



What is Primitive Technology?

Primitive technologies are the first techniques utilized by humans to modify materials found in their environment to assist them in their comfort & survival. These essential developments provide the foundation for all of the technologies which have since followed. By learning & practicing these ancient skills, we keep in touch with our roots, our independence, and our place in the natural world.

It is often difficult for students to visualize & comprehend how early humans lived. Hands-on participation in (or just being able watch) the creation of an item using ancient living skills, brings the topic to life & gives participants a base upon which to build an understanding of the past.

School Programs are most commonly presented to 3rd - 8th graders, however the program can easily be adapted to younger ages with enough extra adult assistance.

(6th grade is most common as part of the early humans curriculum in California public schools and 3th grade is most common in Waldorf schools.)

Young Adult programs are usually presented to 9th - 12th graders

All programs give an introduction to the basic technologies listed & participants go home with either a necklace or bracelet which they have made entirely by hand from raw materials such as sticks, stones & nuts.

Can also be adapted for home school groups.



Skills Demonstrations

are also available in the following topics:

Stringmaking

Netmaking & Ropemaking

Firemaking

Basketry

Braintanning Deer Skins

(Leathermaking)

\$100/hr (\$200 minimum)

ANCIENT LIVING SKILLS

School Programs and Demonstrations

with
Tamara Wilder
Primitive Technologist



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Stringmaking programs begin with either the stalk or prepared fiber of the native plant Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*), depending on group size and length of the program. Groups of three kids then cooperate to twist the fiber into strings.

Young adult programs use one of several possible single person twisting techniques.

Firemaking programs begin with a demonstration of friction firemaking using a wooden handdrill kit. Participants can then partner up and give it a try using supplied handdrill and bowdrill kits. Friction fire is a difficult skill so we concentrate on the process instead of the result; however, sometimes focused pairs of older kids do make fire. Flint & steel firemaking can also be demonstrated. *Young adult programs focus more on participants actually making fire themselves.*



Grinding and drilling beads is a fun activity which introduces some age old drilling, shaping and polishing techniques traditionally used on stone, bone, shell, wood, and other materials. Participants make beads from soapstone & the native Ghost Pine nuts to hang on the string they have twisted together. Most kids take home either a bracelet or necklace which they are proud to have made “from scratch”.

Young adults are generally faster at this topic and make more artistic or numerous beads.

Hunting tools target practice

is extremely popular with kids, helps develop hand-eye coordination and is a safe activity with adequate space and adult supervision (minimum of 5 other adults required). A large grass field is the best locale.

The hunting tools available are: ***rabbitsticks***

The oldest & most pandemic tool.

handspears

One of the most basic of hunting tools.

bow & arrows

Probably the most familiar hunting tool.

atlatls (spear-throwers)

Spear-throwers, which pre-date the bow & arrow, were developed at the end of the ice age when such large animals as mammoths and mastadons were being hunted.

Hoop & Pole game

is a fun & instructional spearthrowing game played in many areas of North America.



A standard **5 topic school program** covers hunting tools, pine nut beads, stone beads, cordage & firemaking.

(3-4 hours) Generally 8:30 to 12:00

\$325 for up to 16 students

\$400 for 17 to 30 students

\$10/student thereafter

(Materials included. Travel fee may be added.)

Larger groups require min. of 5 adults.

Smaller groups require min of 3 adults.

Program organization:

Following an initial introduction and demonstration, the group moves through the hand-on activities.

Smaller groups stay together.

Larger groups are divided into 3 groups and rotate through 3 stations.

Tamara Wilder has been practicing, teaching & demonstrating primitive living skills since 1989 and has been running school programs across Northern California since 1998.

She regularly teaches at *the Solar Living Institute, California School of Herbal Studies, New College of CA,*

Pt. Reyes National Seashore & the Mendocino Art Center;

is coauthor of the book ***Buckskin***, board member of the

Society of Primitive Technology, and demonstrates ancient living skills for museums, fairs & schools.

She is also featured on the History Channel in the Modern Marvels show entitled "***Leather***".

Information on wild foods can vary from a simple discussion with samples of wild foods to an expanded program w/hands-on activities.

Topics can include:

-cracking, shelling & pounding acorns

-making manzanita berry cider

-grinding roasted bay nuts

-cooking acorn with hot rocks

-tasting prepared acorn mush

Wild foods program (3 hours) covers some acorn & manzanita, plus other seasonal foods.

\$350-\$400 depending on content.

Limited by availability of resources.