

Topics: World Arts & Cultures, Celebrations in Pacific Island Cultures

Materials List

- ✓ 2 Skeins eyelash yarn
- ✓ Straw
- ✓ Piece of string longer than the lei length
- ✓ Paper clip

This activity can be used to teach:

- Artistic traditions and art forms (National Visual Arts Standards: Creating, Grades K-8)
- Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts (CA Visual Arts Standards: Grades K-6, Historical and Cultural Context, 3.0)

Hawaiian Yarn Leis

For Your Next Luau or Just to Brighten Your Day



Students will enjoy creating these fun yarn leis! Use them in a unit on Hawaii, wearable art, Island cultures, or even as a great addition to the “dress up” trunk.

To Do and Notice

1. Tie a paper clip to one end of the string.
2. Push the other end of the string through the straw. (Hint: Sip the straw to get the string through the straw.)
3. Tape about 5 cm (2”) of the end of the string to the end of the straw using masking tape or cellophane tape.
4. Tie a loose knot with the yarn around the straw.
5. Wind the yarn about 7 to 8 times around the straw.
6. Push the wound yarn down to the end of the straw.
7. Continue winding more yarn around the straw and pushing it down the straw. Eventually it will go onto the string.
8. When close to the end of the first skein, tie the beginning of the second skein to the end of the first skein.
9. When done, adjust the yarn on the string.
10. Tie the beginning of the string and yarn to the end of the string and yarn.

The Content Behind the Activity

Leis for personal decoration and ceremony have a long Hawaiian history, originating from Polynesian roots. Leis are traditionally made from found materials including flowers, shells, and nuts. They can be worn at any time, for personal beautification, given as gifts, or used as part of celebrations. If given as a gift, leis should never be refused; and it is considered rude for a recipient to remove a lei in front of the presenter.

In terms of the creative activity itself, making these leis is tactile and soothing. The simple, repeating motions will have particular appeal to tactile learners and provide opportunity for hand-eye coordination skill building. About an hour of perseverance will result in a fun and impressive product!

Taking it Further

In addition to using these creations as leis, incorporate them into a “dress-up cabinet”. They also make excellent “boas”, fancy necklaces, or unusual belts.

Web Resources (Visit www.raft.net/raft-idea?isid=102 for more resources!)

For more information about traditions and history associated with Hawaiian leis, visit: www.hawaiiflowerlei.com/leitradition.asp