Let's Rendezvous!
The Mountain Man Rendezvous

Grade: Upper Elementary

Purpose/Objective: Students will understand that the rendezvous was an important part of the mountain man's life. They will be able to experience parts of this by participating in a class rendezvous.

Lesson Plan:
[Use Teacher Resource Information: Rendezvous and Teacher Resource Information: The Mountain Man and Fur Trade Industry]

1. Introduction: What do you like to do when you get together with your friends? Do you know what your parents do with work associates? Is it fun? Explain that a rendezvous was where mountain men gathered to take care of business and buy supplies, but it was also a time to catch up with friends and have a good time.
2. Mountain Men Rendezvous. Give students some brief information about the mountain man rendezvous and why they were held.
3. Organize a class (or grade) rendezvous: Set up different areas of the "rendezvous" that students may participate in. The following areas are suggested: trading area, games, and storytelling. Students may be organized into groups to rotate through the areas if there are a lot of students. Beaver pelts may be used to trade for items or participate in the different areas, if desired. These pelts can be given out during the week leading up to the rendezvous for good behavior, homework completion, etc.
    a. *Trading Area*. In the trading area, students may use their beaver pelts to trade for small trinkets; beads, honey sticks, candy, etc. Students may also make their own beads (see instructions below) and trade those with each other. Students may want to try to trade without talking or using verbal communication. This was significant to mountain men because when they first encountered Native Americans they often didn't know each others' languages.
    b. *Games*. Games such as foot races, tug of war, card games, and stick pull may be set up. Stick pull: Have two students sit facing each other with their feet touching. Have them both hold onto the stick. On "go" they both try to pull each other over.
    c. *Storytelling*. Students may want to share their tall tales they have been working on. A teacher or guest storyteller may share or read stories in this area.

Parts of this lesson were adapted from the following sources:
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/HNS/Mtmen/lifestyle.html#rend1
http://www.autrynationalcenter.org/pdfs/lesson_plans/fur_trading.pdf
http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=1689

Bead Necklace

Introduction: The Mountain Men and Traders used glass beads to trade with the Native Americans. Make your own beads and keep them or trade with classmates!

Materials Needed:

