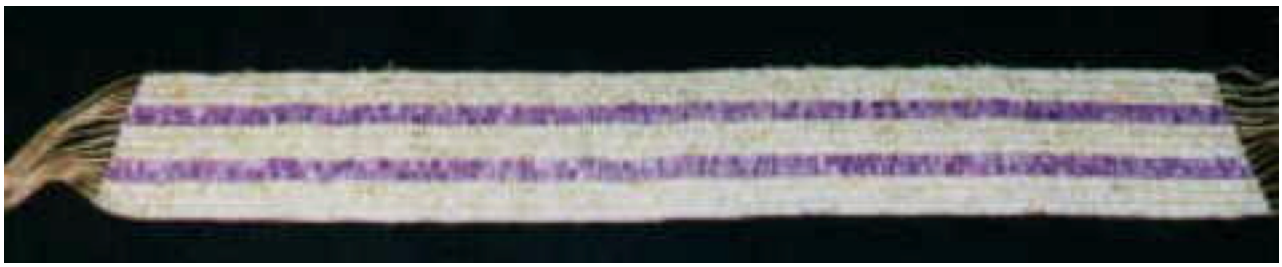
Wampum Pictures

Wampum beads are used to make strings and belts. The belts were reminders of past events, laws, and other important events.

Replica of a Two-Row Wampum Belt. The two rows of purple wampum symbolize two nations of people trying not to interfere with the other, existing with their own traditions, culture, language, laws, government, and spirituality.



Photos used with permission of Barbara Gray.

Wampum Pictures

The Iroquois Confederacy, founded by the Great Peacemaker in 1142, is the oldest living participatory democracy on earth. Wampum belt depicting the five nations of The Great Law of Peace.

https://www.pbs.org/native-america/blogs/native-voices/how-the-iroquois-great-law-of-peace-shaped-us-democracy/

https://www.britannica.com/topic/wampum

Wampum Background Information Sheet

Wampum is short for the Algonquian word wampumpeage (wom pom pe ak) meaning "white string of beads." There were two types of beads. The white bead, the only bead properly called wampum, was made from a large sea snail called whelk. The dark purple bead was made from a saltwater clam of the North Atlantic coast called quahog. The beads were cylindrical in shape and drilled lengthwise to form a tube. Beads were about 5mm or 1/4 inch in length. Beads were strung into lengths called a fathom, which is about six feet, containing 240 - 360 beads. Six white beads were worth 1 penny. The purple beads were worth twice the white beads since only a small portion of the shell could be used to make the beads. Wampum was distributed from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi River and from the general Great Lakes region to the lower Ohio Valley.

Woven wampum belts, which averaged 6 inches wide and 30 inches long, were used as a form of communication between Indian tribes. The designs of the belts were reminders of past events, laws, and other important matters. A belt was used to ratify a treaty while the arrangement of colors became the treaty document. Wampum belts were used at councils, to elect or depose a chief, at an adoption ceremony, during mourning, as records and deeds, and as gifts. Single strands of wampum were worn for ornament. Wampum was not used as money between tribes.

There was no gold or silver available from the home governments for the colonists to make coins. Wampum was used as a medium of trade exchange between European colonists and Indian tribes. The Massachusetts Bay Colony made wampum legal currency in 1641. Wampum could buy enough land to start a plantation! There are records of wampum being used to pay taxes to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to pay tuition at Harvard College.

Due to the intensive labor involved, wampum was a prized item of adornment and valued in trade. The Dutch Campbell family started a wampum factory in New Jersey. They introduced the mass-produced beads, becoming one of the earliest industries in America. Indians reportedly rejected the mass-produced beads as inferior. With colonists counterfeiting the Indian money on a large scale, its value dropped sharply in the colonies. Wampum remained a medium of exchange until 1792 when the United States government established coinage laws. However, inland tribes continued to accept it in exchange for furs until the early 1800s.

Geography Assessment **Name**_____

1. Wampumpeage (wampum) means _____.

2. What is not a use of wampum for the Indians?
   a. As money between tribes
   b. To ratify a treaty between tribes
   c. As gifts
   d. To elect a chief of a tribe

3. The shells for the purple beads are found _____.

4. What is not a use of wampum for European colonists?
   a. As trade exchange with the Indians
   b. To pay taxes
   c. As ornaments
   d. To pay tuition

5. Wampum was considered legal currency until 1792 when the United States established _____ laws.

6. The Campbell family started one of the earliest industries in America. This industry made _____ and was located in _____.

