

Split Twig Figurines

by Carol J. Ellick, M.A., RPA, SRI Foundation
cjellick@srifoundation.org

Age: 7 and up

Objectives: Provides a chance to reproduce replicas of perishable artifacts originally made 4000 years ago.

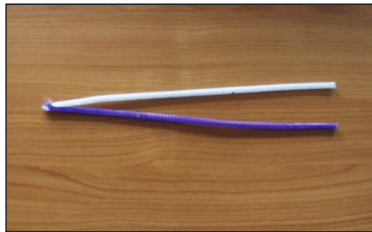


Materials: Pipe cleaners and information pages; options for more experimentation include using wrapped-wire used for making the stems of silk flowers; and willow twigs, if available

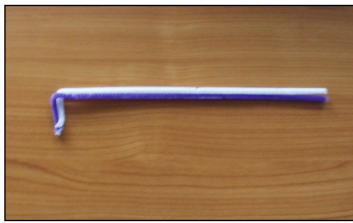
Preparation: Photocopy a sufficient quantity of information pages for your event. Provide several finished figurines using each of the materials.

Number of volunteers: 1 volunteer for every 2–4 children

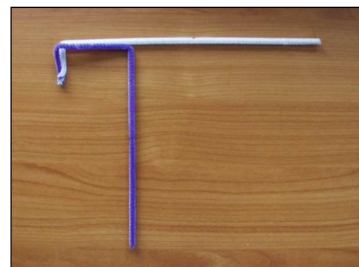
Procedure:



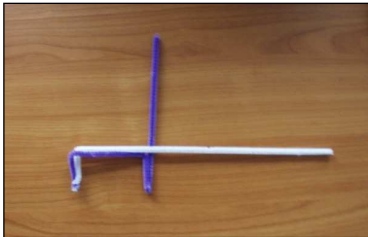
1. Fold the pipe cleaner in $\frac{1}{2}$.



2. Fold the doubled end down slightly less than 1 inch to form the back leg.



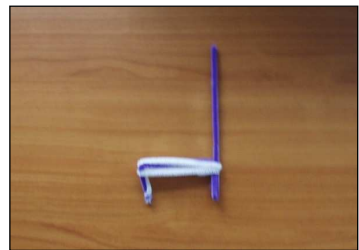
3. Measure out about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and fold one segment down to form the other leg.



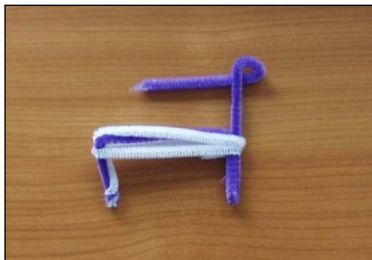
4. Take the bottom of the section that you just folded down, and fold it up to make the other leg.



5. Fold the segment that points forward over the one that points up.



6. Wrap the segment around the legs to form the body and tuck in the end.



7. Bend the segment pointing up put to make the head.



8. Wrap the extra down the neck and around the body.



Split twig figurines have been found in protected areas within the Grand Canyon. It is estimated that some of the figurines may be as much as 4000 years old. Figurines appear to represent bighorn sheep and mule deer. Both animals are still very common in the Grand Canyon today.

The peoples who made these little animal figures were most likely the ancestors of some of the modern Native American people who live in the Four Corners area today.

The figurines were made from willow twigs (in a method similar to the one illustrated above.) When the shapes were finished, they were placed in a sacred area in the back of a cave.

What they take away: Each visitor takes an information page containing the preservation information and their finished split twig figurine.

Preservation message: Perishable materials such as split twig figurines are delicate and unusual. They are handled with care by scientists. If someone finds an artifact, it should be reported to an archaeologist or the State Historic Preservation Office.

(SAA President tested, child approved. ☺)

Instruction Page for Split Twig Figurine

Split twig figurines have been found in protected areas within the Grand Canyon. It is estimated that some of the figurines may be as much as 4000 years old. Figurines appear to represent bighorn sheep and mule deer. Both animals are still very common in the Grand Canyon today.

The peoples who made these little animal figures were most likely the ancestors of some of the modern Native American people who live in the Four Corners area today.

The figurines were made from willow twigs (in a method similar to the one illustrated on the right.) When the shapes were finished, they were placed in a sacred area in the back of a cave.

Preservation

Perishable artifacts—those made from grasses, twigs, and other organic materials—rarely survive in archaeological sites.

All care must be taken to preserve these materials. Scientists wear clean white cotton gloves when analyzing split twig figurines and other organic materials.

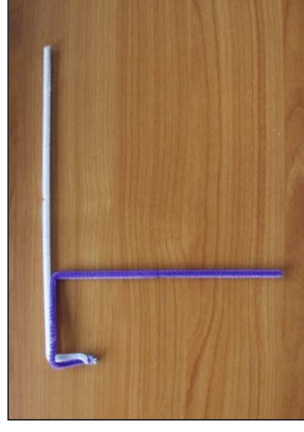
If you find artifacts, please contact an archaeologist to report the find or notify your State Historic Preservation Office.



1. Fold the pipe cleaner in $\frac{1}{2}$.



2. Fold the doubled end down slightly less than 1 inch to form the back leg.



3. Measure out about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and fold one segment down to form the other leg.



4. Take the bottom of the section that you just folded down, and fold it up to make the other leg.



5. Fold the segment that points forward over the one that points up.



6. Wrap the segment around the legs to form the body and tuck in the end.



7. Bend the segment pointing up put to make the head.



8. Wrap the extra down the neck and around the body.

