

Lesson Plan: Soap Making

4th-8th



Lesson Summary

Today, none of us could imagine a world without soap. In fact, we take for granted how important it is until we run out. Modern hygiene and our ability to prevent and stop the spread of infectious diseases rely on this humble staple of modern life. In this lesson, students will learn how soap was discovered and how the soap manufacturing business has changed over time with our understanding of cleanliness and hygiene.

Learning Objectives

Children will learn about how soap is produced throughout the world, and the uses of soap over the course of human history, as well as how they can make their own soap to use at home.

- The history of soap
- Soap production in the Southwestern borderlands
- Methods of modern soap production
- Follow a recipe to make homemade soap

Background Information/Historical Context (For staff/teachers)

Today none of us could imagine a world without soap. In fact, we take for granted how important it is until we run out. Modern hygiene and our ability to prevent and stop the spread of infectious diseases rely on this humble staple of modern life. Please see the resource file for a historic background on the use of soaps and soap production in history.

Preparing the Lesson

- Read the background information.
 - See Resource File 1 – History of Soap Making
- Print or download example photos
 - See Resource File 3 – Related Images
- Print or download the vocabulary page.
 - See Resource File 2 – Related Vocabulary
- Gather the materials needed.
- The activities in the lesson are messy, so be sure you have gathered tablecloths and necessary clean up supplies.

Teacher Presentation

- Summarize the history of soap making
 - See Resource File 1 – History of Soap Making
- Complete yucca root or leaf soap making presentation
 - See Activity – Making Soaptree Yucca Root Soap
 - See Activity – Making Soaptree Yucca Leaf Soap
- Introduce the related vocabulary list.
 - See Resource File 2 – Related Vocabulary
- Complete activities which reinforce learning objectives.

Essential Questions to Ask

- What is soap made of?
- How has soap production changed over time?

Activities

Activity: Making Soaptree Yucca Root Soap

In this activity, you will demonstrate for your students one way in which the yucca plant was, and continues to be used, for soap making. This time using the plant's root.

Please see the resource files for detailed instruction on making soap using the Soaptree yucca root.

Resource File 3 contains images of the Soaptree yucca plant.

Materials Needed

- Clear melt and pour glycerin soap base
- Pigment powder colorant dye
- Silicone molds
- 2 Large crock pots
- Glass or hard plastic cups
- Popsicle sticks
- Ladle
- Bags & plastic wrap to take home soap
- Small spray bottles
- 70% rubbing alcohol
- Markers (to mark molds)
- Tablecloths
- Scrub brush
- Sealable containers
- Paper towels
- Hammer
- Soap yucca root
- Soap yucca leaves
- Knife
- Warm & cold water (separate)
- Small strainer
- Small saw

Activity: Making Soaptree Yucca Leaf Soap

This activity can be done either as a student activity or a teacher-led demonstration showcasing another way in which the yucca plant was, and continues to be used, for soap making. This time using the plant's leaves.

Please see the resource files for detailed instructions on making soap using the Soaptree yucca leaves.

Resource File 3 contains images of the Soaptree yucca plant.

Activity: Melt & Pour Soap Making (Cold Process)

In this activity students will get to make their own soap to take home using the melt & pour method.

Please see the resource files for detailed instructions on making take home soap.

New Mexico State Standards

Please see Resource File 4 for a list of benchmarks and standards for this lesson.

Resources/Citations:

Please see Resource File 5 for a list of resources and citations for the background information.

Questions and Comments

We would love to hear from you and your students. Let us know how your students did making soap! Send us photos of you and your students making soap. Please contact the instructional coordinator, Alexandra McKinney, with any questions or comments at alexandra.mckinney@state.nm.us.