b> Put 4 corn husks in the bowl. Cover them with cold water and let them soak for 15 minutes.</p>
	<p><b>2.</b> Take two corn husks from the bowl. These should have a similar size and shape.</p>
	<p><b>3.</b> Place these alongside each other, so that the narrow part of the corn husks touch each other and the husks face outward.</p>
	<p><b>4.</b> Take a third corn husk from the bowl, and place it <b>between</b> the other two pieces.</p> <p>The narrow part should touch the narrow parts of the other two, but the husk should face to be back.</p> <p>This will be the doll's hair.</p>
	<p><b>5.</b> Tie the husks together at the top (about ½ inch /1 cm from top) with a piece of pipe cleaner.</p>






Illustration	Instructions
	<p><b>6.</b> Flip the two outer husks over themselves (bottom to top) to cover the knot, but not the middle husk.</p> <p>Leave the middle husk sticking out.</p>
	<p><b>7.</b> Tie the two outer husks together that are covering the knot.</p> <p>This will be the doll's head.</p>
	<p><b>8.</b> Take another husk from the bowl. Tear it lengthwise (along the ridges) in half.</p> <p>Take one of these pieces. This will be the doll's arms.</p>
	<p><b>9.</b> Fold the husk lengthwise, so the top touches halfway along the husk.</p>
	<p><b>10.</b> Fold the husk over itself along its width. You should now have a rectangular piece of husk.</p>









Illustration	Instructions
	<b>11.</b> Fold this lengthwise into a tube.
	<b>12.</b> Place the tube beneath the head of the cornhusk doll, between the husks.
	<b>13.</b> Tie off the husks beneath the arms with a piece of pipe cleaner. The arms will rest between the two pipe cleaners.
	<b>14.</b> Carefully divide the middle corn husk (the hair) into 3 strips (for one braid) or 6 strips (for two braids).  Stop when you reach near the end of the husk (to keep from tearing a piece off).



Illustration	Instructions
	<b>15.</b> Braid the strips for the hair (3 strips for one braid, 6 strips for two).
	<b>16.</b> Tie off each braid with a piece of pipe cleaner.
	<b>17.</b> To keep your doll's hair back, tie it loosely to the doll until the husks dry.  The hair will then stay in place.
	<b>18.</b> Carefully trim the bottom of the corn husks of the doll's body so the doll can stand up.

The above instructions are based on instructions provided by Courtney Parchcorn, Cultural Instructor, Chickasaw Nation to Tony Perry on 14 June 2019.

Extension Story: <https://www.oneidaindiannation.com/the-legend-of-the-no-face-doll/>

## TO MAKE A DOLL WITH PANTS:






Illustration	Instructions
	<b>1.</b> Put 4 corn husks in the bowl. Cover them with cold water and let them soak for 15 minutes.
	<b>2.</b> Take two corn husks from the bowl. These should have a similar size and shape.
	<b>3.</b> Place these alongside each other, so that the narrow part of the corn husks touch each other and the husks face outward.
	<b>4.</b> Tie the husks together at the top (about ½ inch /1 cm from top) with a piece of pipe cleaner or string.
	<b>5.</b> Flip the two outer husks over themselves (bottom to top) to cover the knot.





Illustration	Instructions
	<p><b>6.</b> Tie the two husks together that are covering the knot.</p> <p>This will be the doll's head.</p>
	<p><b>7.</b> Take another husk from the bowl. Tear it lengthwise (along the ridges) in half.</p> <p>Take one of these pieces. This will be the doll's arms.</p>
	<p><b>8.</b> Fold this piece lengthwise, so the top touches halfway along the husk.</p>
	<p><b>9.</b> Fold the husk over itself along its width. You should now have a rectangular piece of husk.</p>







Illustration	Instructions
	<p><b>10.</b> Roll this lengthwise into a tube.</p>
	<p><b>11.</b> Slide the tube beneath the head of the cornhusk doll, between the husks.</p>
	<p><b>12.</b> Tie off the husks beneath the arms with a piece of pipe cleaner or string. The arms will rest between the two pipe cleaners.</p>
	<p><b>13.</b> Hold the doll with the face looking toward you. Cut the husk at the lower part of the doll, down the middle. This becomes the legs.</p>



Illustration	Instructions
	<p><b>14.</b> Tie the end of each leg with a piece of pipe cleaner or string.</p> <p>Slide the tube beneath the head of the cornhusk doll, between the husks.</p> <p>Trim, as needed, the bottom of each leg so they are even. This will help the doll stand alone.</p>
	<p><b>15.</b> Let the cornhusk doll dry. This may take a few hours.</p>