Math Assessment (meters) Name_____

Givens: One wampum bead is 5 mm in length.
6 White beads = 1 cent
3 Purple beads = 1 cent

1. Calculate the number of beads needed to make a string of beads with each of the following lengths: (a) 20 cm, (b) 1 meter, and (c) 1 fathom (about 1.8 meters). Show your work.

2. Calculate the length of 250 beads in (a) centimeters and (b) meters. Show your work.

3. Find the value of a string of beads 60 cm long if the beads are: (a) all white beads, (b) all purple beads, and (c) 1/2 purple and 1/2 white. Show your work.

4. Suppose the pattern of colors on a string of beads 1 meter long is P W P P W P P W P. How many white beads would be needed to make the string? Show your work.

Math Assessment (customary units) Name_____

Givens: One wampum bead is 1/4 inch in length.
6 White beads = 1 cent
3 Purple beads = 1 cent

1. Calculate the number of beads needed to make a string of beads with each of the following lengths: (a) 7 inches, (b) 1 foot, and (c) 1 yard. Show your work.

2. Calculate the length of 260 beads in (a) inches and (b) yards. Show your work.

3. Find the value of a string of beads 12 inches long if the beads are (a) all white beads, (b) all purple beads, and (c) 1/4 purple and 3/4 white. Show your work.

4. Suppose the pattern of colors on a string of beads 1 yard long is P W W P P W W P. How many white beads would be needed to make the string? Show your work.

Geography Assessment Answer Key

1. Wampumpeage (wampum) means ____*white string of beads*_____.

2. What is not a use of wampum for the Indians?
   a. As money between tribes
   b. To ratify a treaty between tribes
   c. As gifts
   d. To elect a chief of a tribe

3. The shells for the purple beads are found ____*North Atlantic Coast*_____.

4. What is not a use of wampum for European colonists?
   a. As trade exchange with the Indians
   b. To pay taxes
   c. As ornaments
   d. To pay tuition

5. Wampum was considered legal currency until 1792 when the United States established _____*coinage*_____ laws.

6. The Campbell family started one of the earliest industries in America. This industry made _*mass produced wampum beads*_____ and was located in __*New Jersey*_____.

Math Assessment (meters) Answer Key

Givens: One wampum bead is 5 mm in length.
6 White beads = 1 cent
3 Purple beads = 1 cent

1. Calculate the number of beads needed to make a string of beads with each of the following lengths:
   a. 20 cm = *40 beads*
   b. 1 meter = *200 beads*
   c. 1 fathom (about 1.8 meters) = *360 beads*

2. Calculate the length of 250 beads in
   a. centimeters = *125 cm*
   b. meters = *1.25 m*

3. Find the value of a string of beads 60 cm long if the beads are
   a. all white beads = *20 cents*
   b. all purple beads = *40 cents*
   c. 1/2 purple and 1/2 white = *30 cents*

4. Suppose the pattern of colors on a string of beads 1 meter long is P W P P W P P W P. How many white beads would be needed to make the string? *67 white beads*

Math Assessment (customary units) Answer Key

Givens: One wampum bead is 1/4 inch in length.
6 White beads = 1 cent
3 Purple beads = 1 cent

1. Calculate the number of beads needed to make a string of beads with each of the following lengths:
   a. 7 inches = *28 beads*
   b. 1 foot = *48 beads*
   c. 1 yard = *144 beads*

2. Calculate the length of 260 beads in
   a. inches = *65 inches*
   b. yards = *1 yd. 29 inches*

3. Find the value of a string of beads 12 inches long if the beads are
   a. all white beads = *8 cents*
   b. all purple beads = *16 cents*
   c. 1/4 purple and 3/4 white = *14 cents*

4. Suppose the pattern of colors on a string of beads 1 yard long is P W W P P W W P. How many white beads would be needed to make the string? *24 white beads*

Grading Rubric for Mathematics Questions

4 - The student set up the problem using correct numbers to change within the metric/customary system. The calculations were correct.

3 - The student set up the problem using some incorrect numbers to change within the metric/customary system. The calculations were partially correct.

2 - The student set up the problem using no correct numbers to change within the metric/customary system. There were no correct calculations.

1 - The student set up the problem using the wrong system of numbers to change within the metric/customary system. There were no correct calculations.

0 - The student made no effort to solve the problem.