

Loom Docent

Goal: Students will be able to describe the difficult process of making clothing in Early America.

Loom docent is the primary teacher in this gallery, although the touring docent will need to assist.

1) Making textiles

Seat all the students in front of the display of weaving items. The loom docent will lead a short discussion with the entire group on how fabric was made. Include: Preparation of the fiber (flax, wool and cotton) and the sources of color.

If on display - Simply contrast the weaving of the colonists with the basket weaving of the Native Americans by pointing out the Native American baskets with the porcupine quill decorations.

2) Demonstrate the loom

- Demonstrate weaving to the entire group on one loom.

Remind the teacher or touring docent to pay attention because they will need to help with the other loom.

- Divide the group in two groups, one for each of the looms.

Ask the teacher or touring docent to supervise the other loom.

Let each child weave two throws of the shuttle.

- Remind them to be gentle with the beating and the pedals!

Spinning

As the children finish weaving, let them try out carding or spinning under supervision of the touring docent. Remember spinning is hard and that is the lesson. No one is very good at it!

After the tour, prepare for the next day:

Refill empty bobbins

Replace nearly empty bobbins with new thread

Refill shuttles with full bobbins

Advance warp threads if necessary

Tidy up the room

Double check that the costumes are tidy on the hooks

Note: It is possible to switch 1 and 2 above to ensure that students get to weave first, using the time left for teaching about the fibers and dyes.