

## 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

---

- 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 GIRL CORN HUSK DOLL:






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
	<p><b>11.</b> Fold this lengthwise into a tube.</p>
	<p><b>12.</b> Place the tube beneath the head of the cornhusk doll, between the husks.</p>
	<p><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.</p>
	<p><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).</p>



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

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 BOY CORN HUSK DOLL::






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> Tie the husks together at the top (about ½ inch /1 cm from top) with a piece of pipe cleaner or string.</p>
	<p><b>5.</b> Flip the two outer husks over themselves (bottom to top) to cover the knot.</p>





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>