



ELP and ESP Station Handout

Rag Dolls

INTRODUCTION

This handout will give you historical background of rag dolls and show you how to make the dolls. Through the Rag Doll station, your students will learn how to make their own rag doll. They will also get the opportunity to compare and contrast toys and entertainment of the 1840s with those of the present day.

HISTORY

Rag dolls were sometimes called pioneer dolls or rag babies. Mothers made these dolls when coming to California in the 1840s and 1850s. The dolls would be something with which the children could play while walking along the trail or resting in camp at night. The material was all cotton muslin; cotton print with no more than 2-3 colors and plain color cotton were both used.

MAKING RAG DOLLS

Materials Required to Make One Doll

- 1 piece of cloth roughly 24 inches by 10 inches
- 4 pieces of string 4 inches in length
- 1 cotton ball or fiberfill about the size of a golf ball (approximately 2 inches in diameter)
- Additional pieces of cloth to make apron, scarf or bonnet, if desired.

Note: Used fabrics work well as they give an authentic look to the doll.

Directions

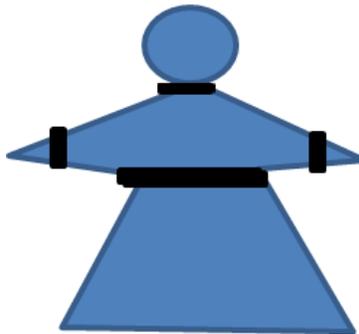
1. Select the piece of cloth and fold it in half lengthwise.



2. Place a wool ball into the center of the fold. Tie the cloth around the base of the wool ball to create a head for your doll.



3. Tie the two ends of the top corners using more of the string to create the dolls hands. Dress the doll according to preference.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The advantage of the Rag Doll station is that it is very flexible; it can be set up almost anywhere in the fort, including indoors if it is raining. For that reason, and because working with cold water (required for Corn Husk Dolls) in the winter is difficult, Rag Dolls is a good station to have during the late fall and winter, while Corn Husk Dolls is best during the spring and early summer.