Objective
Students will make toys from corn cobs. Students will write descriptions for making the toys and will write plays with the toys as characters.

Background
In Early America, there was no industry devoted to making toys for children. Most families were involved in farming, and children stayed busy with chores. When they had time to play, they had to find amusement from everyday life. Made toys consisted of whatever they or their parents could make for them from whatever they had around the home. Toys were usually simple in design, and the material available to work with depended on the geographic location and the wealth and talents of the child’s family.

One major crop grown by Early American farm families was corn. The Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock would have starved in 1621 if natives had not taught them how to grow corn. Besides eating the corn and feeding it to their animals, the Pilgrims also learned to stuff their mattresses with corn husks and to burn corn cobs for fuel. From the cobs and the husks they learned to make toys.

Today, we have many more uses for corn. Corn syrup sweetens candy bars and many of the sweet drinks we enjoy. Corn is even used to make the plastic used in modern toys.

Visual Art
1. Tell students they are going to learn to make toys from corn cobs, like children in early America did.
   — Show students how to make corn cob people and corn cob airplanes, as described below.
   — Students will make one of the two toys described or design and make some other toy or useful object from the materials provided.

   CORN COB PEOPLE
   — Students will use markers to draw faces on the large ends of their corn cobs.
   — Students will choose fabric remnants to wrap around the cob and tie the cloth in place with yarn.
   — If corn silk is available, students may use it to make hair for their dolls. The hair may be tied, wrapped in loose strands or braided. If no silk is available, have students draw hair or glue on yarn.

   CORN COB AIRPLANES
   — Students will decorate the planes with markers, as desired, before criss crossing two corn cobs and securing them with yarn.
2. Students will use fresh corn on the cob to make corn paintings, as

Oklahoma Academic Standards

KINDERGARTEN
History Literacy: 4.1,3. Economics: 2.2
Measurement: 2.1,2
Speaking and Listening: W.1,2.
Phonics and Word Study: 3,4.
Reading and Writing: W.1,2

GRADE 1
Visual Art History and Culture: 1,2,3. Visual Art Expression: 3.2,4; 4.3
Citizenship Literacy: 5. History Literacy: 2,3. Economics: 2.2
Measurement: 2.1,3
Speaking and Listening: W.1,2.
Phonics and Word Study: 1,2,3.
Reading and Writing: W.2

GRADE 2
Visual Art History and Culture: 1,2,3. Visual Art Expression: 3.2,4; 4.3
Citizenship Literacy: 5
Number & Operations: 2.6
Measurement: 2.1
Speaking and Listening: W.1,2.
Phonics and Word Study: 1,3.
Reading and Writing: W.1

GRADE 3
Visual Art History and Culture: 1,2,3. Visual Art Expression: 3.2,4; 4.3
Writing—2.1,2,3
Citizenship Literacy: 4. Economics: 1,2
Number & Operations: 2.1,3,7.
Measurement: 2.3,4,5
Speaking and Listening: W.1,2.
Phonics and Word Study: 1. Reading and Writing: W.1
follows.
—Cover a table with newspaper, and place paper on top.
—Students will dip corn on the cob in tempera paint, roller-style, and roll along
the paper in any direction.

Social Studies
1. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
   —Discuss the toys of the past compared with toys of the present
   —Compare and contrast corn cob dolls with modern dolls and corn cob planes
   with modern model planes.
2. Students will use online or library resources to find pictures of toys from other
cultures around the world.
   —Students will compare American toys with the toys from other cultures.
3. Discuss what holiday we celebrate in the US as a result of the Pilgrims’
struggles. Discuss family traditions for the holiday celebration.

English Language Arts
1. Students will each write a description of the toy/object he or she has made and
provide instructions for making it.
2. Students will write and perform plays, using their corn cob people as charac-
ters.
3. Students will complete the worksheet provided with this lesson.
4. With a combination of drawing and writing, students will create toys they
believe will be invented in the future.
   —Students will write opinion pieces explaining why they believe their newly-
invented toys are better than toys from the past or present.

Math
1. Students will estimate the number of kernels on a corn cob.
2. Students will develop strategies to find the number of kernels on a corn cob
using multiplication.
3. Students will estimate the length of a corn cob.
4. Students will order corn cobs by length.
5. Students will measure corn cobs to find the circumference and length of each
corn cob.
6. Students will compare measurements to determine the differences between
different corn cobs.

Extra Reading
Collodi, Carlo, and Alice Carsey, *Pinocchio: The Tale of a Puppet, Bottom of the
Hill*, 2011.
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, and Garth Williams, *Little House in the Big Woods*, Harper-
Williams, Margery, and Liz Encarnacion, *The Velveteen Rabbit: Or How Toys Be-

www.agclassroom.org/ok
Corn Cob Toys

Read the following words: corn cob doll toy

Which two words have the short “o” sound ____________ ____________

The word corn has the combination “o-r” in it. Make a list of words that contain the combination “o-r.”

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Toy has the dipthong “o-y” in it. What other words contain “o-y?”

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Write three words that rhyme with corn.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Write a sentence using the word corn and the three rhyming words.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Write a poem, using the four words at the top of the page.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.