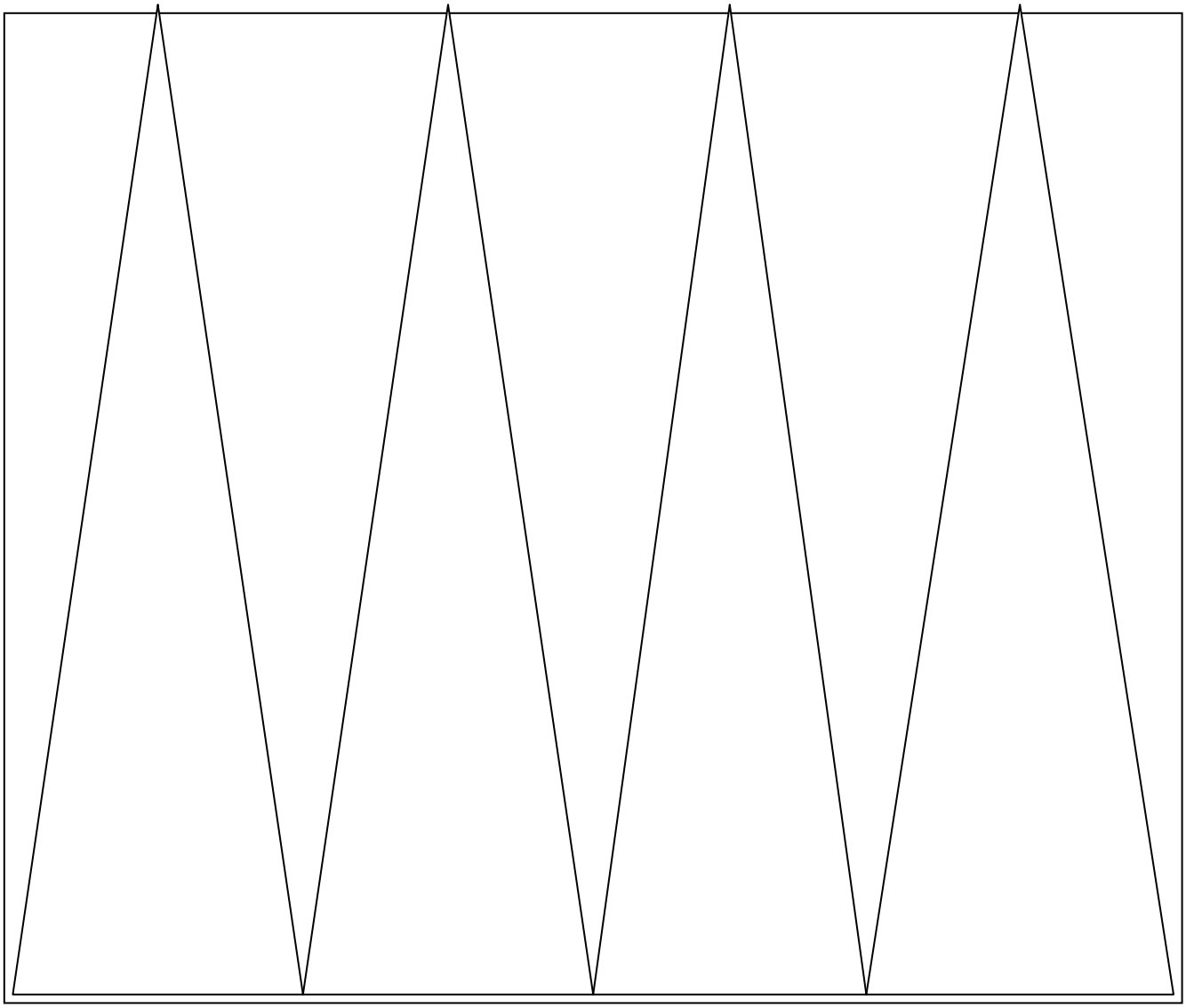
- Newspaper, magazines, wrapping paper or colored paper – for great looking beads, use the most colorful pages you can find.
- Glue
- Pencil
- Ruler
- String or yarn
- Paper towels
- Macaroni
- Food Coloring

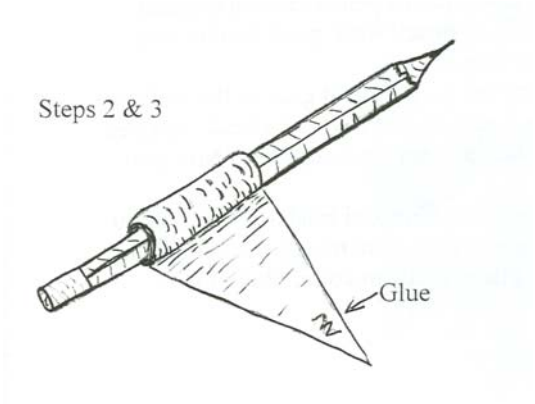
Directions:

1. Use the pattern page or make a large square with your ruler on colored paper. Mark out triangles about one to two inches wide or wider for longer beads, but don't go over 2 1/2 inches. Cut out the triangles.
2. Roll the triangle from widest side to smallest onto a pencil or similar round object. Knitting needles, wooden dowels, or pencils work great for this. Don't roll the paper too tight around the pencil.
3. When the triangle is rolled around the pencil, put a drop of glue on the end and hold it for a few seconds. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have your beads finished.
4. String your beads onto your string and tie the string ends together. Now you can wear or trade your bead necklace.
5. You may also make beads from macaroni. The macaroni can be colored in a bowl of colored alcohol. Use about 6 teaspoons of alcohol and just enough food coloring to make a deep shade of color. Place these different colored beads onto a string.

Pattern

Cut out and use or mark a similar example on your colored paper.





Beaver Pelt:
To be handed out prior to the rendezvous. May be copied, cut out, and distributed.

Photo: www.thefurtrapper.com/fur_trappers.htm